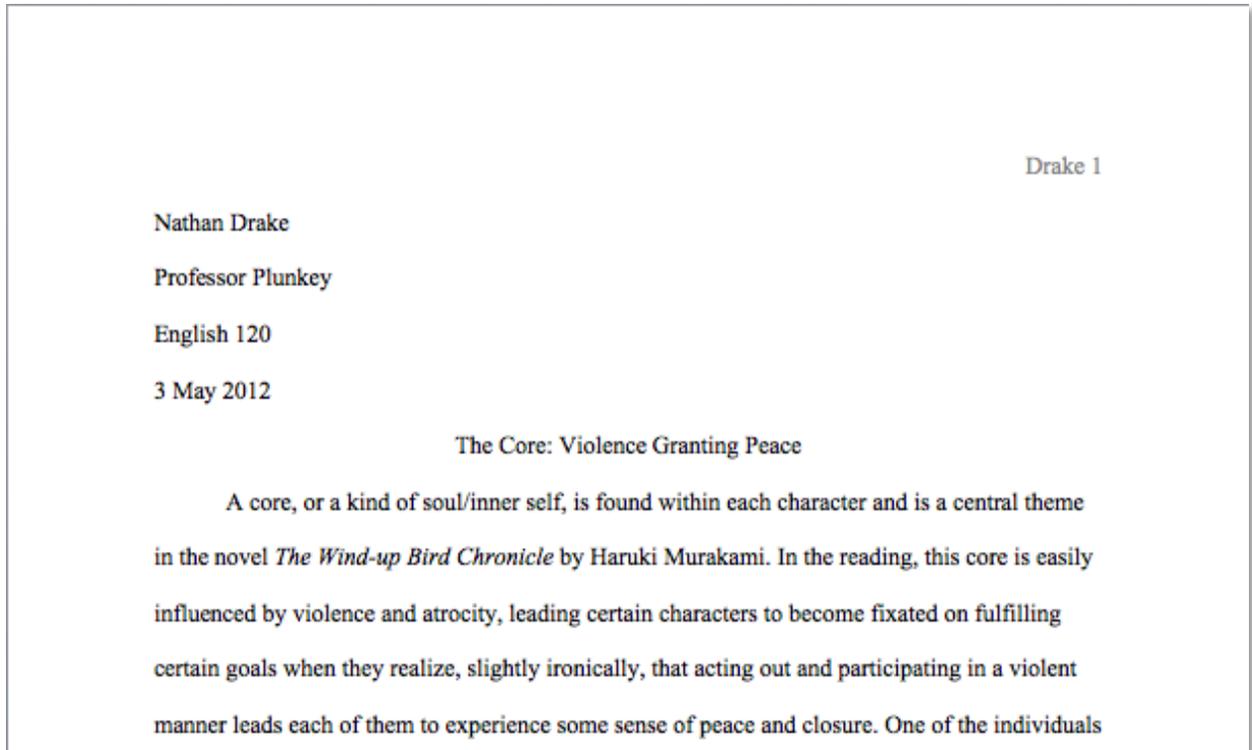


RMC Writing Center
Developing & Polishing Essays in MLA Format
Updated on March 25, 2013

MLA (the Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write essays and cite sources in the liberal arts and humanities. This condensed resource offers examples and guidelines for the general format of a first page, Works Cited page, and in-text citations.

First page of a sample MLA paper:



Note:

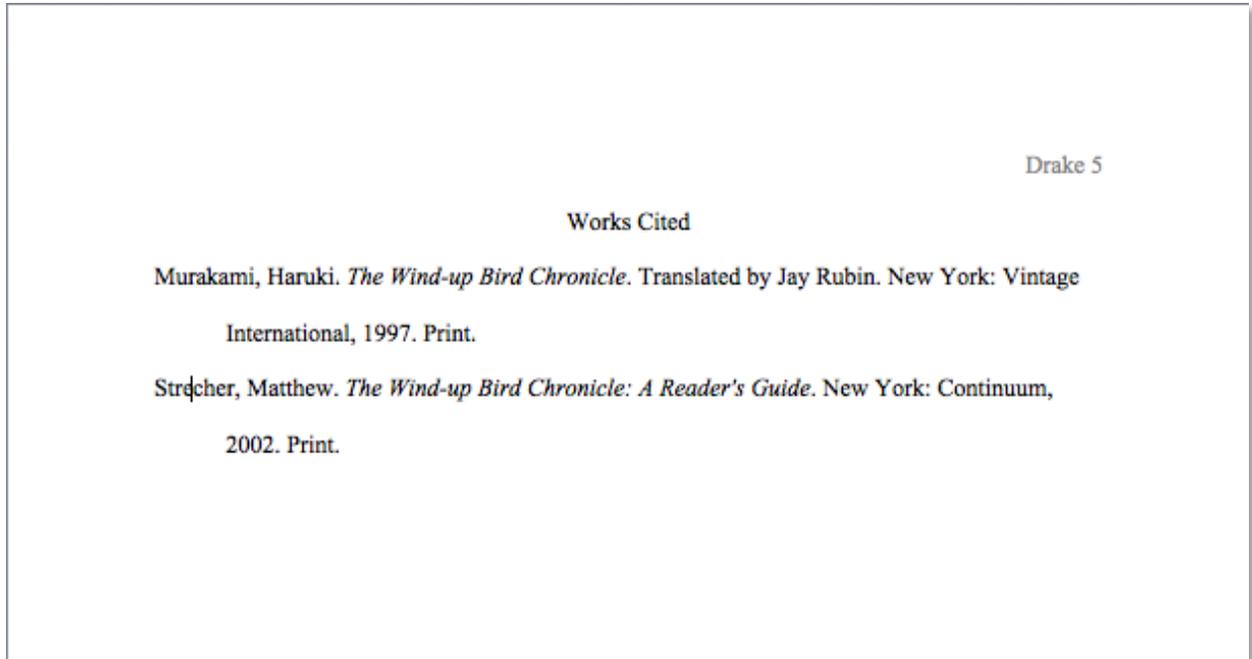
- Occasionally, the professor's first and last name are listed (Ex: **Professor Nick Plunkey**).
- The **last name followed by page number** is optional on the first page.

MLA Formatting Guidelines for Works Cited Page

- Only list works you cited in your paper, unless otherwise instructed.
- A Works Cited page is always the last page of the entire piece.
- Center the heading (Works Cited). Do not underline or put in boldface.
- Double Space the page just like your essay.
- If the citation exceeds one line, the next lines are all indented five spaces.
- List sources in alphabetical order by the author's last name.
 - If there is not an author listed, alphabetize based on the title of the work.
 - If the title begins with *A*, *An*, or *The*, alphabetize by the word that follows.

- Capitalize the first letter of books and the name of journals except *a, an, the, and, or, to*, and most prepositions, unless they begin or end the title (Ex: *The Catcher in the Rye*).

Last page of a sample MLA paper:



How to Apply This Guide/Formatting Shortcuts in MLA

- Generally, use italics for longer works, quotation marks for shorter works.
- **Med.** refers to Medium (such as Print, Web, Film, DVD, etc.).
- **Last, First** refers to the author's Last and First name.
- To denote an editor, use **Ed.** (Ex: Ed. Joe Smith).
- Do not indicate page numbers using pg, pp, or page.
- To indicate a specific edition, use the **number followed by ed.** (Ex: **5th ed.**).
- When abbreviating months, use the first three letters and a period (Ex: **Jan.**)
- When crediting a director or performer, use Dir. And Perf. (Ex: **Dir.** David Lynch. **Perf.** Laura Dern).
- If you lack source information (possible, but uncommon), omit it and move on to clarifying the info that you do have.

Sample Works Cited Entries & Information

Book

Last, First. *Title: Subtitle*. Publication City: Publisher, Year. Med.
Bing, Jack. *Monkey Around: A Fun Tail*. Boston: Ink Press, 2011. Print.

Journal Article

Last, First. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): Pages. Med.
Half, Burt. "My Day With The Monkey." *The Monkey Journal* 17.2 (2011): 14-16. Print.

Book with Multiple Authors

First Author's Last, First, and Second Author's First and Last, Third Author's First and Last.

Title. Edition. Publication City: Publisher, Year. Med.

Black, Dale, Cindy Hue, and Frank Ray. *Monkey and Tree*. 5th ed. Boston: Ink Press, 2009. Print.

Editor, No Author Named

Editor's Last, First, ed. *Title*. Publication City: Publisher, Year. Med.

Smith, Robert A., ed. *Our Every-Changing World: Essays on Evolution*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2012. Print.

Work in Anthology

Last, First. "Title of Selection." *Title of Anthology*. Edition. Editor's First and Last. Publication City: Publisher, Year. Pages. Med.

Noles, Sharon. "Origins." *New Living*. 5th ed. Ed. Joe Halo. Boston: Ink Press, 2008. Print.

Film

Title. Director's First and Last. Performers First and Last. Distributor, Year of Release. Med.

Any Which Way You Can. Dir. Buddy V. Horn. Perf. Clint Eastwood. MGM Studios, 1980. Film.

Poem

Olds, Sharon. "Feared Drowned." *Satan Says*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980. Print.

Last, First. "Title." *Book*. Publishing City. Publisher, Year. Med.

Website

Last, First. "Title of Work." *Title of Website*. Sponsoring Institution (or N.p. if none available), Day Month Year of Publication. Med. Day Month Year Accessed. Full URL.

Kirk, James. "Monkey Eats." *The Monkey Site*. World Wide Fund for Nature, 15 Dec. 2012. Web. 12 Jan. 2013. <http://www.themonkeysite.com>.

Hex, Mal. *Everyone's Got Something to Hide*. n.d. Web. 16 Jan. 2013.

<http://www.everybodysgotssomethingtohide.com>

In-Text Citations

MLA style requires a citation in the text of an essay for every quotation, paraphrase, summary, or other material requiring documentation. Parenthetical references should include the information your readers need to locate the full reference in the list of works cited at the end of the text. We're only providing examples of basic formatting and common citation goals in classes at RMC.

1. Author Named in a Signal Phrase

The MLA recommends using the author's name in a signal phrase to introduce material and cite page number(s) in parentheses, followed by a period. Writers should also prepare readers for the subject matter in the quoted passage and its relevance.

Murakami suggests that objects in the world look artificial for those, such as Kasahara, who do not get in touch with their souls, which he refers to as a gooshy thing: "the world

looks totally empty to me. Everything I see around me looks fake. The only thing that isn't fake is that gooshy thing inside me" (323).

2. Author Named in a Parenthetical Reference

When you do not mention the author in a signal phrase, include the author's last name before the page number(s) in parentheses. Use no punctuation between the author's name and the page number(s).

This splitting of the self is evidenced by his act of beating up the man with the bat: "I had split in two, but this me had lost the power to stop the other me" (Murakami 336).

3. Using Ellipses and Brackets to Manipulate Passages

Because writers often only need to cite certain parts of passages (not the whole thing), they often use ellipses to indicate omitted material and brackets to clarify potentially vague references.

The shockingly savage act of the Mongolian soldiers and their subsequent mistreatment toward Mamiya left his mental state in stagnation: "real life may have ended for me deep in that well ... the intense light ... burned up the very core of my life until [no core was left]" (Murakami 170).

This handout was adapted from the following sources:

Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. 5th ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Print.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.

Other Useful Resources

Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

University of North Carolina's Writing Center Handouts Page:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>