

Style Signals

Use MLA conventions to help readers locate and understand sources.

9-10L3a “Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a professionally recognized style manual appropriate for the discipline and writing type.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every example of title or quotation formatting, circle each citation or Works Cited feature, and number the rules about punctuation or capitalization.

Tracing Sources in MLA Style

- ① An MLA-style literary analysis lets readers trace a claim to its evidence. In the sentence, “The speaker sees the road as uncertain,” an in-text citation follows the quotation: (Frost 9). The author’s surname and page number point readers to the matching source on the Works Cited page. MLA does not place a comma between Frost and 9. A period comes after the parenthetical citation because the borrowed words and citation form one complete sentence. Short quotations appear inside quotation marks rather than in a separate block.
- ② MLA formatting also signals what kind of work a writer names. Italicize the title of a book, play, film, or website, as in *Frankenstein*. Put the title of a poem, article, chapter, or short story in quotation marks, as in “Ozymandias.” Capitalize principal words in titles, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns. Do not capitalize short articles, coordinating conjunctions, or prepositions unless one begins or ends the title. These conventions help readers distinguish a whole work from a smaller work within a larger publication.
- ③ At the end of the paper, the Works Cited page lists sources alphabetically by each author’s surname. Each entry uses a hanging indent, so its first line starts at the left margin and later lines move inward. A book entry usually gives the author, italicized book title, publisher, and publication year. If a source has no author, alphabetize it by title. Checking these details before submitting makes the paper easier for a reader to verify and quickly locate the source without searching through the paper.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 A student writes an in-text citation as (Nguyen, 27). What edit should the student make?

2 A student refers to a chapter titled *Across the Old Bridge*. How should the title be formatted in MLA style?

3 Rewrite this ending with correct MLA punctuation: The captain admits, "I was afraid" (Ortiz 61)

4 A Works Cited source has no author and begins with the title *City Parks at Night*. Under what letter should it be alphabetized?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write two sentences from a literary analysis of an imagined novel. Include the italicized novel title, a short quotation, an MLA in-text citation with an author surname and page number, and correct end punctuation. Then write a one-line MLA-style Works Cited book entry for the same imagined novel, including author, title, publisher, and year.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every example of title or quotation formatting, circle each citation or Works Cited feature, and number the rules about punctuation or capitalization. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A student writes an in-text citation as (Nguyen, 27). What edit should the student make?	Remove the comma: (Nguyen 27).
2	A student refers to a chapter titled Across the Old Bridge. How should the title be formatted in MLA style?	Put it in quotation marks: "Across the Old Bridge."
3	Rewrite this ending with correct MLA punctuation: The captain admits, "I was afraid" (Ortiz 61)	The captain admits, "I was afraid" (Ortiz 61).
4	A Works Cited source has no author and begins with the title City Parks at Night. Under what letter should it be alphabetized?	C, because an untitled-author source is alphabetized by its title.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In *Harbor Lights*, Maya Chen presents the pier as a risky choice when Lena says, "The water keeps its own secrets" (Chen 18). This image makes the setting seem powerful and unknown. Chen, Maya. *Harbor Lights*. Northwind Press, 2024.

Accept any imagined source details if the in-text citation surname matches the Works Cited author and the novel title is italicized. Check for quotation marks around a short quotation, no comma inside the parenthetical citation, and a period after it.