Research Paper Information Packet

Information Included
• MLA Format
• How the first page should look
• How the Works Cited should look
• When & What to Cite
• Research Paper Outline & Supporting Paragraph
MLA Style – Sonoma Valley High School

Be sure to Double Space all entries (shown with 1.5 spacing due to space constraints)

BOOKS

| --- | --- |

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author (Last Name, First Name)</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

MAGAZINE ARTICLE
(From a Print Source)


Sonoma Valley High School

January 2010
# MLA Style - Sonoma Valley High School

## MAGAZINE ARTICLE
(From an Electronic Database)


## NEWSPAPER ARTICLE
(From a Print Source)


## NEWSPAPER ARTICLE
(From an Electronic Database)


### INTERNET ARTICLES


  - **Title of article:** “MLA Made Easy.”
  - **Web Site:** *MLA Citation Style.*
  - **Date of Access:** (day month year)

* Not all information may be available. If no date use n.d. If no publisher, use n.p.; use n. pag. if no pagination given.

### NO AUTHOR


### AUTHOR


### SCHOLARLY JOURNAL
(From an Electronic Subscription Database)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEW IN PERSON</td>
<td>Miller, Susan. Personal interview. 25 July 2009.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Cited


Miller, Susan. Personal interview. 25 July 2009.


**Parenthetical Documentation**

- Parenthetical documentation is also known as “internal documentation”
- It tells your reader where you got your information
- Appears in the text of your paper

Parenthetical Documentation: MLA Style Diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citing a source when the author’s name is in your sentence.</th>
<th>List only the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to Jim Smith, “Pit bulls are bad dogs to own”</td>
<td>According to Jim Smith, “Pit bulls are bad dogs to own” (82).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Citing a book in a research paper. Example: you wish to cite page 200 in a book by author David Smith | Author and page number (Smith 200). |

| Citing a website with an author but no page numbers. The author is Kenneth Fitzgerald. | Author and if given, page or section number of a website. (Fitzgerald) |

| Citing a website without an author but with page numbers. The Internet article is called “All About Elvis.” | First word or two in article title in quotes. Page or section numbers, if given. (“All About” 17) |

No page number: use author’s last name

No author: use shortened title (main words) in quotes.

If several facts from the same page of a source are used in a row in the research paper, place the parenthetical documentation after the last fact.
13. **Type a rough draft**

Follow MLA format.

Page number on the first page is optional.

---

Susie Smith

Mr. Johnson

English 120

12 April 2010

Princess Diana: The People’s Princess

In his eulogy at her death, Edmond Spencer remembers that

“Diana, named after the goddess of hunting, was ironically one of
the most hunted people in the 20th Century” (Zamudio 5).

Diana. She was a beloved figure to Britons, from her shy,
sideways glance to the sea of bouquets marking her grave in 1997.

Although she was a commoner and died before the age of 40,
Princess Diana contributed greatly to the 20th Century, living up to
her title “The People’s Princess.”

Princess Diana was a commoner at heart. After marrying
Prince Charles and becoming a royal, she never forgot those
less fortunate. She brought focus to AIDS and land mine removal as
12. Complete a Works Cited page

Make sure to alphabetize entries and double-space.

Don’t forget to number the page.

Works Cited


Be sure to allow a 1” margin on both sides of your paper. For the second line of each source, indent ½” or 5 spaces.
When a Citation or Reference is Necessary

There are several situations in which it is virtually always necessary to provide a reference or a citation for the sentence or paragraph (or phrase/specific fact if different parts of the sentence were gathered from different sources).

If a statement meets any of the following criteria, a citation or reference is typically needed:

- The statement refers to obscure facts, or information that is not commonly known ("The company's third president, John Smith, grew the company's revenue by thirty percent in his first year, and at least ten percent each year thereafter")
- The information has been gained from the results of a scientific study ("The research performed by Smith and Smith indicates that when fed cocoa on a regular basis, baby newts turn brown")
- The statement is a direct quote from another source, including speeches or multimedia ("Sheri Bo-Beri told the cameraman to 'take a break and have another sandwich' before she punched him")
- The statement includes statistics that the writer did not calculate him or herself ("A whopping 42% of the competitors ate more than seventeen burgers, which adds up to more than three times the daily recommended allowance of fat for an individual")
- The statement refers to a particular line of poetry or prose, or a very specific incident in a novel ("Line six of Smith's final sonnet is considerably less imaginative than the sixth line in her first sonnet")
- The statement provides an argument that was developed by someone else ("Existentialism is the dominant school of thought among authors with staying power")

When a Fact Should Not be Cited

Some information that is necessary to discuss in research papers does not need to be referenced. For instance, if the information communicated in the sentence or paragraph meets any of the following criteria, a specific citation is typically not necessary (although it may be a useful resource for the bibliography, if required):

- The information is common knowledge ("There are 365 days in one year")
- The information is very general or vague ("Some boys are tall")
- The statement is subjective in nature ("I think he felt like a failure")
- The topic has been discussed in-depth during class and is considered expected basic knowledge on the topic ("These species of amphibians are asexual...")
- There is no new information contained in the sentence, or the citation has previously been given for the specific fact mentioned ("As noted previously, there were three successful experiments that July")

Additional Tips for Knowing When a Reference is Required

Many teachers will require that information meeting the following criteria is also cited, particularly in college-level academic papers or work intended for publication (check with the individual professor):

- The statement or paragraph paraphrases content or ideas developed by someone else, including in spoken conversation, informal communications, and multimedia
- The statement could be challenged or argued, or if the information sounds like an opinion but is a documented fact
- The statement incorporates contradictory claims, perhaps from conflicting research studies
- The sentence refers to a specific conversation, incident, insinuation, or event documented or presented elsewhere, such as in a book or in a television report
- The statement leaves the writer unsure as to whether the information is considered common knowledge, even among a population of educated readers in the target audience
When should I cite a source in my Research Paper?

When to Cite a Source
You should use evidence (citations) any time you make a claim that is not based on a well-known fact or common knowledge.

- You make a claim that could be challenged.
- You quote somebody.
- You make a specific claim that is not common knowledge.
- You paraphrase information from a source (give the meaning but change the wording).
- Offer an authoritative (expert) opinion.
- You got an idea from somebody else, even through email or conversation.

Examples of Claims You Should Support
- Hot water can freeze faster than cold water.
- Poodles are friendlier than Dalmatians.
- American Chestnut trees are nearly extinct.
- Eating while driving is more dangerous than talking on the cell phone while driving.
- Thomas Edison invented a vote counter.

When You Don't Need to Cite a Source

Examples of Common Knowledge or Well-Known Facts
Common knowledge is basically a fact that practically everyone knows, like the fact that George Washington was a U.S. president.

- Bears hibernate in the winter.
- Fresh water freezes at 32 degrees F.
- Many trees shed their leaves in the fall.

A well-know fact is something that many people know, but it is also something that a reader could look up easily if he/she didn't know.

- It's best to plant flowers in the early spring.
- Holland is famous for its tulips.
- Canada has a multilingual population.

A good rule of thumb for any writer is to go ahead and use a citation when you're not certain whether or not it is necessary. The only risk in doing this is littering your paper with unnecessary citations that will drive your teacher crazy. Simply trust your own judgment.
How to Outline a Research Paper

Listed below is the basic structure of research paper outline. This outline is based on a paper that will eventually be 3-5 pages. Review this document before beginning to write your paper.

1. Introduction / Thesis (1 Paragraph)
   a. This includes your thesis, hooks the reader and outlines your argument
   b. This can include a powerful quote, short story or surprising fact

2. Background (1 – 2 Paragraphs)
   b. Provide information reader should know before proving your thesis

3. Supporting Paragraph / Evidence (3 – 4 Paragraphs)
   a. Evidence/facts that support your thesis
   b. Explanation of how evidence proves your thesis

4. Conclusion (1 Paragraph)
   a. Wrap up your argument
   b. Do not repeat introduction or thesis word-for-word

How to Write a Supporting Paragraph

Use the guideline below when writing your supporting paragraphs. The format for writing supporting paragraphs in a History paper is different than the format used when writing an English paper. Please review this carefully.

1. Topic Sentence / Argument
   a. Presents topic of paragraph
   b. Assertive statement

2. Evidence / Facts / Quote
   a. Research that supports your argument
   b. Quote should be no longer than 2 sentences

3. Analysis / Commentary
   a. Your personal commentary on information you are providing
   b. Tell the reader why you are including the evidence

4. Evidence / Facts / Quote / Counter-Argument
   a. Research that supports your argument OR opinions of opponents of your argument that strengthen your paper by giving the reader a balanced view (if you use a counter-argument, you must make sure that your commentary clearly demonstrates that this view is not as strong as your own)
   b. Quote should be no longer than 2 sentences

5. Analysis / Commentary
   a. Your personal commentary on information you are providing
   b. Tell the reader why you are including the evidence

6. Evidence / Facts / Quote
   a. Research that supports your argument
   b. Quote should be no longer than 2 sentences

7. Concluding Statement / Link to Thesis
   a. Finish with a firm connection of your argument to your thesis
   b. Tell the reader how this argument supports your thesis

- NOTES -
• You should have a ratio of 3 pieces of evidence for every 2 sentences of commentary
• Any evidence/fact/quote must have a parenthetical citation! (Even if the information is in your own words)
EXAMPLE OF A SUPPORTING PARAGRAPH

THESIS STATEMENT:

The University of Texas (UT) provides a diversity of social, academic and athletic opportunities for students. This can be a powerful positive force, but it can also detract from students’ abilities to manage their time. More attention to time management training is needed to ensure that all UT students graduate with the ability to succeed in their chosen careers.

SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH:

While there is little doubt that extracurricular opportunities at UT are a positive and critical component of students’ overall development, providing students with time management skills is equally important. One only needs to look at past alumni to see the validity of this claim. As famous alum George W. Bush states, “I sometimes overdid it when I was at UT, missing out on valuable academic opportunities. Fortunately, I buckled down in my senior year and managed to make a “C” average and things have worked out fine since” (227). In this example, George W. Bush is arguing that the detrimental effects of extracurricular excesses can be rectified in the senior year of college. While George W. Bush is certainly correct when he implies that it is never too late for a student to try to raise his or her GPA, it is probably better for students to attempt to balance academic and other activities early in their college career. Also, Bush assumes that all students can achieve what they want with a “C” average, but many students need higher GPAs in order to apply to professional school, graduate school and for graduate-entry jobs. While extracurricular activities are often a positive and critical component of student life at UT, administrators should consider instigating a time management education and awareness course for all incoming freshmen. After all, not every UT graduate will be as lucky as George W. Bush; if our students are going to succeed in business and higher education, we need to first ensure they understand the importance of time management.