MLA GUIDE

CCS English Department

This guide is based on the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* (2016).

There are two basic requirements for MLA format:

1) The paper must look a certain way.

2) All sources must be properly documented with in-text (parenthetical) citations and works cited entries.

APPEARANCE

The following requirements should be applied to **all pages** of your paper:

- ☐ typed
- ☐ double-spaced
- ☐ font (Times New Roman / 12 pt.)
- ☐ one inch (1") margins
- ☐ student's last name and page number (upper right corner)

The following requirements should also be applied to the **first page** of your paper:

- ☐ identification (double-spaced / upper left corner):
  - student's name
  - instructor's name (e.g. Mr. Foran)
  - course title (e.g. English 12)
  - date (e.g. 29 September 2016)
- ☐ paper's title (centered)

The following requirements should also be applied to the **works cited page** of your paper:

- ☐ Works Cited heading (centered)
- ☐ entries in alphabetical order
- ☐ second and subsequent lines of each entry indented

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

MLA requires that an in-text (or parenthetical) citation accompany each quotation or paraphrase in your paper. An in-text citation is set off with parentheses and, in most cases, will include the last name of the source's author and the page number(s) indicating the location of the quotation or paraphrase in the source.

> **For example:** Franz Kafka experienced a whole series of contradictory elements in his life, including "the problematic but ultimately productive tension...between the office and his writing" (Adler 55).

If you include the author's name in the context of your sentence, omit it from the citation.

> **For example:** According to Jeremy Adler, Professor of German Literature at King's College London, Franz Kafka experienced a whole series of contradictory elements in his life, including "the problematic but ultimately productive tension...between the office and his writing" (55).

If an author's name is not available, use the title of the source.

> **For example:** ("German Romantic Poets" 78)

If the title is longer than a noun phrase, use a shortened version that includes the first noun and any preceding adjectives, omitting any articles.

> **For example:** Instead of ("The Importance of Historical Context" 165-167), you would use ("Importance" 165-167).

If the title does not begin with a noun phrase, use the first word (or as many as will clearly identify the source).

> **For example:** Instead of ("Employing Poetic Devices" 33), you would use ("Employing" 33).

When a source does not have page numbers, do not include any.

> **For example:** ("Metonym")

If your source is a poem, use the title of the poem instead of the author's name.

> **For example:** ("Fern Hill" 26)

If the poem's lines are unnumbered, include the page number (as in the previous example). When the poem's lines are numbered, include line numbers. Make sure to use the word *line* or *lines* in the first citation referring to the poem, so the reader will know you are including line numbers, not page numbers. Subsequent citations referring to the same poem do not need to include the word *line* or *lines*.

For example: ("The Thin People" lines 3-4) then ("The Thin People" 7-9)

If the poem's length does not exceed one page in the source, you do not need to include page or line numbers.

For example: ("Istanbul")

When quoting from a long poetic work (such as an epic poem) that includes division numbers (e.g. cantos), use the division number and line numbers.

For example: (*Odyssey* 2.37)

If the source is a dramatic work that is written in prose, include the author's name and the page number, followed by a semicolon and division numbers (act, scene).

For example: (Beckett 13; act 1)

If the source is a dramatic work written in verse (e.g. Shakespeare's plays), include the title, division numbers (act, scene), and line numbers.

For example: (*Macbeth* 1.2.3-4)

When citing scripture, include the abbreviated name of the book (when applicable), as well as the chapter and verse numbers.

For example: (Gen. 1.1-2)

WORKS CITED ENTRIES

MLA requires that documentation for each source used in your paper be included on the works cited page.

For example: Eco, Umberto. "The Return to the Middle Ages." *Travels in*

Hyperreality, translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace
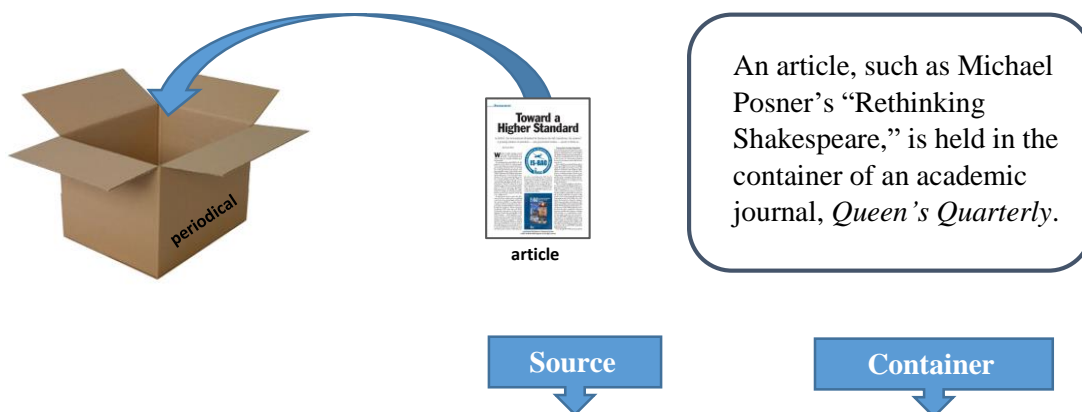
Jovanovich, 1986, pp. 59-85.

A single source may be available in multiple forms (e.g. a journal article can be accessed in print, on an e-reader, or through a database; a documentary can be viewed on Netflix, on DVD, or on YouTube). Instead of asking you to first identify the format of a source and then follow specific rules for documenting each unique medium, MLA now uses a universal set of guidelines that can be applied to all types of sources. Use the following categories to generate a works cited entry. If one of the categories does not apply to the source you are documenting, simply skip it and go to the next category.

UNIVERSAL CATEGORIES

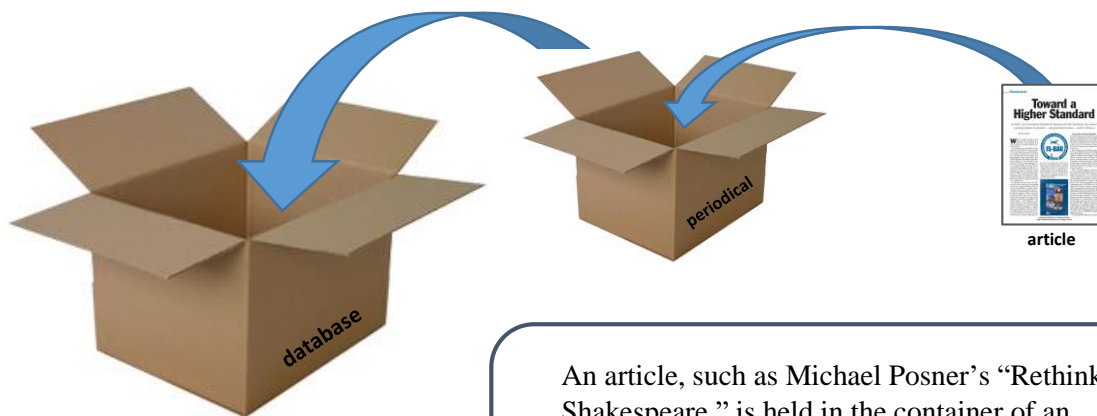|	
Author	_____
Title of Source	_____
Title of Container	_____
Other Contributors	_____
Version	_____
Number	_____
Publisher	_____
Publication Date	_____
Location	_____

"CONTAINERS"

The 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* introduces the concept of "*containers*" to the documentation process. A *container* is any larger whole which holds a smaller source. Types of *containers* include: a book (which contains essays, stories, or poems—although a novel would be a source, not a container), a periodical (which contains articles), a website (which contains articles, posts, etc.), or a database (which contains periodicals), etc.

An article, such as Michael Posner's "Rethinking Shakespeare," is held in the container of an academic journal, *Queen's Quarterly*.

For example: Posner, Michael. "Rethinking Shakespeare." *Queen's Quarterly*, vol.

115, no. 2, 2016, pp. 246-250.

In order to properly document a source, it is important to remember that some containers can be held in other containers, like nesting boxes, and that all containers should be identified.

database

periodical

article

An article, such as Michael Posner's "Rethinking Shakespeare," is held in the container of an academic journal, *Queen's Quarterly*, and the journal is held in a secondary container, a database, *Literature Resource Center*.

Source

Container 1

For example: Posner, Michael. "Rethinking Shakespeare." *Queen's Quarterly*, vol.

115, no. 2, 2016, pp. 246-250. *Literature Resource Center*,

go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE.

Container 2