Writing Papers at BBC in the MLA Format

By

Your Name

Course Number and Name

Instructor’s Name

Date
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Formal research papers are generally expected to follow rules that govern the presentation of the material and the documentation of sources. There are more than one set of rules. The Chicago and Turabian styles follow the more traditional approach and demand extensive use of footnotes. The APA style has been designed for those writing in the field of psychology. At BBC, we have chosen to adopt the system designed by the Modern Language Association. The MLA style has been developed primarily for those writing in the broad field of the humanities. It simplifies the documentation process by replacing the traditional footnote with in-text notes like the one inserted here (Gibaldi 66).

Boise Bible College departs from the MLA standard in four ways. They are listed here, and are explained later in the body of this paper.

1. A title page is required on all formal papers.
2. Your name is not to appear on the header line with the page number.
3. Because title pages are being utilized, the upper left portion of the first page of the text will not include the information that the MLA style calls for (your name, the instructor's name, the course, and the date). The title of the paper, though, should be centered at the top of that page.
4. A Works Consulted page is required rather than a Works Cited.
5. MLA calls for the use of a period between a Bible chapter and verse (e.g., Ezekiel 1.23). At BBC we tend to prefer to use a colon instead (e.g., Ezekiel 1:23). You are welcome to choose either method.

In all other matters, BBC uses the MLA standards as described and illustrated by the Purdue Online Writing Lab (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/).

Format for a Manuscript in MLA Style

The BBC version of the MLA style mandates that some elements appear in all formal research papers. These required elements are the title page, the text of the paper, and the Works Consulted page. Occasionally it may be necessary to add optional elements like an outline, content endnotes, and an appendix. Individual faculty members will notify you if any of these optional elements are to be included.
in your paper. Both the required and optional elements are described below in the order in which they should appear in the finished product.

The **title page (required at BBC)** consists of three parts spaced equally on the page. Use balanced, even margins for all sides of the title page. Place the title of the paper toward the top of the page. If the title is too long to fit on one line, separate it into two or more lines, arranging them in a kind of inverted pyramid. Your full name is placed in the middle of the page, preceded two lines above with a “by.” Finally, insert the course information, instructor, and date toward the bottom of the page. (See the title page of this document as an example.)

The **outline** is **optional**. However, if your instructor requires one, Lester recommends that you “place it after the title page on separate pages that are numbered at the top right-hand corner with lowercase Roman numerals beginning with ii (e.g., ii, iii, iv, v)”(203). An example of an outline is located in Appendix C.

The **text of the paper** is obviously **required**, and is of course the most important part of your paper. Several guidelines govern this part of the writing assignment. The margins should be one inch on all sides. Because you will be using a title page, you do not need to repeat the title page information in the upper left corner of the first page as generally required by MLA standards. You do, however, need to center the title of your paper above your first paragraph. Everything in the paper, except for the title page, should be double-spaced. The first line of each paragraph is indented five spaces or one-half inch. Right margin justification is prohibited.

You are **not required** to use **section headings** in your paper, but they are often quite helpful to the reader. If you wish to insert headings, insert them on the left margin, capitalizing all major words. You can number the section headings if you wish, but again that is optional.

**Content endnotes** are **optional** but sometimes extremely helpful to the reader. Endnotes are utilized to give important information that is not germane to the paper, to provide additional interesting information on the subject, to add explanatory notes, or to offer more biblical references for a point made in the paper. This page should be labeled “Notes,” centered toward the top edge of the sheet, at least one
double space below the page numbering sequence in the upper right corner. Double-space between the “Notes” heading and the first note. Number the notes in sequence with raised superscript numerals to match those within your text. Double-space all entries, and double-space between them.

The final optional part of the paper is the appendix. This is the place for detailed data that support your case but would clutter up the text of your paper. These would include such items as supporting documents, large tables of data, and extensive lists. Appendices are placed after the text of the paper and any endnotes that have been included. “The page number sequence should be continued in the upper right corner of the sheet” (Lester 205). The page should be labeled “Appendix” if there is only one. If more than one appendix is included, they should be labeled “Appendix A,” “Appendix B,” and so forth.

The final required element in formal papers written at BBC is the Works Consulted page. This page is very important since it allows the reader to verify your claims or to do further research. It should list all sources that were consulted when you were researching the paper. These sources should be alphabetized by the last name of the author (or the first word of the entry if the work has no stated author). The titles of longer works should be italicized and after each source you are expected to identify the nature of the source (e.g., print, web, CD-Rom, DVD, download, etc.). For detailed instructions on writing your entries properly, please see MLA reference works. There are many online citation aids available. Please be aware that although these citation helpers may assist with typical citations, the BBC library contains many atypical documents. The writer of the paper is ultimately responsible for correct citations. Some examples of the more common types of references BBC students make use of are found in Appendix A.

The formatting of the Works Consulted page remains consistent with the formatting of the pages of the text of the paper. The page number goes on the top right header line and all entries are double-spaced. Whether you are typing the second line of a reference or starting a new reference, the spacing remains the same. What changes is that the second line of a reference is to be indented half of an inch in what is referred to as a “hanging indent.” To see an example of the correct layout of a Works Consulted page, see the example at the end of this document.
In-Text Citations

The most distinguishing characteristic of the MLA style is the abbreviated parenthetical citations that replace footnote citations or endnote citations. Whether you quote, paraphrase, or borrow a key idea from a particular source, you must give credit to that source. According to William Forsythe, when you refer to the author’s name in the text, the MLA style does not require you to repeat the name in the parenthetical citation (29). Another authority says, “If the source’s name does not appear, then the last name is included with the page number” (Lester 181). When the source does not have a named author, then you will use a shortened form of the title of that work. You will run into other common situations like authors with multiple titles, authors with shared last names, and multiple authors for a work. Appendix A provides explanations for some of these. For those not covered there, you will have to consult a more exhaustive MLA guide.

Occasionally you may need to insert a quote that runs longer than one line. In such situations, you will use a block quote like this one:

When a quote runs four or more lines, the whole quote is introduced with a colon and is indented ten spaces or one inch. Double-spacing is continued, though no quotation marks are used at either the beginning or end of the quotation. In these situations the in-text citation appears after the period. An important rule of thumb about such quotations is that they should be used very sparingly. (Lester 205)

Using too many quotes will give the paper a choppy, sterile tone. In general, only use direct quotations when “language is especially vivid or expressive, exact wording is needed for technical accuracy, the debaters of an issue need to explain their position in their own words, or the language of a source is the topic of discussion” (Hacker and Sommers 469). When quotations are used, writers need to imbed the quotation into their own sentences to avoid a “dropped quote”: a quotation seeming to exist without a specific purpose. Often it is preferable that writers are able to summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize information using their own words rather than a direct quotation; writers that can blend crucial
information from outside sources with their own writing are more likely to produce powerful and persuasive papers. See Appendix B for special cases of in-text citations.

**MLA Techniques**

Arranging the elements of a paper in proper sequence and properly handling in-text citations are the two major building blocks of a properly written paper. There are other minor issues that need to be addressed.

Formal papers are not the place to use creative fonts. The preferred fonts are size 12 point Times New Roman (the font used in this paper) or Arial (which looks like this). The same font should be used throughout the paper.

It is important to put page numbers on your paper. A slight modification from the MLA style is made at BBC, and students are asked not to put their last names with the page number.¹ The first page of your text is considered the first page of your paper. Page numbers should be placed in the upper right-hand corner, ½ inch down from the top of the page.

During the days of typewriters underlining was used as a substitute for italics. That convention is no longer necessary. So you should refer to major works like books, magazines, and journals by italicizing their titles. Minor works like articles, lectures, and chapters should be contained within quotation marks. A more complete listing of works and how they are to be listed can be found at the end of this paper in Appendix C.

No corrections may be added to a paper by hand, and unless otherwise instructed by the instructor, all submissions are to be on paper rather than in electronic form.

**Conclusion**

This sample paper covers the basics of the MLA style. More technical details are covered in BBC’s English classes, or can be found in MLA manuals in the library or on-line.
Notes

1BBC’s policy of not placing last names with page numbers has a practical purpose. Some faculty turn all papers to the first page of text before starting to grade any of them. This allows them to grade papers without being biased by their personal feelings about the author of the material.
Appendix A

The material in this appendix is designed to provide examples of in-text citations and Works Consulted citations for many of the common types of resources you might use. Please cite editors when they are mentioned on the title page.

General Guidelines: Books (Please Note: For Encyclopedias and Dictionaries see “Reference Work” below)

- **Single Author**


  **In-text citation:** (Pirolo 45)

- **Two or Three Authors**


  **In-text citation:** (Anderson and Moore 45)

- **More than Three Authors**

  Either name all contributors or name the first one listed and add “et al.” (Latin for “and others”).


  **In-text citation:** (Faber, Byerly, Grove, and Whittaker 45) or (Faber et al. 45)

- **Group or Agency as Author**


  **In-text citation:** Use the organization as the author in the text and then cite the page number (45).
• **Unknown Author**


   **In-text citation:** Use a shortened form of the title (*Illustrated Atlas* 45).

• **Two or More Titles by Same Author**

   Use three hyphens in place of author’s name after the first entry.


   **In-text citation:** (Lucado, *He Chose* 73)

   See Appendix B, Example #1

**General Guidelines:** **Reference:** Reference works and other books located in the reference section of the BBC library.

• **Reference Work with Listed Volume Numbers** (*certain commentaries and anthologies*)

   Identify each volume consulted by the author of that volume. If multiple volumes are used, each volume will be listed separately.


   **In-text citation:** (Carson 45)

• **Article or Selection from a Commentary, Reader or Anthology**


   **In-text citation:** (Howard 215)
• **Reference Work with Signed Articles** *(e.g., encyclopedia that names the authors of individual articles)*

    Omit the place of publication, publisher, and page numbers (page numbers are not included in alphabetized texts).


    **In-text citation:** (Benedict)

• **Reference Work with Unsigned Articles** *(e.g., dictionaries or encyclopedia that do not name the authors of individual articles.)*

    If only one word is referenced, list the word in your Works Consulted page. If multiple words are referenced, cite only the book in your Works Consulted page and cite the individual words in the text of your paper.

    **Works Consulted reference:** Omit the place of publication, publisher, and page numbers.


    Or


    **In-text citation:** (“Philistines”)

• **Lexicons of Foreign Languages** *(e.g., BDAG)*

    Cite the book in your Works Consulted page. If only one word is referenced, list the word in your Works Consulted page. If multiple words are referenced, cite the book without the entry and cite the individual words in the text of your paper.


    **In-text citation:** (“Oikos”)

• **Bible**

    You only need to specify the version if you are quoting the verse. Once you have specified the version, you don’t need to specify the version again unless you are quoting a different version.

    *(New International Version, Rev. 21:4)*
General Guideline: Magazines and Journals

- Article in Magazine

**Works Consulted reference:** Identified by date of publication (not volume).


**In-text citation:** (Sabatino 21-2).

- Article in Scholarly Journal

**Works Consulted reference:** These are usually identified by volume number or season.


**In-text citation:** (Carlson 7)

- Newspaper Article

**Works Consulted reference:**


**In-text citation:** (Warbis A1)

General Guidelines: Electronic Sources

- Short Work from a Web Site


**In-text citation:** Please cite the author’s name if available, or the name of the article. Page numbers are not used with online sources that were never printed documents (“Why are Statistics”).
• Web Page


**In-text citation:** Preferably mention the source in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary.

Otherwise use the author’s name if available or a shortened form of the title (“Admissions”).

• Computer Software


**In-text citation:** Preferably mention the source in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary.

Otherwise use the author’s name if available or a shortened form of the title (3D Home).

• Web Version of a Printed Text or Article


**In-text citation:** Cite like a printed version of the text, using the author’s name and a page number if provided (Bernstein).

• Article from SIRS Researcher *(note that SIRS is self-citing, but may need the url removed)*


**In-text citation:** Cite like a printed version of the text, using the author’s name and a page number if provided (Mann 42).

• Email


**In-text citation:** Preferably mention the source in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary.

Otherwise use the author’s name (Smith).

• DVD or Videotape

Videocassette.

**In-text citation:** Preferably mention the source in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary. Otherwise use the author’s name if available or a shortened form of the title (Harrington).

- **Personal Interview**

**Works Consulted reference:**

James, Peter. Personal interview. 15 June 1998.

**In-text citation:** Preferably refer to the interview in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary. Otherwise use the name of the person interviewed (James).

- **Lecture**

**Works Consulted reference:**


**In-text citation:** Preferably refer to the lecture in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary. Otherwise use the name of the lecturer (Cook).

- **Television Program**

**Works Consulted reference:**


**In-text citation:** Preferably refer to the program in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary. Otherwise use the name (or a shortened version) of the program. (“No Surrender”)
Appendix B

Special cases of in-text citations

1. **When a single author is cited in two or more works:**
   
   It is better, if possible, to use the author’s name to introduce the quote, and then for the parenthetical note, use keywords from each title instead of the author’s last name. For example, C.S. Lewis wrote *The Four Loves* and *The Screwtape Letters*. For parenthetical notes, use the following: *(Four Loves 35)* and *(Screwtape 25)*.

2. **When a work with no author is cited:**

   For the parenthetical note, use keywords from the title of the work. Consider an article entitled “The Four Stages of Mental Health.” The parenthetical note could be (“Four Stages” 25).

3. **When more than one work is cited in one note**

   More than one work may be cited for a particular item of information. Simply separate the works with a semi-colon (Faulkner 45; Jones 32-5).

4. **When a work is cited with no page number – see #14 on Appendix A**

5. **When an author is quoted in another person’s work**

   Suppose Mark Green is to be quoted, but the quote is found in Robert Walker’s book. For example: Mark Green explains, “The first state ends with an increase” (qtd. in Walker 58).

6. **When the same work is cited twice in a row**

   When citing the same work in succession, simply cite the page number only on the second citation. For example, (Stabler 45) would be the first citation, followed by (58), which would indicate this information was also from Stabler.
Appendix C

Works to be Italicized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin</td>
<td>Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlet</td>
<td>Periodical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Show</td>
<td>Television Show</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Works to be Contained in Quotation Marks

Titles of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Essays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>Songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Individual episodes of Television Show</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Do not italicize the titles of essays, lectures, poems, sermons, and stories. However, these items are usually published as part of an anthology, in which case you would underscore the title of the anthology” (Lester 239).

Handling Titles of Sacred Writings

Do not underline the titles of sacred writings (e.g., Genesis, Old Testament).
Appendix D

Outlines need to have parallel structure between points, and at least two points are needed in each section (every A needs a B, every 1 needs a 2 etc.). Please remember that since the outline is located before the actual paper, a small Roman numeral is used as a page number.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

I. CHOOSE DESIRED COLLEGES
   A. Visit and evaluate college campuses
   B. Visit and evaluate college websites
      1. Look for interesting classes
      2. Note important statistics

II. PREPARE APPLICATION
   A. Write personal statement
      1. Choose interesting topic
         a. Describe an influential person in your life
            (1) Favorite high school teacher
            (2) Grandparent
         b. Describe a challenging life event
      2. Include important personal details
         a. Volunteer work
         b. Participation in varsity sports
   B. Revise personal statement

III. COMPILÉ RÉSUMÉ
   A. List relevant coursework
   B. List work experience
Works Consulted


