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MLA Style

 Minimum page lengths on formal assignments require heading, font, margin, and line spacing customs. Since the eighth edition of the MLA Handbook does not provide general formatting guidelines, you will follow the seventh edition’s rules. Your formal paper should use one inch margins, Time New Roman 12 point font, and double-spacing. Do not commence your paper with a title page; instead, provide a double-spaced heading that includes your name, your professor’s name, the course number, and the date on the top left-hand corner. Then, while maintaining double-spacing, provide a centered paper title. Do not bold, italicize, underline or change the font size of the title. Do not add extra lines around the title or between paragraphs. Note that each page must have a running header, which includes your last name and page number, set one-half inch from the top of page and justified to the right margin. Do not manually type the header on each page; instead, use your word processing program to automatically insert a running header in the correct position on each page, or download an MLA styled paper template.

 Next, let’s learn proper quotation format (1.3 Quotations). Do use in-text parenthetical citations, but do not use footnotes. Only use endnotes if they are absolutely warranted and you discuss their use with me first. Note that quotes cannot stand alone grammatically as sentences. Quotes must be introduced; they must work grammatically within your own sentence. Do not let the quote do all the analytical work. Quotes constitute illustrative evidence; your task is to analyze them. Introduce the passage, quote the passage, and then explain and interpret the passage thoroughly. The author, source, and page number of the quote must be made clear to the reader, through context and/or parenthetical citation. If the source and author have already been provided or are provided in context of the introductory sentence or surrounding paragraph(s), simply cite the page number in parentheses after the closing quotation mark. This is called the parenthetical citation. Do not use the word page or pages or the abbreviation p. or pp. The parenthetical citations of unpaginated electronic text sources as well as video sources such as film and television do not have page numbers. The following provides examples of how to quote prose, drama (including film and television), and poetry. Because the goal of this webpage is to demonstrate correct quotation style, I will not be explaining the quotes and each type of quote will be set off in a new paragraph. In your own papers, you should never let the quote simply speak for itself, and you should never allow a quote to constitute an entire paragraph.

 To illustrate the author’s name in the parenthetical citation, Roquentin, the protagonist of *Nausea*, realizes that he exists in a void: “Now I knew: things are entirely what they appear to be─and behind them . . . there is nothing” (Sartre 96). To illustrate the author’s name in the text, Roquentin, the protagonist of Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Nausea*, realizes that he exists in a void: “Now I knew: things are entirely what they appear to be—and behind them . . . there is nothing” (96).

 If a quote occupies more than four lines of text of your paper (not the original source), you should turn it into a block quote. Start a new line, do not use quotation marks, indent the quotation half an inch from the left-margin only (not the right margin), and place your period before the parenthetical citation. For example, the unnamed narrator of Angela Carter’s “Flesh and the Mirror” meditates upon the psychological effect of mirrors:

Mirrors are ambiguous things. The bureaucracy of the mirror issues me with a passport to the world; it shows me my appearance. But what use is a passport to an armchair traveler? Women and mirrors are in complicity with one another to evade the action I/she performs that shell cannot watch, the action with which I break out of the mirror, with which I assume my appearance. But this mirror refused to conspire with me; it was like the first mirror I’d ever seen. It reflected the embrace beneath it without the least guile. All it showed was inevitable. But I myself could never have dreamed it. (70)

When quoting one, two, or three lines of poetry, separate each line by a slash (/) and put the line numbers rather than the page number in the parenthetical citation. In “In the Waiting Room,” Elizabeth Bishop attempts to convince herself of her individuality: “But I felt: you are an I, / you are an Elizabeth” (60-61). Indicate a stanza break with a double slash (//). In “Memories of West Street and Lepke,” Robert Lowell contrasts a woman’s phoenix-like birth with his own sedation: “Like the sun she rises in her flame-flamingo infants’ wear. // These are the tranquillized Fifties, / and I am forty. Ought I to regret my seedtime? (11-3).

 When quoting four or more lines of poetry, indent the quotation half an inch from the left margin, do not use quotation marks, and place the period before the parenthetical citation. If a line runs over, indent it an additional one-fourth inch or three spaces. Because line spacing in poetry indicates stanza breaks and line style often suggests meaning, you may single space block quotations of poetry. This is an instructor rule, not an MLA guideline. Wary of writing, the speaker in “The Instruction Manual” daydreams of touring Mexico:

 Not one of them has to worry about getting out this manual on schedule.

 And, as my way is, I begin to dream, resting my elbows on the desk and leaning out of

 the window a little,

 Of dim Guadalajara! City of rose-colored flowers!

 City I wanted most to see, and most did not see, in Mexico!

 But I fancy I see, under the press of having to write the instruction manual,

 Your public square, city, with its elaborate little bandstand! (Ashbery 8)

When quoting plays, screenplays, or teleplays that you have read in print, provide the page number. When quoting plays, films, or television programs that you have only watched (and thus do not have a page number), simply provide the title in the parenthetical citation, unless you have already provided the title in context. For example, Jack Lipnik is akin to a circus ringmaster: “The point is, I run this dump and I don’t know the technical mumbo-jumbo. Why do I run it? I’ve got horse-sense, goddamnit. Showmanship” (*Barton Fink*). Optionally, you may provide the hour and minute marker for films and television episodes. This is an instructor rule, not an MLA guideline. For example, Jack Lipnik asserts, “The writer is king here at Capitol Pictures” (*Barton Fink* 0:14). Provide the page number if you are quoting from a published script.

 When quoting just one character, treat the quote as you would regular prose. Consequently, four or less lines of monologue are quoted as in-text citation while more than four lines of text are block quoted. For example, Estragon sets the tone and thema of Waiting for Godot with his opening line: “Nothing to be done” (Beckett 7). When quoting verse plays that provide line numbers in the margin, such as those by Shakespeare, your citation should include act, scene, and line numbers rather than page numbers. For example, Hamlet realizes, “the play’s the thing / Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King” (2.2.584-585). To quote more than four lines of dialogue in a play, film, or television program, capitalize and indent each character’s name half an inch and follow it with a period. If a line runs over, indent the next line an additional one-fourth inch or three spaces:

 CARDIN. What’s the matter, Martha?

 MARTHA. Nothing.

 CARDIN. (His face is grave, his voice gentle.) Yes, there is. For a long time you and I

 have had something to talk about. (Hellman 23)

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