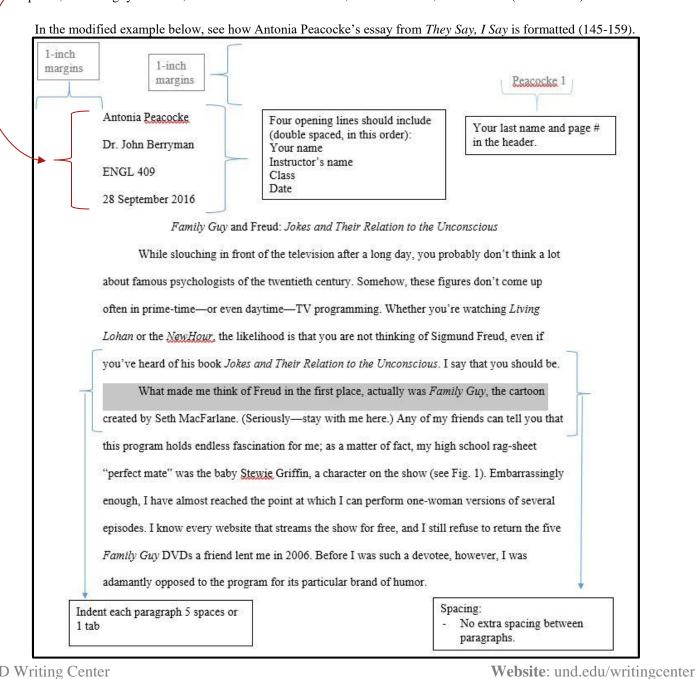# Modern Language Association (MLA) 8th Edition Format and Documentation

This handout covers the most common, basic elements of MLA 8 formatting and documentation. For further information, consult the MLA Manual, 8th edition, available at the Chester Fritz Library, or visit the MLA website: http://www.mla.org.

Formatting Your Paper

- ✓ **Margins:** All margins (top, bottom, and sides) set at 1 inch.
- ✓ **Font and Typeface:** Times New Roman (TNF) and 12-point font.
- ✓ **Page Numbering:** Provide page number in the top right header preceeded by your last name by selecting insert > page numbers (these should also be TNR, 12 pt. font).
- ✓ **Spacing:** Unless otherwise indicated the entire document should be double-spaced (including the Works Cited page). Adjust Microsoft Word's default line spacing: Home> Paragraph> Line Spacing Options> Spacing> After> 0 pt.
- ✓ **Title Page:** MLA does not require a title page; instead, the first page of the paper should begin with four lines, double-spaced, indicating: your name, name of the course instructor, name of course, and due date (in this order).

In the modified example below, see how Antonia Peacocke's essay from *They Say, I Say* is formatted (145-159).

1-inch margins

1-inch margins

Peacocke 1

Antonia Peacocke

Dr. John Berryman

ENGL 409

28 September 2016

Four opening lines should include (double spaced, in this order):
Your name
Instructor's name
Class
Date

Your last name and page # in the header.

Family Guy and Freud: *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*

While slouching in front of the television after a long day, you probably don't think a lot about famous psychologists of the twentieth century. Somehow, these figures don't come up often in prime-time—or even daytime—TV programming. Whether you're watching *Living Lohan* or the *NewHour*, the likelihood is that you are not thinking of Sigmund Freud, even if you've heard of his book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. I say that you should be.

What made me think of Freud in the first place, actually was *Family Guy*, the cartoon created by Seth MacFarlane. (Seriously—stay with me here.) Any of my friends can tell you that this program holds endless fascination for me; as a matter of fact, my high school rag-sheet "perfect mate" was the baby Stewie Griffin, a character on the show (see Fig. 1). Embarrassingly enough, I have almost reached the point at which I can perform one-woman versions of several episodes. I know every website that streams the show for free, and I still refuse to return the five *Family Guy* DVDs a friend lent me in 2006. Before I was such a devotee, however, I was adamantly opposed to the program for its particular brand of humor.

Indent each paragraph 5 spaces or 1 tab

Spacing:
- No extra spacing between paragraphs.

Creating the Works Cited Page

- ✓ **Page Numbering:** Continue the page numbering from the main body of your paper.
- ✓ **Title:** "Works Cited" should be centered and one inch from the top of the page.
- ✓ **Spacing:** The Works Cited should also be double spaced.
- ✓ **Indenting:** The only lines of the citation that needs to be indented are the those beyond the first line if the citation is multiple lines long (see sample below).
- ✓ **Organization:** Sources should be listed alphabetically by the author's last name. If there is no author, use the first word in the title of the source other than *A, An,* or *The* (see sample below).
- ✓ **Last name first:** All sources, if they have an author, should be listed last name first followed by a comma and then the author's first name (see sample below).

Here is a sample of Lisa James' Works Cited page that she included at the end of her essay.

James 1

Works Cited

Barr, David. *The New Testament Story.* Wadsworth Publishing, 2008.

Burd-Sharps, Sarah, and Kristen Lewis. "Inequality: Shifting the Spotlight from Wall Street to
    Your Street." Poverty/Privilege: A Reader for Writers, edited by Connie Snyder Mick,
    Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 98-101

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man.* Vintage International, 1947.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. "The Art of Quoting." *They Say/I Say: The Moves That
    Matter in Academic Writing,* 3rd ed., W.W. Norton & Co., 2014, pp. 42-50.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses.* Oxford UP, 1992.

Kirkman, Robert. *The Walking Dead.* Number 100, Vintage, 2012.

Murakami, Haruki. *Kafka on the Shore.* Translated by Philip Gabriel, Vantage International,
    2006.

Fassler, Joe. "Cormac McCarthy's The Road May Have the Scariest Passage in All of Literature:
    Benjamin Percy, author of Red Moon, makes the case." The Atlantic, 14 May 2013.
    https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/05/cormac-mccarthys-i-the-
    road-i-may-have-the-scariest-passage-in-all-of-literature/275834/.

Schulz, Katheryn. "Evidence." *Ways of Reading,* Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014, pp. 362-379.

Stevens, Wallace. *The Collected Poems of Wallace.* Vintage, 1990.

UND Writing Center   **Website**: und.edu/writingcenter
Merrifield Hall Room 12   **Hours:** M-F 10am-4pm; M-R 7-9pm
(701) 777-2795   **Email:** writing.center@und.edu

Sample of Most Common Works Cited Page Entries

- ✓ **An Article in Scholarly Journal**
  - ➢ **Database Journal**
    Author's Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Article." *Journal Title*, Volume number, Issue number, Month or Season Year of Publication, Page numbers. *Database Title,* URL or DOI.

    Clarke, Michael Tavel. "'I Feel Close to Myself': Solipsism and U.S. Imperialism in Tim O'Brien's The Things They Carried." *College Literature*, vol. 40, no. 2, Spring 2013, pp. 130-54. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/lit.2013.0018.

- ✓ **A Book by a Single Author**
  - ➢ **Print Book**
    Author's Lastname, Firstname. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year of publication/Copyright date.

    O'Brien, Tim. *Going After Cacciato*. Dell Publishing, 1978.

- ✓ **Work in an Anthology or Compliation**
    Author's Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Work" or *Title of Work*. *Anthology Title*, edited by Editor's Firstname Lastname, Publisher, Year of publication/Copyright date, page numbers.

    Foer, Joshua. "The End of Remembering." Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers, 10th ed., Edited by David Bartholomae, Anthony Petrosky, and Stacey Waite, Bedford/Martin's, 2014, pp. 160-175.

- ✓ **A Book by Two or More Authors**
  - ➢ **2 Authors**
    Author 1's Lastname, Firstname, and Author 2's Firstname Lastname. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year of publication/Copyright date.

    Hughes, Linda K., and Michael Lund. *Victorian Publishing and Mrs. Gaskell's Work*. UP of Virginia, 1999.

  - ➢ **3+ Authors**
    Author 1's Lastname, Firstname, et al. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year of publication/Copyright date.

    Davis, Alex, et al. *The Essential Glossary: Irish Studies*, edited by John Goodby, Arnold, 2003.

- ✓ **A Nonperiodical Web Publication (including web sites sponsored by newspapers, magazines, news organizations, etc.)**
  - ➢ **Web-only magazine or magazine Web site**
    Author's Lastname, Firstname. "Title Article." *Web Site Title*, Day Month Year of publication, page numbers [if any], URL.

    Alston, Joshua. "Puffy Combs Revives 'Raisin.'" *Newsweek*, 24 Feb. 2008, www.newsweek.com/puffy-combs-revives-raisin-93493.

  - ➢ **Newspaper Web site**
    Author's Lastname, Firstname. "Title Article." *Newspaper Title*, Day Month Year of publication, URL.

    Wren, Celia. "Family Bonds, Music Play Together in Quiara Alegria Hudes's 'Water by the Spoonful.'" *The Washington Post*, 28 Feb. 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theatre_dance/family-bonds-music-play-together-in-quiara-alegria-hudness-water-by-the-spoonful/2014/02/27/941f00de-9b38-11e3-8112-52fdf646027b_story.html.

UND Writing Center   **Website**: und.edu/writingcenter
Merrifield Hall Room 12   **Hours:** M-F 10am-4pm; M-R 7-9pm
(701) 777-2795   **Email:** writing.center@und.edu

Most Common In-text Citations

Author's name appears in the sentence:

In "Hunger as Ideology," Susan Bordo claims that women are inundated with advertisements in which "food is constructed as a sexual object of desire and eating is legitimated as much more than a purely nutritive activity" (150).

Author's name does not appear in the sentence:

We demand images of youth because "sagging flesh is almost the ultimate signifier of decay and disorder" (Bordo 176).

Block quotes:

"When a prose quotation takes up more than four lines of your essay or includes a paragraph break, indent it ½ inch from the left margin [1 tab] to create a block quotation. *Do not enclose the quotation in quotation marks, since these are implied by the formatting" (Mays 2270, emphasis original).*

Graff and Birkenstein explain how some writers do not summarize effectively:

> Many writers shy away from summarizing—perhaps because they don't want to take the trouble to go abck to the text in question and wreste with what it says, or because they fear that devoting too much time to other people's ideas will take away from their own. When assigned to write a response to an article, such writers might offer their own views on the article *topic* while hardly mentioning what the article itself argues or says. At the opposite extreme are those who do nothing *but* summarize. Lacking confidence, perhaps, in their own ideas, these writers so overload teir texts with summaries of others' ideas that their own voice gets lost. And since these summaries are not animate by the writers' own interests, they often read like mere lists of the things that X thinks or Y says—with no clear focus. (30)

Two Authors:

In the end of *The Gold Rush,* the main character George was able to find his wife even though she was swept away by the current (Benson and Mumford 26).

Three or more authors:

If a source has three or more authors, use the last name of the first author followed by "et al.":

We are told that "The earliest surviving architectural forms in Ireland are the remains of ring forts" (Davis et al. 13).

Corporate Author/No Identified Author:

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America notes that despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, "the number of people doing creative writing—of any genre, not exclusively literary works—increased substantially between 1982 and 2002" (3).

OR

Despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, "the number of people doing creative writing—of any genre, not exlusively literary works—increased substantially between 1982 and 2002" (*Reading* 3).

References

Mays, Kelly J.. "Quotation, Citation, and Documentation." *The Norton Introduction to Literature,* 12th ed., W.W. Norton & Co., 2017,

pp. 2268-2294.

MLA. *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed., The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.