

ENGLISH LITERATURE STYLE GUIDE



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1. Introduction

The information contained in this handbook is a basic introduction to the most important things you need to know about presenting and referencing your essays for English Literature. You will find that different subjects use different referencing systems and it's important that, by the end of the first year, you are competent in the referencing system we use in our subject. This system is known as the MLA (Modern Languages Association) system. It would be impossible in a short handbook to cover every aspect of referencing and writing a Works Cited list, so the following website and guides will be useful:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: Modern Languages Association of America, 2009.

---. *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 3rd ed. New York: Modern Languages Association of America, 2008.

More detailed information on these two sources can be found at the end of this handbook, and you must use these to resolve any referencing problems you may have. As a student, you are required to develop your own skills in referencing but help will be given in seminars during the first year of your course.

Keeping to the word length

When you are given an essay title you will also be told the number of words you are to write. Essays that are **under or over** the word length will have the assessment result reduced by five marks for every ten percent that they vary from the word length of the assignment.

Single spacing, as in this paragraph, has been used for long quotations in this handbook although the MLA referencing system specifies double spacing. It is felt that there is no specific advantage in double spacing your long quotations and that it results in unnecessary waste of paper.

2. How to present your English Literature essay

The way your essay looks has an immediate impact on the reader so, just in general terms, it is obviously to your advantage to present your essay well: the form and content of your work are an expression of one another. However, there are also specific ways of presenting an academic piece of work that will have an

effect on the final mark it receives. Below are the very first things you will need to do in order to present an essay in English Literature.

- Write out the title of the essay in full
- Use italics for all titles of books, plays and long poems
- Use a font size of 12
- Use Times New Roman typeface
- Leave margins of about 1.25 inches
- Double-space your lines
- Write on one side of the page only

3. How to include quotations in your essay

The MLA system aims to give the smallest amount of information in parentheses within your essay that will enable the reader to identify the source by the author's name in your Works Cited list (or from the first word of the citation in your Works Cited list). To do this, the author's name must appear in your text **before** the quotation and then the page number can be put in parentheses immediately **after** the quotation. If you have not mentioned the author's name, you put the author's surname and the page number of the quotation in parentheses. There are, however, slightly different ways of referencing for poetry and drama and these are demonstrated below. First, you need to know how to write short and long quotations in your essay for both prose and poetry.

- a) **Short quotations**, which are quotations of no more than two lines of poetry or prose, are placed in quotation marks and are "embedded" in your own text as shown in the examples below: the first is a **prose** example and the second **poetry** (blank verse in this case).

Examples:

Lockwood's initial estimation of Heathcliff as "a capital fellow" (Brontë 12) in the opening paragraphs of *Wuthering Heights* is quickly undermined by Heathcliff's behaviour.

In *King Lear* Gloucester's view that "As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods; / They kill us for their sport" (1. 2. 14-15) is shown by the play to be inadequate as a philosophy.

Note: Line divisions in poetry or blank verse must be indicated by a forward slash and the capital letter at the beginning of each line retained (if applicable).

- b) **Long quotations**, which are quotations of four lines or more of poetry or prose, are separated from your own text by leaving a space and indenting them as follows. The first example of prose quotes from a critical text but would also be used for quotations from novels.

Examples:

When writing about the place that woman has occupied in history and in literature, Virginia Woolf makes the following assertions:

She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact, she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. (Woolf 13) **[Note the placement of the full stop in the long quotation.]**

It will be the aim of this essay to evaluate the truth of these assertions.

The first four lines of Philip Larkin's poem "Home is so Sad" immediately evoke a mood of aching melancholy, intensified by the personification of the subject, "Home":

Home is so sad. It stays as it was left,
Shaped to the comfort of the last to go
As if to win them back. Instead, bereft
Of anyone to please, it withers so. (Larkin 14-17)

Note: It is very important that all quotations make complete sense, otherwise there is no point in using them. Always make sure that this is the case by reading the quotation you have used aloud to yourself. Also, remember that there are no quotation marks around long quotations.

4. How to reference quotations within your essay

As well as providing a Works Cited list at the end of your essay you must reference **all** quotations within your essay. In the MLA system this is done by putting brief information in parentheses after the quotation which will identify the source clearly in your Works Cited list. This type of referencing is known as “internal documentation” or “parenthetical referencing” because the information is written in parentheses. The parenthetical information you give varies slightly depending on whether you are quoting prose, poetry or a section from a play.

a) Referencing quotations from plays divided into acts, scenes and line numbers

Short quotations

If you have mentioned the author and the title of the play you give only the act, scene and line reference in Arabic numerals and in parentheses at the end of your quotation and before the full stop of the sentence if the quotation occurs at the end.

In Shakespeare’s *King Lear* Gloucester asserts that “As flies to wanton boys are we to th’ gods; / They kill us for their sport” (4. 1. 36-37). However, the play demonstrates that this philosophy is unjustifiable.

Long quotations

Here the reference comes after the full stop at the end of your quotation.

Lear’s eldest daughters use a ruthless logic against him, reducing the number of soldiers in his entourage:

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GONERIL | Hear me, my lord. What need you five-and-twenty, ten or five, To follow in a house where twice so many Have a command to tend you? |
| REGAN | What need one? (2. 4. 254-58) |

Note: Always make sure that you have indicated who is speaking. This may have been done in your own sentence, otherwise it must be written as part of the quotation as in the example above.

b) Referencing quotations from plays not divided into acts and scenes

If the play is not divided in the early modern style into separate acts and scenes then provide the author's surname and the relevant page number in parentheses following the quotation, as follows:

In *The Crucible* it is Hale, not Proctor, who confirms that there is “a prodigious fear of this court in the country!” (Miller 88).

c) Referencing quotations from a critical source

If you have used the author's name in your essay you need only write the page number of the critical text in parentheses after the quotation.

Watling points out that in Greek tragedy the Chorus has “a double function”, serving both “as actor and as commentator” (10).

If you have not used the author's name you put the surname and the page number of the reference in parentheses.

The Chorus in Greek tragedy serves a double function both “as actor and as commentator” (Watling 10).

d) Referencing quotations from poetry

Short quotations

Short poems from a collection of poems by the same author can simply be referenced by a page number if you have mentioned the author and the title of the poem in your sentence.

In the poem “Home” (112) Larkin's placing of certain words such as “left” and “bereft” at the end of lines intensifies their emotional impact.

Short poems from an anthology of poems by different poets are referenced by the author's surname and the page number.

In the poem “Sheep in Fog” the lyric voice uses personification to dramatic effect when she writes that “the hills step off into whiteness” (Plath 23).

For long poems with numbered lines the line numbers are given in parentheses.

One of the characters in Frost's poem "Death of the Hired Man" describes home as "the place where, when you have to go there / They have to take you in" (lines 118-19).

Long Quotations

For quotations of more than two complete lines the same rules apply, but the reference is given at the end of the quotation after the punctuation mark.

e) Referencing quotations from novels and short stories

Short quotations

- **If you have mentioned the name of the author in your sentence you give only the page number of the quotation in parentheses.**

Lockwood's estimation of Heathcliff as "a capital fellow" in the opening paragraph of Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is quickly undermined by Heathcliff's behaviour (45).

- **If you have not mentioned the name of the author then give both name and page number in parentheses.**

Lockwood's estimation of Heathcliff as "a capital fellow" in the opening paragraph of *Wuthering Heights* is quickly undermined by Heathcliff's behaviour (Brontë 45).

- **If you are writing about more than one text by the same author use a title word of the text and the page number.**

The suffering and isolated individual is a recurring figure in Charlotte Brontë's work beginning with the child Jane Eyre, who describes herself as "always suffering, always brow-beaten, always accused, forever condemned" (*Jane* 31).

- **If you are using texts by authors with the same surname, give their first initial followed by their surname, for example, (E. Brontë 78), (C. Brontë 33), unless of course you have mentioned their full name in your sentence.**

Long quotations

- **Follow the rules as above but write the quotation as below and place the parentheses after the punctuation.**

From the start Nelly Dean dehumanises Heathcliff in her narration, describing him frequently as “it” when she recounts Heathcliff’s arrival to Lockwood:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so I put it on the landing of the stair, hoping it would be gone by morning. (Brontë 78)

f) Referencing quotations from websites

- **If the website has an author, use his/her name (followed by a page number if there is one).**
- **If there is no author then write the first word of the citation as it appears in your Works Cited list (followed by a page number if there is one).**

It has been argued that “something often happens to these ordinary moral feelings of Marxists [...] after a prolonged exposure to Marxist doctrine: their morality becomes politicised” (Levin).

[Note that words omitted from a quotation are indicated by three dots set within square brackets.]

The citation for the example above would be written in your Works Cited list as follows:

Levin, Richard. “Marxist Criticism And/Or/Versus a Clearer Sense of Justice”. *Renaissance Forum*, 1.2 (1996): n. pag. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.

5. How to write a “Works Cited” list at the end of your essay

At the end of every essay you will have to provide a list of Works Cited. This is a list of **all** the texts (and websites) you have used in your essay. The list will include:

- your primary texts, such as *King Lear* or *Wuthering Heights*;
- secondary texts, which will list any critical sources you have used, for example, *Thinking About Texts* by C. Hopkins;
- any websites you may have accessed.

Remember to compile this list whilst you are working on your essay.

NOTE THE PUNCTUATION!

- Use a separate page for your Works Cited list
- Use double spacing
- All the works you list must be organised alphabetically, placing the author's or editor's last name first
- The author's or editor's name is followed by the title of the novel/play/critical work/website etc.
- Then comes: place of publication – publisher – date of publication
- Medium of publication (for example, "Print" or "Web")
- If it is a "Web" resource then also provide date accessed (see Levin, below)

Example:

Works Cited

Bradbury, Malcolm, ed. *The Penguin Book of Modern British Short Stories*. London: Penguin, 1988. Print.

Bilton, Alan. "Reassessing the Role of Film in *Tender Is the Night*". *F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*, 5 (2006): 28-53. Print.

Carter, Angela. *The Magic Toyshop*. London: Virago, 1981. Print.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983. Print.

Levin, Richard. "Marxist Criticism And/Or/Versus a Clearer Sense of Justice". *Renaissance Forum*, 1.2 (1996): n. pag. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.

Lodge, David. *Nice Work*. London: Penguin, 1988. Print.

--- . *The Art of Fiction*. London: Penguin, 1992. Print.*

Selden, Raman. *Practising Theory and Reading Literature*. Guildford and King's Lynn: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989. Print.

***three hyphens and a full stop indicate another work by the same author**

How to cite individual poems, plays, short stories, or critical essays

If you are referring to a poem, play, short story, or critical essay that appears in a text containing a number of these, they are written in your Works Cited list as follows:

- the author of the poem, play, short story or critical essay appears first
- this is followed by the title of the poem, short story or essay **in inverted commas and in normal typeface**
- then comes the title of the text in *italics* that the poem, short story etc. appears in, referenced as normal **except for the following note:**

The names of the authors or editors of the **main** text are written in the order of first name first.
(See the Briggs example entry below.)
- The page reference for the poem/short story etc. is then given at the end.

You will see that these kinds of Works Cited entries are also organised alphabetically by author's surname.

Examples:

Briggs, Julia. "Tears at the Wedding: Shakespeare's Last Phase". *Shakespeare's Late Plays*. Ed. Jennifer Richards and James Knowles. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999. 210 – 227. Print.

Donne, John. "Love's Growth". *The New Penguin Book of English Verse*. Ed. Paul Keegan. London: Penguin, 2000. 227. Print.

Hemingway, Ernest. "The Short Happy Life of Frances Macomber". *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. New York: Scribner's, 1938. 3 – 37. Print.

How to cite websites

- If there is an editor, author, or compiler name, list the surname first. Include alphabetically in your works Cited list.
- Name of Site.
- Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher).
- Date of resource creation (if available, if not, write “n.d.”).
- Medium of publication (for example, “Web”).
- Date of access

Example:

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.

How to cite online articles

- If there is an author for the webpage you are using, list the surname first. Include alphabetically in your Works Cited list.
- If there is no author, give the title of the article first and list alphabetically by the first letter.
- State that it is an online resource by writing “Web”
- Give the date on which you accessed the website.
- For articles taken from an online database, provide the name of the database prior to “Web”, and then the date of access

Examples:

Dolby, Nadine. “Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future Directions.” *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal* 6.2 (2008): n. pag. Web. 26 Oct 2011.

Keyishan, Harry. “Griselda on the Elizabethan Stage: The *Patient Grissil* of Chettle, Dekker, and Haughton”. *Studies in English Literature* 16.2 (1976): 253-261. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.

Note the way in which these citations are set out

Some Final Points

- **ALL** quotations form part of your final word count. Your Works Cited list does not.
- **AVOID** websites such as *Sparknotes*, *123helpme* and similar – these are NOT reliable academic resources, and will be detrimental to your essay. You have access to reliable resources such as *JSTOR*, *LION* and *Project Muse* via the library's online database.
- Try not to become over-reliant upon Microsoft Word's spell-checker and thesaurus – it can often make for rather odd or unwieldy syntax.