# MLA Basic for Research Papers

MLA Basic is a concise guide to crafting college research papers in the style of the Modern Language Association (MLA). It largely follows the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed., (MLA 2009), drawing on features found in the MLA's flagship journal *PMLA*.

MLA style is unchanged with the latest edition of the MLA handbook (2016) except for the reference format. The traditional form for references has served for sixty years and is retained in *MLA Basic*. The MLA handbook has a long history of missteps and reversals and that seems likely with this edition as well.
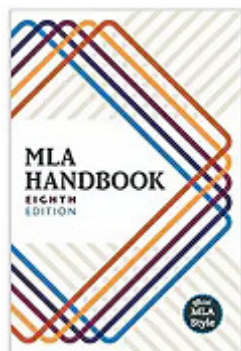
WARNING! The Modern Language Association, through its *Handbook*, supports practices that are not acceptable in the research community. Namely, it requires sources that cannot be verified to be included in a reference list (in MLA speak, the list of *Works Cited*). Journal editors today routinely verify electronic sources in a reference list, and if they cannot be found they must be deleted before publication.

The **APA Publication Manual (2009)** notes "a reference list includes only references that document the article and provide recoverable data" (p. 180). Nonrecoverable sources, such as personal communications, may be noted in text citations but not as references.

The **Turabian Manual** (subtitle: "*Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*", 2013) instructs users to "cite conversations, letters, e-mail or text messages, and the like only in parenthetical citations" (p. 258). Common sense dictates that a source that cannot be recovered and verified lacks credibility and authority, is no source at all.

MLA Handbook? It is not appropriate to encourage students to follow practices widely deemed unacceptable in the research community. Therefore, the primary reference for this style sheet is the *MLA Handbook* 7th edition. Unless otherwise noted, citations are to this edition. Most features of the style are unchanged; the section on "Ephemeral Sources" is adapted from Chicago style. The subheading styles come from the MLA's journal, *PMLA*.

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MLA style uses a hybrid, author-page style of parenthetical (in parentheses) text citation combined with a Chicago style bibliography format for references. Other styles using parenthetical citations follow an author-date format (e.g., the American Psychological Association).

🔲👉 **style.mla.org** presents the entire MLA *Handbook* (2016) online, complete with sample papers. Great patience is required for study.

1.0 MECHANICS OF WRITING (TEXT RULES)

The Mechanics of Writing follows common usage for punctuation and spelling as well as rules unique to MLA style.

1.1 ABBREVIATIONS

■ "Abbreviations are used regularly in the list of works cited and in tables but rarely in the text of a research paper (except within parentheses). In choosing abbreviations, keep your audience in mind. While economy of space is important, clarity is more so. Spell out a term if the abbreviation may puzzle your readers" (MLA 234).

- Never begin a sentence with a lowercase abbreviation. Avoid beginning a sentence with an acronym.

- Common Latin abbreviations such as *etc.*, *e.g.*, and *i.e.* may be used **only** in parentheses. In the text write *for example* (e.g.); *and so forth* (etc.); *that is* (i.e.).

- Spell out the names of countries, states, counties, provinces, territories, bodies of water, mountains, in the text.

- Most prefixes to places, such as Fort, North, Port, South, are spelled out in the text; as are suffixes such as Peak or Fork. Write: North Platte, Fort Collins, Port Huron, South Bend, Long's Peak.

- When writing initials, the traditional format is still preferred—put a period and a single space after each. For example, write: J. S. Bach, E. E. Cummings, C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkhien.

Acronyms. "The trend in abbreviation is to use neither periods after letters nor spaces between letters, especially for abbreviations made up of all capital letters" (MLA 234). For example, write: CA, PhD, MLA, CD-ROM, US, UK.

- If an acronym is commonly used as a word, it does not require explanation (IQ, LSD, FBI, ESP).

- A term must be fully written the first time it is used, thereafter just the acronym is used.

- Use two-letter postal codes for US states and Canadian provinces in references only (GA, PQ, etc.).
- Write the plural form of an acronym without an apostrophe (e.g. some MBAs command high salaries).

NB> The common practice in research writing to spell out the name or phrase to be abbreviated followed by the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, just the acronym is used. For example, the Modern Language Association (MLA) publishes a journal. The reverse is also works—the MLA (Modern Language Association) publishes a journal.

1.2 CAPITALIZATION (TITLES OF WORKS)
■ Capitalization in MLA style is mostly conventional, with the exceptions noted below. Generally, specific designations are capitalized, as in the *American West*. But more general designations--or designations used as adjectives--are lowercased: The western United States, eastern Europe.

- The names of ethnic or racial groups are capitalized if they represent a geographical region or language group. For example, *Hispanic, Asian, African American, Appalachia*n.
- Terms based only on color, direction, size, habitat, customs, or local usage are usually lowercased.

NB> When in doubt, and when a good guide to grammar and usage is no help, follow whatever practice appeals to you but *be consistent* throughout your text!

Heading caps. "The rules for capitalizing are strict. In a title or subtitle, capitalize the first word, the last word, and all principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms" (MLA 86). These are commonly referred to as *heading or headline cap*s. Do not capitalize the following unless they begin a title or follow a colon:
- Articles: *a, an, th*e.
- Prepositions: *against, between, in, of , t*o.
- Conjunctions: *and, but, for, nor, or, so, ye*t.
- Infinitive: *to.*

Sentence caps capitalize just the first word, the first word after a colon, and any proper nouns in a heading or title.
- Use heading caps for the titles of books and articles used in the text and in references.
- Use sentence caps for titles of most non-English works.
- Use sentence caps for lower level run-in/paragraph subheadings.

NB> MLA style uses heading caps for the titles of sources—books, chapters, or articles— both in references and in the text. Titles in French, German, Italian, Spanish, or Latin are more conventionally rendered in sentence caps (capitalize the first word, proper nouns [according to the convention of the language], and first word after a colon).

1.3 ITALICS (UNDERLINING) & QUOTATION MARKS
■ **Italics.** The MLA *Handbook* no longer recommends underlining where italics might be used.

- Emphasize a keyword or phrase in your text by placing it in italics. The next time the term or phrase is used it should be in plain text.
- Use italics for the titles of books and the names of periodicals in your text and references.
- Use italics for "words and letters that are referred to as words or letters" (MLA 78). For example, write "The term *American Indian* is inclusive of over 500 Federally recognized ethnic communities."
- Use italics for non-English words or terms used in your text. For example, *"Ya-te-hay* is a form of greeting in the Diné (Navajo) language." This practice excludes those words that have become incorporated in the English language, such as laissez-faire, or arroyo.

Within quotations. Emphasis may be added to a word or phrase in a quotation by placing it in italics. When this is done the note [emphasis added] or [italics added] must be inserted in brackets at the end of the quotation (within the quotation marks), or if the emphasis comes at the end of the sentence, in parentheses outside the quotation marks.

Quotation marks. Use quotation marks other than for quotes only in the following circumstances:
- "Place quotation marks around a word or phrase given in a special sense or purposefully misused" (MLA 75). For example, The Population Council criticized the "outrageous" position of the Church on birth control.
- Use quotation marks to enclose a translation of a non-English term in your text. *Addis Abab*a, the name of the capital of Ethiopia, is literally translated "new flower."

1.4 NUMBERS & DATES
■ **Numbers.** If your topic makes little use of numbers, "you may spell out numbers written in one or two words" (MLA 81). Otherwise, use arabic numerals. Write: *one, five, twenty-one, one hundred, eighteen hundred*, but write *5½, 101, 3,810*. If your text has extensive numeric statistical or scientific data, use numerals.

- Hyphenate compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine, compounds with a number as the first element (e.g., three-way lightbulb), and the written form of fractions.

- When numbers or a date are required to open a sentence, write them out. For example: "Five girls and 125 boys tried out for the varsity soccer team." If you can, rewrite the sentence.

- Do not mix numbers written as words with symbols, write out the term for the symbols as well. For example, write: 45%, or forty-five percent; $20 or twenty dollars.

- Do not mix numerals with written numbers when they refer to similar things. For example, "Only 10 of the 150 people on the tour (not ten of the 150 tourists) were willing to visit the city after the riot." But also write: "The President got 1.3 trillion of the 1.6 trillion dollar tax cut he proposed."

- Use numerals with symbols and abbreviations (e.g., %, $, ¢, ft., lbs., p.m., ed. vol.) when these appear frequently in your text or are used in references. For example, write: 25%, $25, 50 lbs., 3rd ed., vol. 5. Otherwise write out numbers with measures in your text (but not in references) when you can do so in three words or less, twenty-five percent, twenty-five dollars, fifty pounds.

Ordinal numbers follow the general rules for numbers. For example, "The window for applications was the third to twenty-third of August." But use numerals if more than two words are needed to write the number. For example, the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* is in its 124th edition. Use only numerals in references (e.g., 2nd ed.).

Inclusive range of numbers. MLA style drops digits in numbers above 99 according to specific rules. This is the process of *eliding* a range of inclusive numbers.

- When writing numbers through 99 give the full digits. For example, write 42-48 not 42-8.

- Page numbers above 99 require only the last two digits of the second number as long as the result is unambiguous. Leading zeros are not dropped in MLA practice. Write pages 1123–24 *not* 1123–1124; write pages 2000–04 *not* 2000–4 nor 2000-2004. Write pages 112–35 and pages 102–21, but write pages 102–08 *not* 102–8.

- Write pages 1,584–621 not pages 1,582–1,621, and certainly not pages 1,584–21.

- Elide dates only when they fall within the same century. Write the years 1865-1917 not 1865-917.

NB> When expressing a range of numerals in text do not use a dash unless the numbers reflect an inclusive range of *date*s, write "to" instead. For example, "The IQ range of the first group was 86 to 112." But also write "The years of the Great Depression, 1930–40, tested America severely."

Full dates when written in the text may be in US format: month day, year (e.g., August 21, 2016); or in universal or European format, day month year (e.g., 21 August 2016). Be consistent throughout the text.

NB> References typically use the day-month-year format; sample references in the MLA *Handbook* and *MLA Basic* use this format.

2.0 PAGE LAYOUT FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Easy to Read? The goal of any research style is clarity of communication. "Effective writing depends as much on clarity and readability as on content" (MLA 49).

- *Page numbers* are required on every page. The page header is the author's last name. These go inside the margin space, one-half inch from the top of the page, next to the right margin.

- *Margins.* One inch margins are required on all four sides of a page. This applies to all pages, and the contents of all pages, but excludes the page number/header.

- *Justification?* "Do not justify the lines of text at the right margin; turn off your word processor's automatic hyphenation feature" (MLA 116). Hyphens introduced to break words and wrap lines can confuse a reader.

- *Typeface* (fonts). The MLA *Handbook* expresses no clear preference. The *Handbook* no longer prefers underlining wherever you might use italics.

- *Space twice after punctuation* at the ends of sentences; space once after colons.

- *Dates* may follow US format (e.g., April 1, 2009) or universal format (1 April 2009), the later is preferred.

- *Indents.* Indent paragraphs one-half inch, except block quotes. Indent block quotes one inch. There are special rules for indenting block quotes that run beyond a single paragraph (see Section 3.4).

- *Block quotes* are required when a quote exceeds four lines in your paper. Indent the quote one inch, paragraphs in block quotes a quarter-inch more.

- *Title page ID block.* This is an essential feature of MLA style—do not improvise!

☞ **MLA Basic** prefers *block paragraph spacing*—block quotes and references are single spaced, double spaced before and after. MLA style requires double spacing everything.

2.1 TITLE & TEXT PAGES

■ The research paper in MLA style begins with a distinctive title page, an MLA trademark. Text pages follow the same general form. The subheadings are not found in the *Handbook* but are common to other styles.
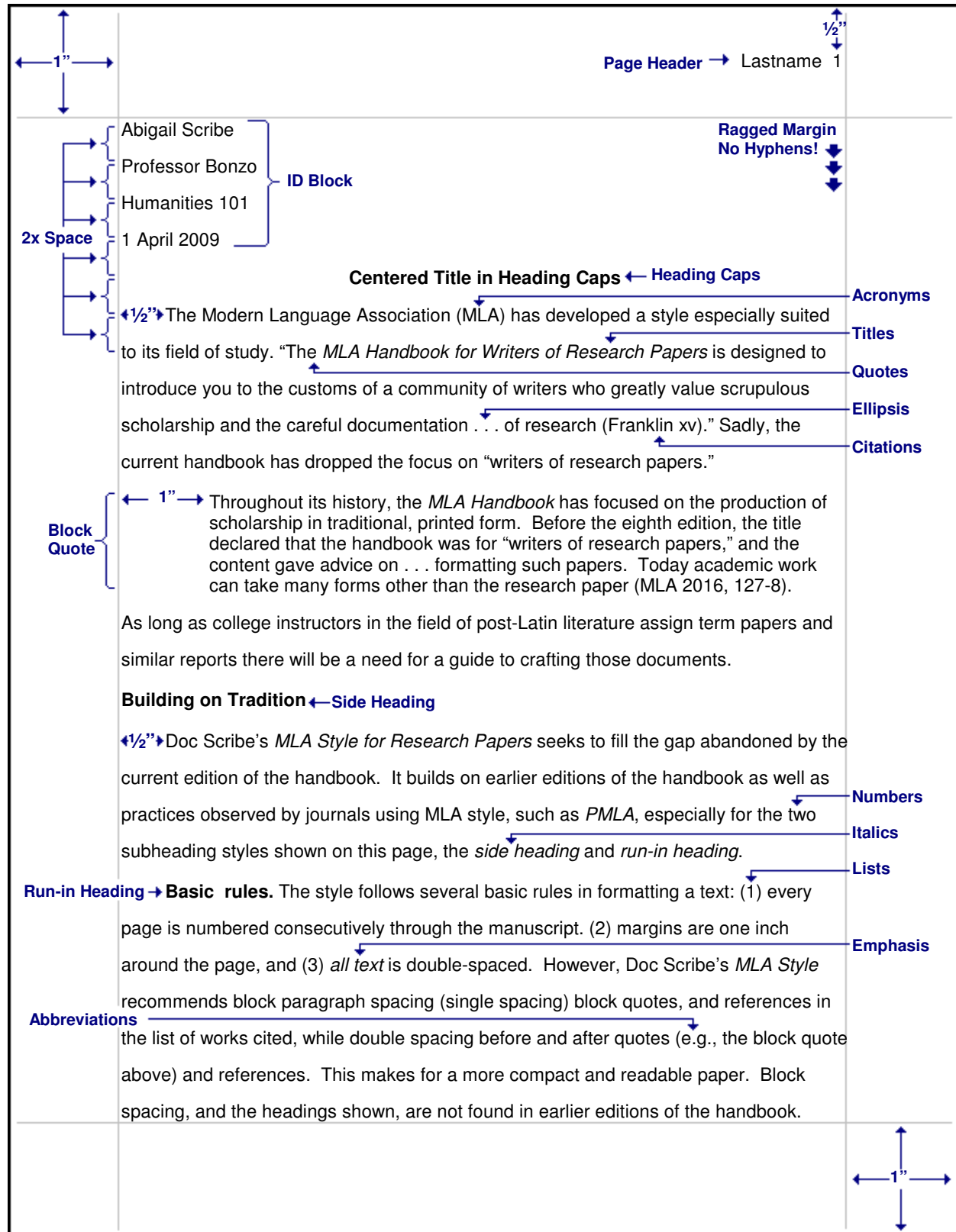
½"

Page Header → Lastname 1

1"

Abigail Scribe

Professor Bonzo **ID Block**

Humanities 101

2x Space 1 April 2009

Ragged Margin No Hyphens!

Centered Title in Heading Caps ← **Heading Caps**

◄½"►The Modern Language Association (MLA) has developed a style especially suited — **Acronyms**

to its field of study. "The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* is designed to — **Titles**

introduce you to the customs of a community of writers who greatly value scrupulous — **Quotes**

scholarship and the careful documentation . . . of research (Franklin xv)." Sadly, the — **Ellipsis**

current handbook has dropped the focus on "writers of research papers." — **Citations**

← **1"** → Throughout its history, the *MLA Handbook* has focused on the production of

Block Quote scholarship in traditional, printed form. Before the eighth edition, the title declared that the handbook was for "writers of research papers," and the content gave advice on . . . formatting such papers. Today academic work can take many forms other than the research paper (MLA 2016, 127-8).

As long as college instructors in the field of post-Latin literature assign term papers and

similar reports there will be a need for a guide to crafting those documents.

Building on Tradition ← **Side Heading**

◄½"►Doc Scribe's *MLA Style for Research Papers* seeks to fill the gap abandoned by the

current edition of the handbook. It builds on earlier editions of the handbook as well as

practices observed by journals using MLA style, such as *PMLA*, especially for the two — **Numbers**

subheading styles shown on this page, the *side heading* and *run-in heading*. — **Italics**

Run-in Heading → **Basic rules.** The style follows several basic rules in formatting a text: (1) every — **Lists**

page is numbered consecutively through the manuscript. (2) margins are one inch

around the page, and (3) *all text* is double-spaced. However, Doc Scribe's *MLA Style* — **Emphasis**

recommends block paragraph spacing (single spacing) block quotes, and references in

Abbreviations the list of works cited, while double spacing before and after quotes (e.g., the block quote

above) and references. This makes for a more compact and readable paper. Block

spacing, and the headings shown, are not found in earlier editions of the handbook.

1"

Fig. 1. Basic format and features of MLA style. 👉 The *ID Block*--name, instructor, course, date--must be presented exactly as shown. Your name is the page header.

2.2 *PMLA* STYLE HEADINGS & LISTS

■ **No headings?** The MLA *Handbook* has no instructions for using headings or subheadings, but the style applied in the MLA's own journal, *PMLA*, does. The austere format should be acceptable to most instructors.

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The MLA *Handbook* makes no provision for headings (or "subheadings" if you prefer) in research papers. However, the MLA's own journal, *PMLA,* does. About half the articles make use of headings, following one of two styles.

[I]

The first style uses roman numerals placed inside brackets to indicate a change in the flow of the text. This style is so austere that most instructors can hardly object; a student need only explain they are just following the example of the MLA's own journal.

[II]

The second style is a bit more ambitious, as shown in the preceding section. This style is widely shared by many major research styles, as featured in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) and other style guides.

Fig. 2. *PMLA* style austere (sub)headings. The headings are roman numerals set inside brackets. There is just a single level with this heading style.

■ **Lists (seriation).** Seriation is a technique to itemize or enumerate the parts to a series or an argument. This can be helpful when the parts are complex, elaborate, or disparate. It is particularly useful in constructing a transition paragraph to introduce a series of topics. Chicago style refers to this as a process of *enumeration*.

Sentence seriation. A series or list of terms or phrases can be introduced following a colon: (1) marked by numbers in parentheses; (2) to enumerate a series of topics; (3) especially when the topics differentiated are complex, lengthy, or disparate. The MLA *Handbook* is silent on this practice, but recent papers in *PMLA* also use numbers.

Paragraph seriation. Paragraph seriation. If each element in the series requires a separate paragraph, these are set flush with the left margin with each paragraph indented and numbered appropriately. This is rare in research writing. An introductory clause or sentence ending with a colon typically introduces the series:

1. This form of seriation is useful in summarizing an argument, or the results of a research study.

2. Each element in the series may contribute to the general topic with extensive commentary.

☞ **No Bullets!** *Chicago* advises "the use of bullets (heavy dots) in place of enumeration is sometimes resorted to, but these may be considered cumbersome, especially in scholarly work" (CMS 314).

2.3 QUOTATIONS

■ Direct quotes must be placed in quotation marks or indented as a block quote. All quotations must include a citation referring the reader to the source document. As a matter of form, quotations should flow with your text, and may be edited to do so. *MLA Basic* covers only the basics in showing how to quote the work of others, the MLA *Handbook* further discusses how to quote from works of poetry, and plays or movies.

- "The accuracy of quotations in research writing is extremely important" (MLA 92). "Direct quotations must reproduce exactly not only the wording but the spelling, capitalization, and internal punctuation of the original" *(CMS* 357–358).

- "If you quote material in a foreign [*sic*] language, you must reproduce all accents and other marks exactly as they appear in the original (école, pietà, tête, leçon, Fähre, año)" (MLA 66).

- If you quote material that contains a citation to another work, include this citation in your quotation. The work cited does not have to be included in the list of works cited if it is cited only in the quotation.

☞ **"Quotations are effective** in research papers when used selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Overquotation can bore your readers and might lead them to conclude that you are neither an original thinker nor a skillful writer" (MLA 92).

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Ellipsis — ½" ↦ The Modern Language Association (MLA) has evolved a research style that reflects "the customs of a community of writers who greatly value scrupulous scholarship and the careful documentation . . . of research" (Franklin xv, in Gibaldi). Among its requirements are complex rules for formatting long quotations as block quotes: ← **Citation**

Block Quote
← 1¼" → If a quotation runs to more than four lines in your paper, set it off from your — **Emphasis**
← 1" → text by beginning a new line, indenting *one inch* [emphasis added] . . . from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced, without quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a quotation displayed this way, . . . sometimes the — **Ellipsis** context may require a different mark . . . or none at all. . . .

Insert ————————
If you need to [block] quote two or more paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional quarter inch. If the first sentence quoted does not begin a paragraph in the source, however, do not indent it the additional amount (MLA 2009, 94). ← **Citation**

There are additional rules to follow when quoting poetry, plays, or translating a quotation. In these instances, the MLA *Handbook* is an essential guide.

Fig. 3. Short and long quotations. The style uses three indents: (1) a standard half-inch indent to start paragraphs in the main text, (2) a full one-inch indent for block quotes, and (3) a one and one-quarter inch indent beginning some paragraphs inside block quotations.

Quotations in running text. Shorter quotations, most quotes in research writing, are embedded directly in the text. Place quotes in running text inside quotation marks. Do not use the abbreviation "p." for "page."

- When the author is introduced in the text the page number follows the quotation. Smith reported that "the creature walked like a duck and quacked like a duck" (23).

- Without an introductory phrase, the author and page are placed together. For example— It was reported that "the creature walked like a duck and quacked like a duck" (Smith 23).

- When citing a quote drawn from several pages in the source, separate page numbers in the citation with commas. For example, write (Thoreau, *Walden* 23, 129-31, 144).

Block quotes are required with longer quotations. "If a quotation extends more than *four lines when run into the text"* set it off as a block quote (MLA 94). Block quotes are continuously indented from the left margin **one inch**. Double space within, before, and after a block quote. Do not place the quote inside quotation marks.

- "If you quote only a single paragraph or part of one, do not indent the first line more than the rest" (MLA 94).

- "If you need to quote two or more paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional quarter inch. . . . If the first sentence quoted does not begin a paragraph in the source, however, do not indent it the additional amount. Indent only the first line of successive paragraphs" (MLA 94).

Add text to a quotation. It may be helpful to add text to merge a quote with the flow and tense of your text, to add emphasis, or to clarify the original. Brackets are required to indicate material or emphasis added to a quote. For example: "They [the Irish Republican Army] initiated a cease fire."

Emphasis may be added to a word or phrase in a quotation by placing it in italics. When this is done the note (emphasis added) or (italics added) must be added after the quotation marks (see MLA 101).

Correct errors. Obvious typographical errors in a quote may be corrected. But for an unusual word choice or spelling it may be best to note the original is being quoted faithfully. This is done by inserting the Latin term *sic* (thus), in italics or underlined, in brackets within the quotation (but in parentheses at the end of a quote), immediately following the term. For example, "The ship struck an iceberg and floundered *[sic*], with the loss of all on board." Or write "The ship struck an iceberg and floundered" *(sic*). (Note, to *flounder* is to thrash about wildly. To *founder* is to fill with water and sink.)

Editing quotations. Capitalization and punctuation may be freely changed to merge a quote into the text, but "a quotation should never be presented in a way that could cause a reader to misunderstand the sentence structure of the original source" (MLA 97). Examples are drawn from the paragraph below.

Effective writing seeks to merge a quotation into the flow of the text. It is not necessary to indicate the minor changes needed to do so. The reader should not stumble over a quote. Edit a quotation according to the following rules.

- The leading portion of a sentence opening a quotation may be omitted from the quotation without indicating an omission as long as the original meaning is not marred.

- If a quote begins in what is mid-sentence in the original, the first letter of the first word may be uppercased to open a sentence. Write: "Merge quotations into . . . " (not "[M]erge quotations. . .).

- A quote that begins with a capital letter in the original may be lowercased to match the syntax without noting the change. For example, good writers know that "the reader should not stumble over a quote."

- The punctuation mark at the end of a quote may be changed to fit the syntax. Please note, a "reader should not stumble over a quote!" But, "if the [original] quotation ends with a question mark or an exclamation point . . . the original punctuation is retained" (MLA 103).

- Double quotation marks may be changed to single quotation marks, and the reverse.

Ellipsis points are used to indicate text omitted from a quotation. Three ellipsis points (periods with a single space before, between, and after each period) indicate material has been omitted within a sentence or at the end of a sentence. Unless clarity demands it, do not use ellipsis points to begin a quotation.

Delete entire sentences. The ellipsis follows the period at the end of the first sentence.

> Effective writing seeks to merge a quotation into the text**. . . .** The reader should not stumble over a quote.

Delete parts of quotes. For example, Henry David Thoreau asserts:

> "To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust" (15, ch. 1).

An omission *within* the quote is edited:

> "To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts**, . . .** but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust" (Thoreau 15; ch. 1).

"If a parenthetical reference [citation] follows the ellipsis at the end of your sentence, . . . use three periods with a space before each, and place the sentence period after the final parentheses" (MLA 98).

> "To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates **. . .** " (Thoreau 15; ch. 1).

3.0 TEXT CITATIONS

■ **MLA style** use a parenthetical form of text citation. Cite all direct quotations as well as significant ideas, concepts, or findings borrowed or adapted from others. Unlike the author-date format used in psychology, MLA style places only the author's name—and the page number when citing a direct quote—in the citation.

- **What not to cite.** It is generally not necessary to cite: (1) dictionary definitions of words unless the specific dictionary is relevant to the context; (2) well documented historical facts; (3) conventional knowledge or knowledge broadly shared in a discipline.

- **Unretrievable sources.** All major styles, except MLA, cite *ephemeral sources* in the text, but not on reference lists. Research journals will not publish papers with references that cannot be retrieved and verified.

3.1 TEXT CITATIONS: BASIC FORMAT

■ Each separate referent to a source must be cited however many times this may occur in a paper. "To avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur (preferably at the end of a sentence), as near as possible to the material documented" (MLA 217). A page number is usually cited only with a direct quotation.

Source	Citation	Source	Citation
No Author	(*Book Title* 123) ("Article Title" 123)	**Multiple**	(Adams 11**;** Baker 21**;** Chavez 123)
1 Author	(Smith 123)	**Literary***	(Thoreau 111, ch.1)
2 Authors	(Smith and Jones 123)	**Two Works***	(Thoreau, *Walden* 8) (Thoreau, "Life" 9)
3+ Authors	(Smith et al. 123)	**Shakespeare***	Macbeth (*Mac*. 3.2.1-9)
Corporate	(Modern Language Association 123)	**Volume/Page**	(Burton vol. 2: 123)

Fig. 4. Parenthetical text citations (*see also Literary Citations below).

An *introductory phrase* leads into a direct quotation by placing the author's name in the text. The page citation in parentheses then follows the quotation. For example: Smith stated "now is the time to run for the gold" (123). As a matter of style it is helpful to the reader to integrate citations into the flow of your text.

If there is no introductory phrase cite both the author and page in parentheses. For example: One expert observed that "the creature quacks like a duck" (Smith 123).

1. *No Author?* Substitute the title of the work (title of an article or book) for the author in both the reference list and text citation. The first word in the citation must be the first significant word (ignore *a, and, th*e) in the title as used to alphabetize the reference in the list of works cited. If the title is long use a short form or just the first word.

2. *Two Authors.* Cite both authors' names: (Smith and Jones 123). When there are two or more authors with the same surname repeat the surname for each author. For example, write (Smithe and Smithe 123).

3. *Three or More Authors.* You may cite the lead author plus *et al.* in all text citations (see MLA 215). Be consistent in whatever practice you adopt, and consistent in matching the text citation with the entry in the reference list.

4. *Multiple sources* are cited enclosed in a single set of parentheses. List sources alphabetically in the order they appear in the reference list. Each citation is separated by a semicolon. For example, write (Alt 12; Brown 23; Car 123; Dean 123–46; Smith 99).

5. *Multiple works by one author* require the short title of the specific work be added to the citation (See MLA 225). For example, write (Thoreau, *Walden* 123) to contrast the source of a quote from another work by Thoreau (Thoreau, "Life Without Principle" 23).

6. *Corporate Author.* Cite the full name of the group or institution as given in the reference list entry.

☞ **The MLA *Handbook*** offers no examples of acronyms used in references or citations.

3.2 TEXT CITATIONS: EPHEMERAL SOURCES

■ The current *MLA Handbook* goes to elaborate lengths to devise references to sources that no one can retrieve except, perhaps, you. View the "container model" devised to format these "sources" at: style.mla.org. Cite these in the text, but not in a list of works cited; best when woven into your discourse.

Ephemeral sources include personal communications such as conversations, interviews (without a published transcript), letters, emails, and tweets. Other sources such as pages buried deep in websites, discussion groups, blogs, social networking sites, or mailing lists may be too unstable to be retrieved at a later date.

Source	Citation
Basic Form	(Name, title, date, medium/event/URL)
Letter, Subject as title	(Nikos Kazantzakis, Zorba as metaphor, 1 Apr. 1956, letter to the author)
E-mail, Subject as title	(Henry David Thoreau, Quiet desperation, 1 Apr. 1846, email to author)
E-mail, Subject is titled work	(Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1 Apr. 1846, email to author)
Tweet, Subject of longer message	(Donald Trump, I am not a clown, 1 Apr. 2017, twitter.com/thedonald)
Tweet, Subject of longer message	(@thedonald, I am not a clown, 1 Apr. 2017, Tweet)
Tweet, Entire message cited	(@thedonald, "Hillary wrong, I am not a clown," 1 Apr. 2017)
Forum, post to a forum topic	News Junky, post to "Fake News," 1 Apr. 2017, News forum, ariver.com)
Interview, No transcript	(Henry David Throeau, 1 Apr. 2017, interview by author)

Fig 5. Nonrecoverable sources or unstable Internet sources.

3.3 LITERARY TEXT CITATIONS

■ MLA style makes special provision for the repeated citation of literary works. "In a reference to a commonly studied prose work, such as a novel or play, that is available in several editions, it is helpful to provide more information than just the page number" (MLA 226). The objective is to help a reader with an edition different from the author's to find the same passage. MLA style distinguishes between prose books and plays and verse books, plays, and poems.

Prose works. MLA style wants writers to identify a source as specifically as may be reasonable. The style for doing this takes two forms, one for prose works, another for verse. Prose works cite the page followed by a semicolon, then additional identifying information.

• *Chapter.* Cite the page followed by a semicolon, then additional identifying information. For example, in *Walden* Henry David Thoreau claimed "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" (111; ch. 1). This same passage is found on different pages in other editions, but always in the first chapter (Thoreau 111; ch. 1).

• *Volume.* Longer works may come in several volumes. "When citing a volume number as well as a page reference for a multivolume work, separate the two by a colon and a space: '(Wellek 2: 1–10)'" (MLA 222).

• When citing a specific page, the page number is understood to come after the volume. For example: "Few Moslems contemplate for the first time the Ka'abah [*sic*], without fear and awe: there is a popular jest against new comers, that they generally inquire the direction of prayer" (Burton 2: 161).

- When citing an entire volume, add the abbreviation "vol." to the citation. For example, his *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca*h includes an account of a clandestine visit to Mecca (Burton, vol. 2).
- When citing an entire volume with the reference in the text, spell out *volum*e. For example, "Burton provides an exacting account of his clandestine visit to Mecca in volume 2 of *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca*h" (159–258).

Verse works. MLA style advises use of a decimal notation system.

- The following passage is from the Bible: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This is found in the book of Romans, Chapter 10, verse 13. MLA style cites this (Rom. 10.13). Conventional notation cites this (Rom. 10:13).
- The following passage is from the *Merchant of Venice* (MV). Shylock is speaking: "I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond; I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond. . . ." MLA cites this (*MV* 3.3). Conventional notation might cite this *(Merchant of Venic*e, act III, sc. iii).

4.0 WORKS CITED (REFERENCES)

■ Titles of works that stand alone, (e.g., books, films, monographs, reports, webpages) are usually underlined (or placed in italics). The titles of works that are parts of something (e.g., parts of books, journals, encyclopedias) are usually placed in quotation marks. The day-month-year format, 1 April 2010, is preferred.

☞ *MLA Basic* recommends referencing only the top level domain for URLs (Universal Resource Locators), the part that contains the .com, .edu, .org, .net, etc. These rarely change. Site indexes or search engines at this level can be used to locate specific documents. Lower level pages can easily be changed, rendering a long URL useless, the document unretrievable. When a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is available use that instead of a URL.

☞ **Documents that cannot be retrieved by the reader do not go on reference lists!**

4.1 PAGE LAYOUT

	Author-Lastname 12	
	Works Cited	
Review . . .	Adams, Phoebe. Review of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. *The Atlantic Monthly* Aug. 1960, www.theatlantic.com.	
Reprint . . .	Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. 1958. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.	
Corporate Author . . .	Bureau of the Census. "Higher Education Price Indexes: 1965-1991." *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993*. 113th ed. Washington, DC: US GPO, 1993. Table 277.	
Book	Follett, Ken. *Lie Down with Lions*. New York: Signet, 1986.	
3-em Dash	———. *The Pillars of the Earth*. New York: Signet, 1990.	
Edition . . .	Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003.	
Anthology .	Hemingway, Ernest. "The Big Two-Hearted River." In *The Nick Adams Stories*. Edited by Philip Young. New York: Bantam Books, 1973. 159-180.	
Journal . . .	Kelley, Klara, and Harris Francis. "Traditional Navajo Maps and Wayfinding." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 29.2 (2005): 85-111.	

Fig. 6. Works cited. References are double-spaced in formal MLA style; block spaced as shown enhances readability. Only sources cited in the text are referenced.

■ **Place references** on a new page under the centered heading "Works Cited" (in heading caps one inch below the top of the page just inside the top margin). Continue the page numbering from the previous page. The list of works cited comes after the text and endnotes (if any); it is the last part of your paper. *Reference only what you cite in the text and cite in your text every entry in the reference list.*

- *Arrange references alphabetically* by author, if there is no author by title (ignore *A, An, The,* and equivalents). "The alphabetical order of names is determined by the letters before the commas that separate last name and first names. Spaces and other punctuation marks [and case] are ignored" (MLA 131).

- Use a hanging indent, with the indent one-half inch from the left margin.

- *Give authors' full names* (first, middle, last) when possible. "You may spell out a name abbreviated [to initials] . . . if you think the additional information will be helpful to readers" (MLA 149). Fill in the names in brackets.

- List up to three authors to a work, or the first plus "et al."; give the first plus et al. with four or more authors.

- Multiple works by the same author list *alphabetically by title, not by date.* Use a three-em dash in place of the author's name in subsequent works by the same exact author(s).

- *All titles are set in heading caps* (except languages where sentence caps are customary). Titles of articles, reports, and chapters in edited books are placed in quotes. Titles of books and volumes, and the names of journals, are underlined or placed in italics.

4.2 ARTICLES IN JOURNALS, MAGAZINES, & NEWSPAPERS
■ Use decimal notation to indicate issue number in a journal volume, that is, volume four, number two is written "4.2" not the more conventional "4(2)", for example, *96.3* in the reference below.
- Article titles are in heading caps inside quotation marks. Languages not English use native capitalization.
- The name of the periodical is in italics.
- Cite the volume and issue number for journals, just the date for newspapers and magazines.
- Elide page number ranges, that is, drop digits when feasible. For example, write 1134-56 rather than 1134-1156.

Journal Articles
    Dietler, Michael. "'Our Ancestors the Gauls': Archaeology, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Manipulation of Celtic Identity in Modern Europe." *American Anthropologist* 96.3 (1994): 584–605.

    Solé, Yolanda. "Valores aspectuales en español." *Hispanic Linguistics* 4.1 (1990): 57-85.

    Citations: (Dietler 123); (Solé 123); (Dietler 123; Solé 123)

    NB> Note the volume and issue number use the decimal format (e.g., 96.3; 4.1).

    NB> If there are quotation marks in a title these are changed to single quotes. The article by Solé is in Spanish and is capitalized according to the conventions of that language.

    NB> Citations with multiple authors list alphabetically, each separated by a semicolon: (Dietler 123; Solé 123).

Two Authors
    Galperin, Andrew, and Martie Haselton. "Predictors of How Often and When People Fall in Love." *Evolutionary Psychology* 8.1 (2010): 5-28.

    Citation: (Galperin and Haselton 123)

Three or More Authors - Annual Review
    Rivara, Frederick P., et al. "Prevention of Bicycle-Related Injuries: Helmets, Education, and Legislation." *Annual Review of Public Health* 19 (1998): 293-318.

    Citation: (Rivara et al. 123)

    NB> With three or more authors you may list all authors or just the lead author, *and others* (et al.).

Corporate/Group Author (Magazine)
    Editorial Staff of the *Smithsonian*. "28 Places to See Before You Die." *Smithsonian* Jan. 2008: 78-93.

    Citation: (Editorial Staff of the *Smithsonian* 123)

No Author - Review
    Review of *Anthology of Danish Literature*, by F. J. Billeskov Jansen and P. M. Mitchell. *Times Literary Supplement* 7 July 1972: 785.

    Citation: (Reveiw of *Anthology of Danish Literature* 123)

Newspaper & Magazine Articles
    Curry, Andrew. "Trekking Hadrian's Wall." *Smithsonian* Oct. 2009: 40-47.

    "Feds Close Vail Logging Road." *Colorado Daily* [Boulder] 27–29 July 1999: 2.

    Citations: (Curry 123); ("Feds" 123); (Curry 123; "Feds" 123)

    NB> If the locale of a publication is not evident from its name add that information in brackets.

Reviews
    Camhi, Leslie. "Art of the City." Review of *New York Modern: The Arts and the City*, by William B. Scott, and Peter M. Rutkoff. *Village Voice* 15 June 1999: 154.

    NB> A review may have a title different from the work being reviewed. That title goes in quotes in references..

4.3 BOOKS & COMPILATIONS

■ Compilations combine features of references to articles and to books. When referencing a part of a compilation the title of the part goes in quotes, the title of the compilation is in italics. Both titles are in heading caps: page numbers are required.

Anthology/Compilation: Part-Chapter/Complete Volume

Hemingway, Ernest. "The Big Two-Hearted River." *The Nick Adams Stories*. Edited by Philip Young. New York: Bantam Books, 1973. 159-180.

Whitman, Walt. *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*. 1891-1892. Edited by James E. Miller, Jr. Boston: Houghton, 1959.

One Author: Translation-Initials/Editor

Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. Translated by William Weaver. New York: Harcourt, 1983.

Tolkien, J[ohn] R[onald] R[euel]. *The Silmarillion*. Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Two Authors

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage, 1977.

Three Authors - Edition Other Than First

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Corporate Author: Government Publication-Edition Other Than First

Bureau of the Census. "Higher Education Price Indexes: 1965-1991." *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993*. 113th ed. Washington, DC: US GPO, 1993. Table 277.

Citation: (Bureau of the Census 123)

Multiple Works

Follett, Ken. *Lie Down with Lions*. New York: Signet, 1986.

———. *The Pillars of the Earth*. New York: Signet, 1990.

Citations: (Follett, *Lie Down* 123); (Follett, *Pillars* 456); (Follett, *Lie Down* 123; *Pillars* 456);

NB> Three em dashes (six hyphens) are used to list multiple works by the same author after the first reference. *List alphabetically by title* in works cited and compound citations.

Title as Author (No Author)

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

Citation: (*MLA Handbook* 123)

Edited Book

Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility*. Edited by Claudia Johnson. New York: Norton, 2001.

Foreword, Afterword, Introduction, Preface

Nicholls, David G. Preface. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. xvii-xix.

Language Other Than English

Hadot, Pierre. *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antiques* [Spiritual exercises and ancient pholosophies]. 3rd ed. Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1993.

Reprint

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. 1958. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

NB> The original publication date of a reprint usually goes immediately after the title.

Dictionary

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Houghton, 1992. Print.

"Occam's Razor." *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.

Citation: (*American Heritage* 123); ("Occams Razor" 123)

Encyclopedia

Bergman, Peter G. "Relativity." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol. 26. 15th ed. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998. 501–508.

4.4 COMMON NONPRINT SOURCES

■ References to electronic sources follow the same format as those to print sources. When a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is available that should be used in place of a URL. A URL need only give the top level domain, the part with the .com, .org, .edu, .net, and so on. The *http://www.* is not needed.

Online Journal

Barry, John M. "The Site of Origin of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and Its Public Health Implications." Commentary. *Journal of Translational Medicine* 2.3 (20 Jan. 2004): 1-4. www.translational-medicine.com.

Bowers, Rick. "Comedy, Carnival, and Class: A Chaste Maid in Cheapside." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 8.3 (Jan. 2003): 22 pars. purl.oclc.org.

NB> If the source has numbered paragraphs or sections that is noted in the reference.

Newspaper & Magazine Articles

Adams, Phoebe. Review of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. *The Atlantic Monthly* Aug. 1960. www.theatlantic.com.

"Don't Spoil the Sunset." Editorial. *Washington Post* 27 Apr. 2003. www.washingtonpost.com.

Sterritt, David. "Coppola, 'Apocalypse Now,' and the Ambivalent 70's." Review of *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola, director. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 3 Aug. 2001. chronicle.com.

Citations: (Adams 123); ("Don't Spoil" 123); (Sterritt 123)

Book Online - Part of a Compilation

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. 1854. *EServer.org: Accessible Writing*. Edited by Richard Lenat. Seattle: University of Washington, 2002. eserver.org.

Thoreau, Henry David. "Life Without Principle." In *The Thoreau Reader: The Works of Henry David Thoreau, 1817-1862*. Edited by Richard Lenat. *EServer.org: Accessible Writing*. Seattle: University of Washington, 2002. eserver.org.

Citations: (Thoreau, *Walden* 123); (Thoreau, "Life" 123)

Web Source - Initials

Rolt, C[larence] E[dwin], and Pseudo-Dionysius. *Dionysius the Areopagite: On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 1997. *Christian Classics Ethereal Library.* Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin College, 5 May 2003. www.ccel.org.

"Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format." *OWL: Online Writing Lab*. Edited by Jennifer Liethen Kunka, Joe Barbato, and Erin Karper. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, Dec. 2000. owl.english.purdue.edu.

"Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format." *OWL: Online Writing Lab*. Edited by Jennifer Liethen, et al. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, Dec. 2000. owl.english.purdue.edu.

NB> References with three or more editors may list the lead editor, et al. (*and others*).

Walt Whitman Hypertext Archive. Edited by Kenneth M. Price and Ed Folsom. 1997-1998. www.whitmanarchive.org.

Citations: (Rolt and Pseudo-Dionysius 123); ("Using Modern" 123); (*Walt Whitman* 123)

Works of Art - Performance

Beethoven, Ludwig van. "Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92." Performed by Boston Symphony Orch. Conducted by Leonard Bernstein. *Bernstein: The Final Concert*. 19 Aug. 1990. Deutsche Grammophon, 1992.

Boskovsky, Willi, conductor. *Neujahr in Wien [New Year in Vienna]: 1963-1979*. Performed by Weiner Philharmoniker, 1963-1979. Deutsche Grammophon, 2004.

Strauss, Johann, II. "Freut euch des Lebens." *Neujahrskonzet, 1974*. Performed by Weiner Philharmoniker. Conducted by Willi Boskovsky. Philharmonic Hall, Vienna. 1 Jan. 1974.

Pink Floyd. "Any Colour You Like." *The Dark Side of the Moon*. 1973. Capitol Records, 1986.

———. *The Dark Side of the Moon*. 1973. Capitol Records, 1986.

Citations: (Pink Floyd, *Dark Side*); (Pink Floyd, "Any Colour); (Pink Floyd, "Any Colour"; *Dark Side*)

Rembrandt van Rijn. *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*. 1653. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.