

# MLA Style: The Basics

This handout is designed to provide an overview of **MLA 9th edition**. It will address the basic formatting of the body and Works Cited page of a MLA paper, as well as give an entry point on how to use in-text citations. It should **not** be considered a substitute of more complex or thorough style guides, but rather as a resource for the most essential elements of using MLA formatting and citations.

All information is adapted from the Purdue OWL MLA style guide.

## Formatting

- Generally, 12 pt, double spaced text and a formal, readable font like Times New Roman are recommended for MLA style.
- Use 1" margins all around.
- On the first page, create a **header** flush with the left margin. The header should include four items: 1). Your first and last name 2). Your professor's name 3). The class name; and, 4). The date.
- Give your paper a title. The title will be centered on the page. It should directly follow the header with no spaces, and it will precede the body of the paper also without a space.
- Format your pagination as your last name and the number of the page directly following it.
- Do **not** include a cover page. The first page of your paper will also serve as the first page of your document overall.

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ENGL 4751-001  
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Kate Bush "As an Expressive Form:" Examining Intersections of Authorship and Readership in  
title "Wuthering Heights" and *The Kick Inside*

On January 20th, 1978, EMI Records released the song "Wuthering Heights," attributed to a then-unknown artist named Kate Bush. Written when Bush was 18, the song is based on the novel of the same name, though she was inspired not by an initial reading of the book but by a film adaptation she happened to catch late one night in March of 1977. Bush would eventually read the novel to assure that her interpretation of the story was faithful, and it was these multimodal readings that shaped the song as we know it today: a four minute track in which the

*Annotations: A pink asterisk points to 'Williams 1'. A pink squiggly line points to the header information. A pink arrow points from the 'title' annotation to the title text. A pink arrow points from the 'title' annotation to the 'Did You Know?' box.*

Handout  
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### Did You Know?

MLA Style is used primarily in the humanities. "MLA" is the abbreviation of the Modern Language Association, the premier organization for literary and linguistic disciplines.

# MLA Style: The Basics

## Works Cited Page

The Works Cited Page is another essential aspect of MLA style. On this page, you will compile all of the sources you directly reference in the body of your text. The Works Cited Page, like the References page in APA, seeks to provide the reader with the easiest and most streamlined receptacle of all cited works. This is mainly for attribution purposes, but it also allows for further or more in-depth reading on the topic.

### General Formatting

- The Works Cited Page is a separate page that directly precedes the last page of the body of your paper.
- The **title** “Works Cited Page” will be centered above the body of the page.
- Your Works Cited Page will include the same formatting as your paper (in terms of font, margins, and spacing).
- The Works Cited Page differs from the rest of the paper in its use of **hanging indents**: each entry on the page is flush with the left margin, but subsequent lines will be indented a half-inch from the page.
- Each entry is listed in alphabetical order. The author’s last name is listed first. For electronic sources without authors (i.e, a webpage), the source is identified by its title in quotation marks.

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Works Cited

Bush, Kate. *The Kick Inside*. EMI, 1978.

Jovanovic, Rob. *Kate Bush: The Biography*. Little, Brown Book Group, 2015.

Losseff, Nicky. “Cathy’s Homecoming and the Other World: Kate Bush’s ‘Wuthering Heights.’” *Popular Music*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1999, pp. 227–40. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/853603>. Accessed 3 May 2023.

Mankowitz, Gered. “Photographing Kate Bush.” <https://www.snapgalleries.com/portfolio-items/kate-bush-by-gered-mankowitz/>. Accessed 3 May 2023.

McGrath, Rachel. “Kate Bush Sent This Handwritten Letter And ‘Wuthering Heights’ Lyrics To A Young Fan (PICS).” *The Huffington Post UK*, 27 November 2014, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/27/kate-bush-letter-fan-wuthering-heights\\_n\\_6231076.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/27/kate-bush-letter-fan-wuthering-heights_n_6231076.html). Accessed 3 May 2023.

“Orientalism.” *New World Encyclopedia*, <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Orientalism#:~:text=Orientalism%20is%20the%20study%20of.and%20peoples%20by%20Western%20scholars>. Accessed 3 May 2023.

Works Cited Page Example

### Entry Examples

“Orientalism.” *New World Encyclopedia*, <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Orientalism#:~:text=Orientalism%20is%20the%20study%20of.and%20peoples%20by%20Western%20scholars>. Accessed 3 May 2023.

This is an example of a web page entry. As there is no author to this source, we cite it according to the name of the web page itself.

Jovanovic, Rob. *Kate Bush: The Biography*, Little, Brown Book Group, 2015.

Here’s an example of a book source. The basic format for citing a book is: Author, Title of Book, Publisher, and Publication Date.

# MLA Style: The Basics

## In-Text Citations

MLA Style is mainly used in the humanities, particularly in English Studies. As a result, it is primarily focused on **where** in a text the information is from, and **who** says it. This is reflected in the use of **in-text citations** that emphasize an author's name and the relevant page number(s).

What are the different kinds of in-text citations?

### Citing a Source with Page Numbers

Many sources you will cite in MLA have page numbers. The most common sources that contain page numbers are **books** and **articles from scholarly journals**. You may also cite **a short story** contained in an anthology, a **dissertation**, or even certain **web sources**.

**Example 1:** Catherine's reasoning for her connection to Heathcliff, she says, is "because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (Brontë 72).

**Example 2:** D.F. McKenzie's recontextualization of texts by asserting that "forms affect meaning," pragmatically opens up the field of study to "non-book texts...[and] all textual ephemera as a record of cultural change" (37).

**Explanation:** We cite according to the author's last name for two reasons. First, it is how we provide proper attribution to a particular author. Second, this allows the in-text citation to point directly to the **Works Cited Page** so that the reader can quickly refer to the source we are citing. Because the Works Cited Page follows certain conventions (author's last name first, each entry listed alphabetically), our in-text citation reflects this organization precisely.

**Explanation:** Your parenthetical in-text citation will usually contain two items: the author's last name, and the page number where the information comes from. If you use the author's name in the sentence, however, you only have to include the page number since you've already attributed the information to the author within the actual content of your sentence. Invoking the author's name in your sentence and associating it with the information you're communicating is called a **signal phrase**.

### Citing a Source Without Page Numbers

What happens if the source you are citing does *not* have page numbers? The most common instance of this is if you are citing a **web page**. In this case, you will cite according to the name of the web page. If the name of the web page is particularly long, shorten it to a noun phrase.

**Example:** Orientalism as an ideology is an artifact of nineteenth century British imperialism ("Orientalism").