

MLA DOCUMENTATION



When you use the words or original ideas of another person in your writing, you need to document, or give credit to, the sources of these words or ideas. If exact words from the original are used, quotation marks are necessary. If you paraphrase, or restate, the idea in your own words, quotation marks are not required, but documentation of the source is still required.

There are several different formats for documentation. This explains the MLA format (named after the Modern Language Association, which developed it). In this format, you briefly identify your sources in the text of your paper, then give the full information in the "works cited" list at the end of the paper.

How to document quotations and paraphrasing is explained first, then how to do the "works cited" list is explained.

PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

In the MLA format, "parenthetical documentation" is used to briefly identify the sources of information you have borrowed in writing your paper. Parenthetical documentation should be integrated smoothly into the text of your paper, rather than listed separately.

The general rule is to cite the source right in the text of your paper. If the author's name is mentioned in your writing (this is called a "signal phrase"), you only need to put the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. The reader can then consult the list of works cited (explained below) at the end of the paper to get the complete citation.

NOTE: Some sources, especially those on the Internet, do not give page numbers. The general rule is to give a section number if it is given, which is rare; otherwise just use the author name or, if no author is given, the first words of the title.

Ross Parke notes that "natural fathers aren't the only ones raising children on their own. As more families split up, social workers note that stepfathers increasingly are being called on to bring up other people's kids" (52).

According to Bernard Farber in Encyclopedia Americana, there is a trend toward waiting to marry and toward postponing the birth of the first child (6).

You may decide not to highlight the source of some of your derived information. In such cases, at the end of the sentence enclose in parentheses both the author's last name and the page referred to. The reader can then consult the works cited list at the end of the paper to get the complete citation.

At the turn of the century many men worked long hours, which "entailed their absence from the family for most of the day: that was not a rejection of fatherhood but a necessary element of it" (McKee and O'Brien 54).

Child support payments can be withheld from wages in 45 states (Schorr 33).

For publications with no author given, you should include the first 2–3 key words from the title and the page number in parentheses.

"Fathers today no longer know who they are or what their wives and children expect from them" ("Fathers Confused" 5), and this increases the likelihood they will abandon their families.

DO I HAVE TO DOCUMENT EVERYTHING?

One of the hardest parts of documentation is deciding how far to go in documenting sources. If you mention that Los Angeles suffered an earthquake in January 1994, do you have to show where that information came from? No. This is considered "common knowledge," even if you didn't know on your own. This can get tricky. When in doubt it is probably a good idea to include the documentation. Ask a librarian or your instructor for advice on specific situations.

Be sure to write down the URL and date you accessed a web site; this information may not appear on printouts.

WORKS CITED

A list of works cited has all the sources that contributed ideas and information to your paper. (It is the same as a "bibliography.") **It is arranged in alphabetical order** by the authors' last names or, if a source doesn't list an author, by the first word of the title (ignore "A," "An," and "The"). The list in the sample below is in correct order.

If you have a type of source not covered in the examples below, ask the librarian to show you the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition.

**SAMPLE: All sources are integrated into one list, arranged alphabetically.
Double-space the list and indent the second line of an entry 5 spaces.**

Works Cited

- Box, Scott. "One Father's Unique Perspective." Newsweek 5 Mar. 1999: 38. MasterFILE Premier. EBSCO. Austin Community Coll. Lib., Austin, TX. 12 Feb. 2002 <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.
- "Parent." Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. 2003. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 13 Mar. 2003 <<http://search.eb.com>>.
- Parke, Ross. Fathers. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Schorr, Burt, Jr. "States Cracking Down on Fathers Dodging Child-Support Payments." Wall Street Journal 26 Jan. 1993, eastern ed.: 33.
- Sheppard, Lisa. "Father Involvement Shows Positive Outcomes." Urban Programs Resource Network. Apr. 2001. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 29 May 2003 <<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/news030529.html>>.

The most basic rules for works cited entries are:

BOOKS

Last name, First name of author. Title of Book. City where published: Name of Publisher, year published.

MAGAZINES

Last name, First name of author (if given). "Title of Article." Name of Magazine Date of issue: page numbers.

ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION MAGAZINE ARTICLE

Last name, First name of author (if given). "Title of Article." Name of Magazine Date of issue: page numbers. Name of Database. Name of Database Company. Library Used, City, State. Date of Access <URL of the database home page>.

However there are many variations. Look at the examples for print and online sources below.

OTHER RULES:

Except for "public" web pages, when required information is not given --In the spot where the information should be, put the following abbreviations: No date of publication: n.d. No place of publication or no publisher: n.p. No page number: n.pag.
A second work by the same author--Instead of repeating the author's name in the works cited list, put 3 hyphens and a period (---) and alphabetize as if the name were spelled out.

Remember, the examples on the following pages are not in the order you will list sources. Your list will be one alphabetical list.

To make it easier to find the correct example, the following are divided into print and online sources. Within this, they are grouped by type of source (books, web sites, etc.).

Works Cited - PRINT or VIDEO SOURCES

General encyclopedia, signed article

Farber, Bernard. "Family." Encyclopedia Americana. 1999 ed.

Specialized encyclopedia, no author given

"Fatherhood." Encyclopedia of Sociology. Ed. T.E. Chen. 2 vols.
New York: Putnam, 1990.

Book or pamphlet

Parke, Ross. Fathers. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Republished book

Young, Marilyn. Family Life. 1972. New York: Doubleday, 1999.

Book with editors, not the first edition

McKee, Lorna, and Margaret O'Brien, eds. The Father Figure. 3rd ed.
New York: Tavistock, 1982.

A work or chapter within a larger work

Valsiner, Jaan. "The Father's Role in the Social Network of a Soviet Child."
The Role of the Father in Child Development. Ed. Michael E. Lamb.
New York: Wiley, 1981. 187-201.

Work reprinted in a collection and given a new title

Wooster, Bernard. "Child Support Laws Should Be Tougher." Family Values: Opposing Viewpoints. San Diego: Greenhaven, 1998.
10-14. Rpt. of "Deadbeat Dads." Reader's Digest. Jan. 1996: 29-34.

Previously published scholarly article reprinted in a collection

Wornen, Henry. "The Father and His Sons." Modern Literature 27 (1995): 179-85.
Rpt. in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism. Ed. Michael Stewart.
Vol. 89. Detroit: Gale, 1999. 404-10.

Magazine article, no author given

"Fathers Confused by Changing Family Roles." USA Today Oct. 1980: 5.

Magazine article with an author

Gold, Jeannye. "When Fathers Raise Children Alone." U.S. News and World Report 12 Apr. 1999: 51-52.

Scholarly journal article (volume number goes after journal name; if journal does not use continuous page numbers for the year, add issue number after volume number, example 11.3)

Larson, Eric. "Cross-Cultural Studies of Fatherhood." Journal of Marriage and the Family 11 (1998): 212-18.

Newspaper article with author

Schorr, Burt, Jr.. "States Cracking Down on Fathers Dodging Child-Support Payments." Wall Street Journal 26 Jan. 1993, eastern ed.: 33.

Government document

United States. Dept. of Justice. Child Support Payment Laws.
Washington: GPO, 2007.

Film or video recording

When Fathers Desert Families. Prod. Project Hope. Videocassette. Maxwell, 2002.

Continued on Back

Works Cited - ONLINE SOURCES (The online version has additional examples. library.austincc.edu/help/MLA)

- When two dates are listed in a citation, the first one is the publication date; the second is when you accessed it.
- If a URL for an article from a database is very long, just list the basic URL for the database first page.

Full-text periodical article from an online database to which the library subscribes

Box, Scott. "One Father's Unique Perspective." Newsweek 5 Mar. 1999: 38.

MasterFILE Premier. EBSCO. Austin Community Coll. Lib., Austin, TX. 12 Feb. 2002 <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.

Scholarly journal article from an online database to which the library subscribes (volume number goes after journal name)

Gerry, Judy O. "Balancing Employment and Fatherhood." Journal of Family Issues 18 (1997): 386-402. Sociological Collection. EBSCO. Austin Community Coll. Lib., Austin, TX. 21 July 2001 <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.

Newspaper article from an online subscription database

Griest, Stephanie Elizondo. "Program Offers Help for Young Texas Fathers." Austin American-Statesman. 27 Apr. 1999: E4. InfoTrac Newspapers. Gale. Austin Community Coll. Lib., Austin, TX. 21 Apr. 2002 <<http://find.galegroup.com>>.

Work reprinted in a collection (give information about where originally published first, then about reprint source)

O'Neale, Sondra. "Fathers, Gods, and Religion: Perceptions of Christianity and Ethnic Faith in James Baldwin." Critical Essays on James Baldwin. Ed. Fred Stanley and Nancy Burt. N.p.: Hall, 1988: 125-43. Rpt. in Contemporary Literary Criticism. Austin Community Coll. Lib., Austin, TX. 12 Dec 2001 <<http://galenet.galegroup.com>>.

Newspaper article with author from free online source

Willison, Marilyn Murray. "Family Issues." Washington Post 1 May 2002. 2 May 2002 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A146-2002May2.html>>.

Online encyclopedia, no author given

"Parent." Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. 2003. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 13 Mar. 2003 <<http://search.eb.com>>.

World Wide Web site (Give general title of web site, if known, after title of particular page)

Sheppard, Lisa. "Father Involvement Shows Positive Outcomes." Urban Programs Resource Network. Apr. 2001. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 29 May 2003 <<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/news030529.html>>.

World Wide Web page with "missing" information (Often all the information asked for in the above example isn't there. Here there was no author, publication date or publisher.)

"Why Fathers Are Getting Child Custody More." 30 June 2004 <<http://www.geocities.com/~dadpower>>.

If you have questions, ask the librarian for help.

Go to library.austincc.edu/help/ask.htm for ways to contact a librarian in person, by phone, chat or IM.