The Educated Dummies’

Guide

to

MLA Documentation

Revised Edition

Aligned with *MLA Handbook,* 8th edition

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SOME BASICS

• MLA form for bibliographies generally resembles other humanities-based documentation

systems (e.g., Turabian, Chicago). It differs more radically from APA and other

systems developed for the social sciences. These differences relate mainly to the greater need

for timeliness in the sciences.

• Book titles are italicized as are transliterated Hebrew and Greek words. (Transliteration refers

to the practice of representing words and letters from one language in the characters of another

alphabet.)

• MLA and other humanities-based documentation methods differ most significantly in the

manner in which one cites sources within the text. *MLA does not use endnotes or*

*footnotes to cite sources*. *It uses parenthetical notes*. These brief parenthetical notes link the

reader to an alphabetized bibliography at the end of the paper.

• MLA uses parenthetical notes to cite sources whether the sources are quoted, paraphrased, or

summarized.

• MLA uses endnotes or footnotes only to provide additional content or comment. Parenthetical

notes may appear within those footnotes or endnotes to document their sources.

• The standard parenthetical note consists of the author’s last name and the page number. If the

author is named earlier in the sentence, the author’s name may be omitted.

*If the author has only one work in the bibliography*

(Sweeney 134) *or* Sweeney asserts…(134)

♦ Note there is no p., pg., or comma in the note.

*If the author has more than one work in the bibliography*, use a short title to distinguish

among the works written by the same author.

(Smith, *Major* 57) (Smith, *Minor* 89)

*If the author is cited in another’s work*

(Ball qtd. in Sweeney 83)

• Essays and chapters contained in edited anthologies should be cited by the name of the author

of the essay or chapter, not the name of the collection’s editor.

• Signed dictionary or encyclopedia articles should be cited by the name of the article’s author.

Unsigned dictionary or encyclopedia articles should be cited by a short article title. The same

is true for newspaper and magazine articles.

• Students and instructors may consult Clay Ham and Cara Snyder, “A Student’s Guide to the

*MLA Handbook*” in addition to *The MLA Handbook*.

Sample Bibliography Entries with Notes on Special Parenthetical Note Forms

Book; One author; Standard form

Ball, Ivan J., Jr. *Zephaniah: A Rhetorical Study*. BIBAL, 1988.

## Book; One author; Later edition

Dumbrell, William J. *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed., Baker, 2002.

## Book; multiple authors

Garrison, Winfred Ernest, and Alfred T. DeGroot. *The Disciples of Christ: A History*. Christian Board of Publication, 1948.

[Only the name of an author which appears on the left margin at the very beginning of a bibliographic entry is reversed. All other names in the entry are typed in the regular order.]

Steiner, George A., and John F. Steiner. *Business, Government, and Society: A Managerial Perspective*. 10th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2003.

## Book in a series

France, R. T. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. Eerdmans, 1985, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 1.

[The book title is italicized, but the name of the book or commentary series is not. The series name and the volume number within the series, if applicable, are placed at the end of the entry after the date of publication.]

## Multiple works by same author

Smith, James E. *The Major Prophets*. College Press, 1992, Old Testament Survey Series.

----. *The Minor Prophets*. College Press, 1994, Old Testament Survey Series.

[Parenthetical notes should distinguish among works by using shortened titles after the author’s name. Examples: (Smith, *Major* 237) (Smith, *Minor* 417) ]

**Article in a book or anthology**

Williamson, Donald. “Exile and After: Historical Study.” *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, edited by David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold, Baker, 1999, pp. 236-265.

[Proper parenthetical note form = (Williamson 247); cited under the name of the article author rather than the editor’s name.]

## Journal article

Hahlen, Mark Allen. “The Background and Use of Equine Imagery in Zechariah.” *Stone-*

*Campbell Journal*, vol. 3, 2000, pp. 243-260.

Moore-Keish, Martha L. “Luke 2:1-14.” *Interpretation*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2006, pp. 442-44, *ATLA Religion Database*. EBSCOhost. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001536258&site=ehost-live>. Accessed 4 September 2016.

[The first example above is for an article that was read in the traditional paper form. The second example is for an article read online as a full text article within the EBSCOhost database. The URL is the permalink provided by EBSCOhost.]

## Signed dictionary article

Merrill, E. H. “Image of God.” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, Inter-Varsity, 2003, pp. 441-445.

[Proper parenthetical note form = (Merrill 444); the author name is used for a signed article]

## Unsigned dictionary article

“River.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Edited by Leland Ryken, et. al., Inter-Varsity, 1998, pp. 729-731.

[Proper parenthetical note form = (“River” 730); the article title is used for an unsigned article]

## Magazine article

Barone, Michael. “In History’s Words.” *U.S. News and World Report*, 22 Sept 2003, pp. 34-36.

[The pagination in the example above indicates that there are no intervening pages which are not devoted to the article.]

Fischer, Joannie. “A Nation Made of Poetry.” *U.S. News and World Report*, 22 Sept 2003, pp. 80+.

[A plus sign in the pagination indicates there are intervening pages not devoted to the article.]

**Signed newspaper article**

Fraley, Gerry. “Another Rangers Fall Guy.” *Dallas Morning News*, 19 Sept 2003, 1C+.

[A plus sign in the pagination indicates there are intervening pages not devoted to article.]

## Unsigned newspaper article

“Pact May Help GM Cut Costs.” *Dallas Morning News*, 19 Sept 2003, 1D+.

[Proper parenthetical note form = (“Pact” 11D) ]

## Website

Bratcher, Dennis. “Word and Table: Reflections on a Theology of Worship.” *The Voice*, 21 May 2003, <http://www.crivoice.org/wordtable.html>, Accessed on 17 August 2016.

[Provide the date of the last posting, if available. End the entry with your date of access and URL, if professor desires.]

Deffinbaugh, Robert L. “Israel’s Covenant Renewal (Deuteronomy).” *Bible.org*. 29 June 2004, <https://bible.org/seriespage/13-israel-s-covenant-renewal-deuteronomy>, Accessed on 17 August 2016.

**Logos and Other Software Resident in Your Computer**

In addition to *Logos*, this form also applies to *Pradis*, *PC Study Bible*, and *BibleWorks*.

Search in *Logos* for the title page of the source being used, and obtain the publication data about that source first. Follow with the *Logos* data. Several *Logos* examples are given below, including one for a signed dictionary article (author’s name, J. B. Taylor, found from the initials at end of article). Use the Logos pagination visual filter, if available, to determine the appropriate page number.

“Amen.” *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, edited by Walter. A. Elwell and Phillip W. Comfort, Tyndale, 2001, *Logos Bible Software*, Logos, 2000-2016.

Holy Bible. English Standard Version. Crossway-Good News, 2001, *Logos Bible Software*, Logos, 2000-2016.

Taylor, J. B. “Amen.” *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., edited by D. R. W. Wood and I. H. Marshall, Intervarsity, 1996, *Logos Bible Software*, Logos, 2000-2016.

COMMON DOCUMENTATION FORM ERRORS

• The name in a parenthetical note should correspond with a name under which the

work is listed in the bibliography. In other words, *the name in the parenthetical note should match something on the left margin of the bibliography*.

• In MLA style parenthetical notes, *no comma, “p.,” or “pg.”* appears between the author name and page number.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Correct | Incorrect | Incorrect |
| (Smith 96) | (Smith, 96) | (Smith p. 96) |

• Use Ham and Snyder form 1.1.1 to list study notes or study Bible book introductions in the bibliography. List the entry under the name of the author of the note or introduction. That name is available from the front matter of the Bible. Parenthetical notes also should use this author’s name.

Example

Morris, Leon. Introduction to John. *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, 1985.

(Morris 1588)

• The names of authors of dictionary articles are found at the bottom of the article, usually after any bibliography that may appear for the article. If a set of initials appears, consult the list of contributors found at the front of the dictionary to determine the author’s name.

• Since there are no authors listed for unsigned dictionary articles, parenthetical notes should use the article title (in quotation marks) in place of an author name.

Example

“Light.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, edited by Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, InterVarsity, 1997, pp. 509-510.

(“Light” 509)

• Use scripture references in parenthetical notes, and not the Bible page number, when citing biblical passages as your source.

• Commentaries in edited commentary sets like the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* or

the *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* should appear under the name of the actual

author of the comments, not the general editor(s) of the set. Names of authors will be

available in the front matter or table of contents.

Example

Carson, D. A. *Matthew*. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank Gabelein, vol. 8, Zondervan, 1981, pp. 1-599.

(Carson 323)

• Use Ham and Snyder form 1.8 to cite an essay contained within a collection of essays. The work will be listed in the bibliography under the name of the author of the essay or chapter, not the name of the editor.

Example

Rush, Myron. “A Biblical Perspective on Evaluating Performance.” *Almost Every Answer for Practically Any Teacher!: The 7 Laws of the Learner*, edited by Bruce H. Wilkinson, Multnomah, 1992, pp. 207-210.

(Rush 208)