

Academic integrity and citing sources

Academic writing is a vehicle for ideas and critical thinking. As you form your ideas about a particular subject, you may borrow from or rely on other people's research. The works you consult and use to write your own text are *sources* for your ideas.

Observing academic integrity means acknowledging your indebtedness to someone else's intellectual property in the formation of your ideas. Citing your sources both demonstrates your integrity as an academic, and allows your reader to trace the origin of your ideas. By citing your sources in a clear and consistent manner, you will map out the intellectual landscape that your essay is a part of.

Both when you paraphrase or summarize and when you reproduce (quote) someone else's intellectual property (words/ideas/images), you must acknowledge your source.

There are a variety of documentation systems. Use the 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). For more information on documentation of sources consult, for instance:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.

How to document your sources in MLA style

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:
 - o 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
 - o 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
 - o 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
- **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 shorter than four lines should be in the text and enclosed in double quotation marks
- quotations of more than four lines should be set off from your text by beginning a new line and indenting from the margin; do not enclose the indented quotation in quotation marks
- ellipsis: when omitting a word, phrase, or sentence, use ellipsis points, or three spaced periods in square brackets
- when you insert words or comments in a quotation, use square brackets
- insert [sic] to indicate deviant spelling in the quoted text
- introduce quotations by a colon or comma, depending on sentence structure
- reproduce internal punctuation exactly as in the original text; 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 (Lightman 106).

- 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. Sample list of works cited

Works Cited

Book:

Carter, Rob, Ben Day, and Philip Meggs. *Typographic Design: Form and Communication*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2007. Print.

Chapter from an art textbook:

Everitt, Anthony. "Abstract Expressionism." *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-Modernism*. Ed. David Britt. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1989. Print.

- in this case, "Abstract Expressionism" is the title of the chapter that was cited; as this book has more than one author, you must cite the relevant author/chapter in addition to the title of the book

Painting:

Monet, Claude. *The Old "Le Pollet" Quarter of Dieppe*. 1856-7. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Image of a painting on a web site:

Monet, Claude. *The Old "Le Pollet" Quarter of Dieppe*. 1856-7. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Museum of Fine Arts Boston*. Web. 4 Sep. 2012
<<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/the-old-le-pollet-quarter-of-dieppe-102873>>.

- the second, italicized reference to "Museum of Fine Arts" is the title of the web site; the first refers to the location of the drawing whose image you are citing
- the inclusion of URLs is no longer required by the MLA

Page from a web site (if you borrow information about the painting from the site):

“Postman Joseph Roulin.” *Museum of Fine Arts Boston*. n.d. Web. 4 Sep. 2012
<<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/postman-joseph-roulin-32542>>.

- start with the title of the web page in quotation marks; "n.d." stands for "no date," i.e. the date of "publication" of the entry on this Van Gogh painting is not available; if a date is available, you must cite it

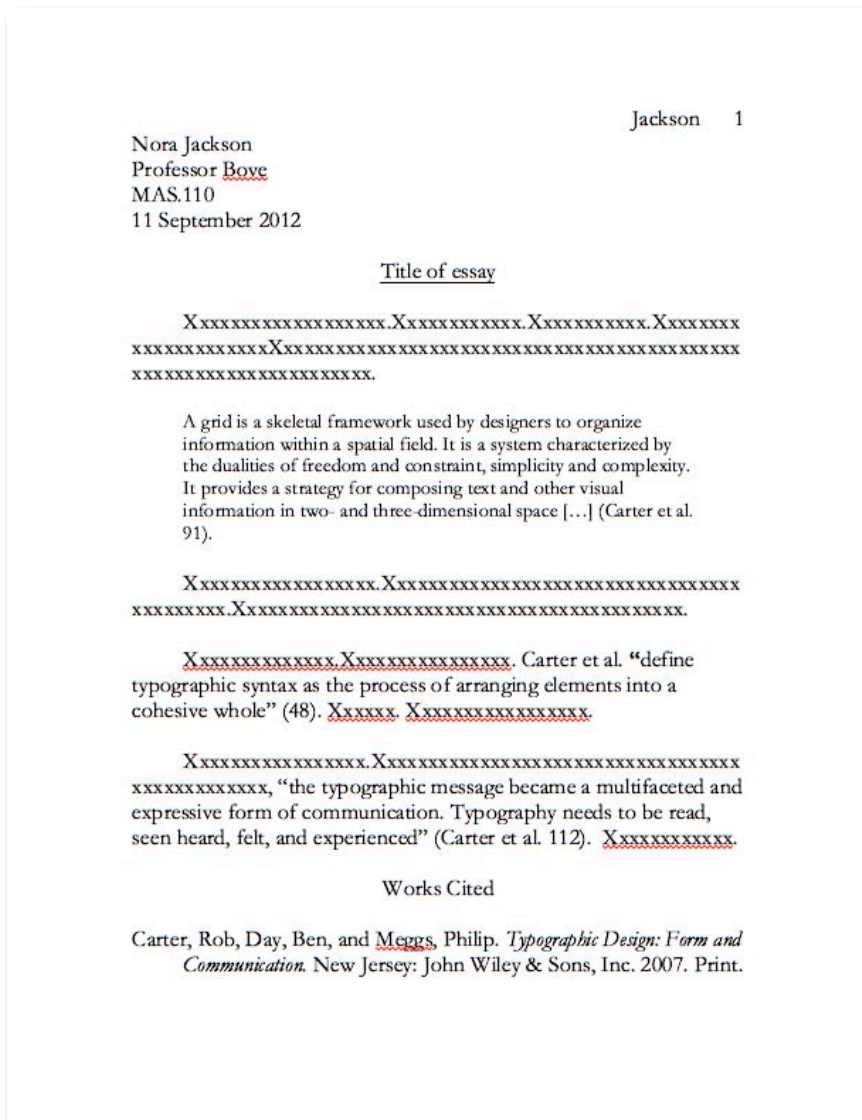
Film or Video Recording / DVD:

Helvetica, dir. Gary Hustwit, Veer, 2007. Film.

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. Liberty Films, 1946. Republic, 1998. DVD.

5. MLA documentation with parenthetical references keyed to a list of works cited: quotations

- indented quotations (≡verbatim rendering of another text or utterance) are NOT enclosed in quotation marks
- in-text quotations are enclosed in double quotation marks
- the parenthesis lists: the author's name and page number (without the abbr. "p." or comma)
- when you cite the author's name in a signal phrase in your text, you may cite only the page number in the parenthesis, but only if you cite only one work by that author



6. MLA documentation with parenthetical references keyed to a list of works cited: paraphrase

- Paraphrasing = reproducing someone else’s ideas and words in your own words and in a sentence structure of your own
- Original quotation from chapter 6, “Abstract Expressionism,” authored by Anthony Everitt, in the edited book volume *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-Modernism*:

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 (Everitt 271).

- Consult the original source when possible. If the original source is not available, you may refer to the indirect source preceded by “qtd. in”

