

(Title) Formatting Research Papers at BBC using MLA Documentation

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Research papers are typical for every college and university. Why? Would it not be easier just to discuss what we have learned with our professors? If only it were that simple; the purpose of college is to challenge and grow our critical thinking skills. Writing, in fact, strengthens our critical thinking, especially when that writing incorporates research. Make no mistake: research is not about copying-and-pasting information from Google, nor it is about summarizing the work of other people. Proper research is about synthesizing (assimilating) our own thoughts with that of other people's (*MLA Handbook for Writers* 4). Because we are all held to a high standard of intellectual integrity, formal research papers are generally expected to follow rules that govern their presentation of written material and documentation of sources used. There are more than one set of rules that govern documentation of sources (Chicago, Turabian, and APA to name a prominent few). At Boise Bible College, we have chosen to adopt the documentation system designed by the Modern Language Association (MLA). The eighth edition of the MLA style has evolved for writers in the digital age who research in the broad field of humanities. For in-depth explanation of MLA documentation, see Appendix A at the end of this paper.

Pay attention: MLA's eighth edition no longer bothers itself with formatting of research papers; it only concerns itself with precise documentation of sources. However, **BBC requires all formal research papers to use doubling spacing and Times New Roman at size twelve and to have a title page, page numbers in the upper right corner, one-inch margins on all four sides, and a Works Cited or Consulted page.** It is important to note that format (margins, spacing, font, page numbers, etc.) should remain consistent from the title page to the Works Cited 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. The optional elements are described later in this paper. The order in which a finished paper should be: title page, outline, text of paper (with optional section headings), appendix, and Works Consulted page.

The **title page** consists of three parts spaced equally on the page. Use one-inch margins for all sides of the title page and double spacing. Center the title of the paper at the top of the page. Center your name in the middle of the page, preceded two lines above with “by.” Finally, center the course title, instructor’s name, and due date at 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, James 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).

The **text of the paper** is obviously **required**, and is of course the most important part of your paper. Remember, the margins should be one inch on all sides and the paper should be double-spaced. Repeat the title of your paper, centered above your first paragraph (not in the header of the paper). Keep the text of the paper aligned to the left. The first line of each paragraph must be indented one-half inch. 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 or put them in bold if you wish.

The other **required** piece in the text of your paper is to cite the sources you reference using **in-text (or parenthetical) citations**, which point to the sources you use on your Works Consulted/Cited page. 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 using an in-text citation. 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. However, when no author is named in the text, standard citations will include the name in the citation. When the source does not have a named author, then you will use a shortened form of the title in the citation. 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 eighth edition guide or see Appendix B for special cases of in-text citations. Occasionally you may need to insert a long block quote like this one:

Block quotations are extended quotations (usually more than four typed lines) that are set off in a block from the rest of the text. In general, use a colon [:] to introduce the quotation, indent the entire quotation [half an] inch from the left margin, and include source information [after the end punctuation]... Since the blocked text indicates to your readers that you are quoting directly, you do not need to include quotation marks.

(Palmquist 264)

Then continue your paragraph as normal. Beware: using too many quotes (especially block quotations) will give the paper a choppy, sterile tone (boring!). However, writers who can blend crucial information from outside sources with their own writing are more likely to produce powerful and persuasive papers.

The final **optional** part of the paper is the **appendix**. This is the place for detailed data that supports 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

before the Works Cited/Consulted page, after the text of the paper. Page numbers should continue as normal (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 Cited or Consulted** page. This element of your paper is very important since it allows the reader to verify your claims or to do further research. All your in-text citations point to the sources on this page. These sources should be alphabetized by the first word of the entry of the source. Works “Consulted” means that you included all sources you looked at for the construction of your paper, whether or not you cite the sources in your paper. By contrast, Works “Cited” means that you included only sources you cite in your paper. For detailed instructions on formatting your entries properly according to the eighth edition of MLA, please see the examples found in Appendix A. Remember, the formatting of the Works Cited/Consulted page remains consistent with the formatting of the rest of the paper. The page number goes on the top right header line and all entries are double-spaced with no skipped lines. Be aware that the second line of a source entry is to be indented half of an inch in what is referred to as a “hanging indent” (you can tell Microsoft to do this automatically: highlight your entries on the page, right click, choose “paragraph,” and change Indentation – Special to “hanging”). See this paper’s Works Consulted page as an example of the correct layout.

Formatting research papers is actually the easy part because it is like plugging numbers into a formula. The difficulty of research papers is synthesizing research. Practice synthesizing your own opinion about a fun subject with two of your friends’ opinions and post it on social media. This is a fun way to practice critical thinking, but don’t forget to cite your friends!

Appendix A – Understanding MLA 8th edition

The material in this appendix is designed to explain the philosophy of the eighth edition of MLA’s documentation style. Use these principles to guide your process of MLA documentation:

1. “Cite simple traits shared by most works” (like author, title, date of publication, etc.)
2. “Remember that *there is often more than one correct way to document a source*”
3. “Make your documentation useful to readers” (*think* about the sources and how your readers might find them) (*MLA Handbook* 3-4)

The key word to know for the eighth edition of MLA is “container.” The “container” is an attempt to standardize documentation in the digital age. Think of the container as the holding cell for the source.

I. Self-Contained Sources:

Let’s start simple, using this template to the right to help us. This book (*The Call*) is a container unto itself because it is not inside a bigger collection of books/articles and it does not hold smaller sources (like articles) within it.

Notice that the periods in MLA definitely come after the author, the title of the source, and at the very end of the entry. Otherwise, commas separate the information within each container.

Author	•	Guinness, Os.
Title of Source	•	<i>The Call.</i>
Title of 1st Container	•	
Other contributors (editors, translators, etc.)	•	
Version (or edition)	•	
Number (volume, issue, episode, etc.)	•	
Publisher	•	W Publishing Group,
Publication date	•	2003.
Location (pages, URL, permalink, time stamp, etc.)	•	
Title of 2nd Container	•	
Other contributors (editors, translators, etc.)	•	
Version (or edition)	•	
Number (volume, issue, episode, etc.)	•	
Publisher	•	
Publication date	•	
Location (pages, URL, permalink, time stamp, etc.)	•	
Complete Works Cited Entry:		Guinness, Os. <i>The Call.</i> W Publishing Group, 2003.

This table is a re-creation of the 8th edition template published by the Modern Language Association.

Books with One Author

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Pirola, Neal. *Serving as Senders*. Emmaus Road, 1991.

In-text citation: (Pirola 45)

Books with Two Authors

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Anderson, Neil, and Hyatt Moore. *In Search of the Source*. Multnomah Press, 1992.

In-text citation: (Anderson and Moore 45)

Books with Three or More Authors (the *et al.* is a Latin abbreviation for “and others”)

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Faber, Charles, et al. *The Joy of Bible Study*. Bible Resource Publishers, 2004.

In-text citation: (Faber et al. 45)

Books with Corporate Author (Group or Agency as Author): If the publisher is the same as the author, then skip to the title.

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

In-home Repair Guide. Reader’s Digest, 1977.

In-text citation: (*In-home Repair Guide* 84).

Two or More Titles by Same Author:

Works Cited/Consulted reference. Use three hyphens in place of author’s name after the first entry.

Lucado, Max. *And the Angels Were Silent*. Multnomah, 1992.

---. *He Chose the Nails*. Word-Nelson, 1998.

In-text citation: Make sure to use a shortened form of title (Lucado, *He Chose* 73)

The Bible or Other Sacred Texts

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

The New International Version Bible. Edited by J. P. Jones, Creation Pub., 1978.

Parenthetical note: You only need to state the version in your paper if you are citing more than one version in your paper.

MLA's official approach: (*New International Version*, Rev. 21:4)

Also acceptable at BBC: (*New International Version*, Rev. 21:4)

Using Only One Volume of a Multi-volume Collection

Works Cited/Consulted reference: Identify the volume by the author of that volume, or the section used, along with the editor (if different from the author), and the total number of volumes.

Carson, D. A. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, vol.8, Zondervan, 1984.

In-text citation: (Carson 45)

Using Several Volumes of a Multi-volume Collection

Works Cited/Consulted reference: Give the total number of volumes. *If each volume has a different author, then list each volume separately*, especially if you're citing it in the text.

Gaebelin, Frank E., editor. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Zondervan, 1988. 12 vols.

In-text citation: (Gaebelin 6: 45) meaning volume 6 page 45

II. Sources in One Container:

The example in the template is an **Article or Selection from a Reader or Anthology**

In-text citation: (Howard 215)

Author	•	Howard, David.
Title of Source	•	“Student Power in World Missions.”
Title of 1 st Container	•	<i>Perspectives on the World Christian Movement,</i>
Other contributors (editors, translators, etc.)	•	edited by Steven Hawthorne and Ralph Winter,
Version (or edition)	•	
Number (volume, issue, episode, etc.)	•	
Publisher	•	William Carey Library,
Publication date	•	1981,
Location (pages, URL, permalink, time stamp, etc.)	•	pp. 210-221.
Title of 2 nd Container	•	
Other contributors (editors, translators, etc.)	•	
Version (or edition)	•	
Number (volume, issue, episode, etc.)	•	
Publisher	•	
Publication date	•	
Location (pages, URL, permalink, time stamp, etc.)	•	
Complete Works Cited Entry:		Howard, David. “Student Power in World Missions.” <i>Perspectives on the World Christian Movement</i> , edited by Steven Hawthorne and Ralph Winter, William Carey Library, 1981, pp. 210-221.

Notice the title in quotation marks is a smaller work within a larger work (container).

This table is a re-creation of the 8th edition template published by the Modern Language Association.

Article in a Magazine

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

Sabatino, David. "The Power of Music." *Worship Leader*, May 1999, pp. 20-22.

In-text citation: (Sabatino 21-22).

Article in Scholarly Journal

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

Carlson, Robert. "Hope for Hurting Marriages." *Leadership*, winter volume, 1986, pp.2-8.

In-text citation: (Carlson 7)

Newspaper Article

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Warbis, Mark. "Governor to Launch Committee Dealing with School Violence." *Idaho Statesman*, 1 August 1999, A1.

In-text citation: (Warbis A1)

Web Page

Works Cited/Consulted reference: Try to find the permalink for a webpage. If you can't find one, then use a standard URL.

"Admissions." *Boise Bible College*, www.boisebible.edu/admissions/admissions-overview.

In-text citation: Use location method given by the website. *If there are no section numbers, page numbers, or paragraph numbers, then don't include anything except the title or author:*

("Admissions") The website did not give paragraph or page numbers, so the page title

alone suffices.

Web Version of a Printed Text or Article

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Ziv, Stav. "Water Found on Mars: NASA." *Newsweek*, 28 Sept. 2015,
<http://www.newsweek.com/water-mars-nasa-377573>.

In-text citation: (Ziv) The website did not give paragraph or page numbers, so the author's name alone suffices.

Television Program

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

"Under the Gun." *Pretty Little Liars*, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013.

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.

("Under the Gun")

III. Sources within Two Containers:

Any sources from an **Online Periodical Database** or **Logos Software** will fall into this third category. Here is an example from the temple for the category:

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Brazier, P. H. "C. S. Lewis: A Doctrine of Transposition." *Heythrop Journal*, vol. 50, issue 4, Jul 2009, pp. 669-688. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=41228358&authtype=cookie,cpid&custid=s5664151&site=ehost-live.

In-text citation: (Brazier 679)

Author	•	Brazier, P. H.
Title of Source	•	“C. S. Lewis: A Doctrine of Transposition.”
Title of 1 st Container	•	<i>Heythrop Journal</i> ,
Other contributors (editors, translators, etc.)	•	
Version (or edition)	•	
Number (volume, issue, episode, etc.)	•	vol. 50, issue 4,
Publisher	•	
Publication date	•	Jul 2009,
Location (pages, URL, permalink, time stamp, etc.)	•	pp. 669-688.
Title of 2 nd Container	•	<i>EBSCOhost</i> ,
Other contributors (editors, translators, etc.)	•	
Version (or edition)	•	
Number (volume, issue, episode, etc.)	•	
Publisher	•	
Publication date	•	
Location (pages, URL, permalink, time stamp, etc.)	•	search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=41228358&authtype=cookie,cpid&custid=s5664151&site=ehost-live.
Complete Works Cited Entry:		Brazier, P. H. “C. S. Lewis: A Doctrine of Transposition.” <i>Heythrop Journal</i> , vol. 50, issue 4, Jul 2009, pp. 669-688. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=41228358&authtype=cookie,cpid&custid=s5664151&site=ehost-live.

This table is a re-creation of the 8th edition template published by the Modern Language Association.

IV. Miscellaneous Sources

Email

Works Cited/Consulted reference:

Smith, Doug. "Re: Preaching in Society." Received by Joseph Normandy, 3 May 1998.

In-text citation: Preferably mention the source in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary. Otherwise use the author's name. (Smith)

Personal Interview

Works Cited/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 Cited/Consulted reference:

Cook, Joe. "Paul's Second Missionary Journey." Acts Class, 19 Mar.1995, Boise Bible College.

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)

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) or (Lewis, *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 that is cited does not provide a page number or paragraph number

Many digital sources do not provide page numbers. In this situation, it is preferred that you mention the source in the text; no parenthetical citation is then necessary. Otherwise use the author's last name if available or a shortened form of the title. SIRS provides page numbers, as do some of the newer electronic titles. If page numbers are supplied it is important to include that information in the citation.

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 (typically long, self-contained works)

Book	Long Poem
Drama / Play	Web Site
Film	Newspaper
Academic Journal	Magazine
Novel	Artwork / Musical Album
Radio Show	Television Show

Works to be in Quotation Marks (typically short works contained with other short works)

Articles	Essays
Chapters	Songs
Lectures / Sermons	Web page
Reports	Individual episodes of Television Show

Handling Titles of Sacred Writings

Do not underline or italicize or put quotation marks around the titles of Scripture (e.g., Genesis, Old Testament).

Works Consulted

Hairston, Maxine, et al. *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*. 5th ed., Longman, 1999.

Lester, James. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. 8th ed., HarperCollins, 1996.

MLA Handbook. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

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

Palmquist, Mike. *The Bedford Researcher*. 5th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.

“Writing Papers at BBC in MLA Format.” *Boise Bible College*, 25 Sept. 2014,

www.boisebible.edu/assets/files/PDF/MLA_Format_S14.pdf.