

Citing Sources

Whenever you paraphrase or reproduce someone else's intellectual property (words/ideas), you need to acknowledge the source you are borrowing from.

There are a variety of documentation systems. Use that documentation system that is most appropriate for your field or the type of text you are writing, and use it consistently throughout your text (i.e. never combine documentation systems). Below is a brief overview of the MLA footnote system.

For more information on documentation of sources consult, for instance:

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

1. Titles of works

- take title from title page, not from cover or running head at top of page
- rules for capitalizing titles and subtitles are very strict:
 - capitalize first words, last words, and all principal words (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, subordinating conjunctions (e.g. after, although, because, etc.), including those that follow hyphens in compound terms
 - do not capitalize articles, coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, for, nor, or, etc.), the *to* in infinitives, when they fall in the middle of the title
 - use a colon and a space to separate a title from a subtitle, unless the title ends in a question mark, an exclamation point, or a dash
- **underline (OR italicize)** titles of books, films, works of art
- use quotation marks for works published within larger works: articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books

e.g.:

Standage's The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century On-Line Pioneers (book)

Helvetica (film)

"Abstract Expressionism" (chapter in book)

Chagall's I and My Village (painting)

- words designating divisions of a work are not underlined, nor put within quotation marks or capitalized (e.g. preface, introduction, appendix, chapter 2)

2. Quotations and punctuation

- quotations of less than four lines should be in the text and in double quotation marks
- for more than four lines > set the quotation off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting from the margin; do not add quotations marks
- ellipsis: when omitting a word, phrase, or sentence, use ellipsis points, or three spaced periods in square brackets
- when inserting words or comments in a quotation > use square brackets

- insert [sic] to indicate deviant spelling in original
- introduce quotations by a colon or comma, depending on sentence structure
- reproduce internal punctuation exactly as in original; exceptions:
 - o use double quotation marks around quotations and single around quotations in the quotation
 - o closing punctuation may be modified to accommodate the sentence in which the quotation is incorporated

3. Using the language of your source appropriately¹

Source quotation:

A grand unified theory has long been the holy grail of physicists. Since ancient times, physicists have sought minimalist explanations of nature. Theories with four basic particles are considered better than theories of ten.

-- Alan Lightman, Ancient Light: Our Changing View of the Universe

Unacceptable paraphrase:

A grand unified theory has long been the central goal of scientists. Since the dawn of time, men of science have looked for minimalist explanations of natural phenomena. A theory with four elementary particles is considered better than a theory of ten.

- Writer has merely substituted a few words. Structure and wording are Lightman's. Since the writer has borrowed Lightman's words as well as his ideas, the acknowledgment of Lightman as a source does not prevent this passage from being plagiarism.

Unacceptable paraphrase:

Physicists have long had the grand unified theory as their holy grail. Science always tries to give minimalist explanations for natural phenomena. The best theory is the one with the fewest elements.

- Structure is somewhat original, but the order of sentences is clearly taken from Lightman. In addition, the writer has used several phrases taken directly from the source. Borrowing such phrases without enclosing them in quotation marks makes the writer guilty of plagiarism.

Acceptable paraphrase:

Physicists have long sought a grand unified theory, since scientists have always preferred theories with the fewest elements (Lightman 106).

¹ From Leslie C. Perelman, James Paradis, and Edward Barrett, The Mayfield Handbook of Technical & Scientific Writing (McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997).

4. MLA documentation with footnotes

(The standard MLA documentation style consists of keying **brief parenthetical citations** in your text to an **alphabetical list of works** at the end of your text.)

For shorter works, and in academic writing, it is common to use footnotes to document your sources.

Example of a quotation (=verbatim rendering of another text or utterance) **and subsequent references**

indented quotations DO NOT require quotation marks

quotation in double quotation marks

<u>Title of Paper</u>
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXX. A grid is a skeletal framework used by designers to organize information within a spatial field. It is a system characterized by the dualities of freedom and constraint, simplicity and complexity. ¹
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XX XXXXXX.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. “We define typographic syntax as the process of arranging elements into a cohesive whole.” ² XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XX XXXXXXXXXXXXX, “the typographic message became a multifaceted and expressive form of communication. Typography needs to be read, seen heard, felt, and experienced.” ³
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> ¹ Rob Carter, Ben Day, and Philip Meggs, <u>Typographic Design: Form and Communication</u> , 4 th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007) 48.
² Carter, Day, Meggs 91.
³ Carter, Day, Meggs 112.

<u>Title of Paper</u>
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXX.
With <u>Onement I</u> , painted in 1948, Newman departs from abstract and figurative art and rejects the subject matter of painting. ¹ XXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Newman suggests a connection between his politics and his aesthetic of formlessness. “My politics,” he said, “went towards open forms and free situations; I was a very vocal anarchist.” ² XXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXX.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> ¹ Anthony Everitt, “Abstract Expressionism.” <u>Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-Modernism</u> , David Britt, ed. (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1989) 271.
² Qtd. in Everitt 270.

Example of a paraphrase (=reproducing some else’s words or ideas in your own words, in a sentence structure of your own)

Source quotation:
By 1948 Newman was ready to abandon subject matter, whether abstract or figurative. *Onement I*, painted in that year, marks the turning point in his style.

(from chapter 6, “Abstract Expressionism,” in Modern Art, authored by Anthony Everitt)

5. Sample footnotes

A Film or Video Recording / DVD

It's a Wonderful Life. dir. Frank Capra, perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell, 1946, DVD, Republic, 1998.

Helvetica, dir. Gary Hustwit, Veer, 2007.

Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph

Rembrandt van Rijn, Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Internet site

Victorian Women Writers Project, ed. Perry Willett, June 1998, Indiana U, 3 November 2009 <<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/>>.

Document from Internet source

Pablo Picasso, Abduction, with Celestina, Ruffian, Woman, Nobleman with his Valet, MFA.org., 3 November 2009
http://www.mfa.org/collections/search_art.asp?review=true&id=315655&coll_keywords=&coll_accession=&coll_name=&coll_artist=picasso&coll_place=&coll_medium=&coll_culture=&coll_classification=&coll_credit=&coll_provenance=&coll_location=&coll_has_images=&coll_on_view=&coll_sort=2&coll_sort_order=0&coll_view=0&coll_package=0&coll_start=1.