BRIEF GUIDE TO REFERENCING WITH MLA SYSTEM

(Last Updated: 10 May 2019)

This is a guide to the MLA (Modern Language Association) referencing system for XJTLU students. However, please always refer to your module handbook or any specifications for further guidance, as your lecturers/tutors may prefer a different style of referencing.

Introduction:

This guide gives advice on referencing using the MLA system. This is the preferred referencing system for some of the departments at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. There are numerous different types of referencing systems available, and most style guides fall into two commonly used systems: **1) author-date system** (Harvard, APA) and **2) numeric system** (Vancouver, MLA). To be noted, MLA is an author-page style which is not that typical. In MLA style, referencing is done by using parenthetical citation which requires that any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. Before writing your reference list, check with your lecturer or supervisor for the bibliographic style preferred. There may be differences in the style recommended by the Department. This guide suggests a style which aligns with the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (8th ed.)*.

Plagiarism:

When writing assignments, you must acknowledge the source of your ideas and quotes in sufficient detail so that readers can locate the item. Referencing is important to avoid plagiarism, to verify quotations and to enable readers to follow up what you have written and locate the cited work. Plagiarism is defined by Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University Student Regulations as "Reproducing material from other works or a paraphrase of such material without acknowledgement". For more information on how to avoid plagiarism please refer to Department of Registry.

Collecting and organizing references:

It is often not easy (or possible) to retrieve sources after you have written your text. For this reason, it is best to write down all the citation details of a source as you use it, and to compile a reference list at the end of the document that includes full details of all references cited. Bibliographic software, such as **EndNote**, **RefWorks**, or **Zotero**, will help you organize your references according to different citation systems and to add the citations to your text.

Two parts in MLA System:

In-text citations: References need not be cited in the text. When they are, it means citing in the text of your work: this means acknowledging, within your text, the sources that you have used.

- In MLA system, the **author's last name** and the **page number(s)** (or volume number(s), chapter number(s), part number(s), e.g., vol. 3, ch. 4, par. 5) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text. The author's name may appear either in the sentence or in the parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses.
- For a source by a corporate author, use the name of the corporation followed by the page number for the in-text citation. You should also use abbreviations where appropriate.
- If there is no known author for a source, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name, followed by a page number. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work (e.g., an article) or italicise it if it's a longer work (e.g., plays, books, television shows, entire Web sites).
- If two authors have the same surname, use their first initial (e.g., A. Smith, R. Smith).
- To cite non-print or Internet sources for which there are no page numbers, no number should be given in the in-text citation. Do not count unnumbered paragraphs or other parts.

Works Cites (excluding bibliographic citations)/ Works Consulted (including bibliographic citations): there you present the details of the sources you have used. In MLA system, you should list all the entries in the Works Cited page which correspond to the works cited in the main text.

- **Format**
  - ✓ You should place a separate page at the end of your research paper with the heading Works Cited centred in the page. It should have the same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
  - ✓ Double space the entire list, but do not skip spaces between citation entries.
  - ✓ Indent all lines of citations other than the first line by 0.5 inches from the left margin.
  - ✓ Provide page numbers when needed, for example, when you are citing journal articles (e.g., 252-55). If the document has no page numbers, part numbers like chapters should be cited.
  - ✓ Since online works typically can be changed or removed at any time, the date on which you accessed online material is often an important indicator of the version you consulted.
  - ✓ In digital formats URLs may be clickable, connecting your reader directly to your sources. Therefore, the inclusion of URLs is recommended in

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the works-cited list, but if your instructor prefers that you not include them, follow his or her directions.

✓ If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally published in print format but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics.

- **List Order**
  ✓ Alphabetize the list by authors' last names. If an entry has no author, alphabetize by the title, ignoring any initial A, An, *or* The.

- **Authors and Editors**
  ✓ Reverse the name (e.g., Andrews, Richard) of the author/editor. If there are multiple authors or editors, only reverse the name of the first (e.g., Andrews, Richard and Vicki Wienand).
  ✓ Present the names as given in the work you are citing. Use the full name rather than initials if full name is listed.

- **Title**
  ✓ Capitalise each word in the title, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms (e.g., Cross-Cultural), but do not capitalise articles (e.g., the, an, a), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.

- **Publisher's Name & Place of Publication**
  ✓ Omit articles (e.g., the) and business abbreviations (e.g., Co. and Ltd.).
  ✓ If there is no publisher or no place of publication provided, supply as much of the missing information as you can, enclosing it in square brackets to show that it did not come from the source (e.g., [circa 2008], [2008?] and *The Star-Ledger* [Newark]).
  ✓ For a university press, abbreviate "university press" as "UP" (e.g., Oxford UP, U of Chicago P).
  ✓ If multiple cities (places of publication) are provided, use the first.
  ✓ Add an abbreviation of the country or province name if the name of the city of publication is outside of the United States and may be ambiguous or unfamiliar o readers.

NOTE:

Some of the examples are created for illustration purpose only.

For more details regarding the referencing rules and abbreviations, please refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (8th ed.)*.

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BOOKS

Elements of citation:

Author(s), editor(s) or corporate author of book – family name and initials. *Title of Book – italicised.* Contributor(s), Edition or Version (if available), vol. Volume (if available), no. Issue number (if available), Publisher, Date of publication, Page(s). *Title of Database – italicised (if it is electronic resources),* DOI (if available) / URL. Accessed Date – if it is electronic resource

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
Single author	• Jacobs wrote in The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction (55) … *or* • It is mentioned that … (Jacobs 55).	Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction.* Oxford UP, 2011.
2 authors	• Dorris and Erdrich offer brief reflections on the questions (129). *or* • The reflection of the questions was … (Dorris and Erdrich 129).	[2] B. Klaus and P. Horn, *Robot Vision*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 1986. Dorris, Michael, and Louise Erdrich. *The Crown of Columbus.* Harper Collins Publishers, 1999. Reverse the first of the names as just described, follow it with a comma and *and*, and give the second name in normal order.
3 or more authors	• … as explained in a book (Burdick, Anne, et al. 196). *or* • Burdick, Anne, et al. explained that … (196).	Burdick, Anne, et al. *Digital Humanities*. MIT P, 2012. When a source has three or more authors, reverse the first of the names as just described and follow it with a comma and *et al.*.
Multiple works by the same author	• Reading is "just half … writing" (Baron, "Redefining" 194).	Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.
Two or more works by different authors	• … is accompanied by writing (Baron 194; Jacobs 55).	Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200. Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

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Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
Corporate author	• United Nations stated… (15-16). *or* • A federal report observed that … (United States, Dept. of Labor 147) … If the corporate author is identified in the works-cited list by the names of administrative units separated by commas, give all the names in the parenthetical citation.	United Nations. *Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries.* Taylor and Francis, 1991. United States, Department of Labor. *Child Care: A Workforce Issue.* Government Printing Office, 1988. When a work is published by an organization that is also its author, begin the entry with the title, skipping the author element, and list the organization only as publisher.
An anonymous book	• Beowulf notes that … (3). • This shows … (Beowulf 3).	*Beowulf*. Translated by Alan Sullivan and Timothy Murphy, edited by Sarah Anderson, Pearson, 2004. When a work is published without an author's name, skip the author element and begin the entry with the work's title.
An edition / version of a book	• … is included in a work (Newcomb 263). *or* • *The Bible* explained … (263).	Newcomb, Horace, editor. *Television: The Critical View*. 7th ed., Oxford UP, 2007. *The Bible*. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998. Versions of books are sometimes given other descriptions (e.g. Expanded ed., Updated ed.) as well.
A book with editor(s)	• … mesmerism's influence on the Victorians (Nunberg 52). *or* • Holland and Hart-Davis explained … (52).	Nunberg, Geoffrey, editor. *The Future of the Book*. U of California P, 1996. Holland, Merlin, and Rupert Hart-Davis, editors. *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*. Henry Holt, 2000.
A book with author(s) and editor(s)	• … by Howells (20). *or* • This was … (Howells 20).	Howells, W. D. *Their Wedding Journey.* Edited by John K. Reeves, Indiana UP, 1968.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
A chapter in an edited book / A Work in an Anthology	• …… was mentioned by Bazin in his work (158-59). *or* • This was … (Dewar and Ang 369-70).	Bazin, Patrick. "Toward Metareading." *The Future of the Book*, edited by Geoffrey Nunberg, U of California P, 1996, pp. 153-68. Dewar, James A., and Peng Hwa Ang. "The Cultural Consequences of Printing and the Internet." *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron et al., U of Massachusetts P / Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007, pp. 365-77. If two or more organizations are named in the source and they seem equally responsible for the work, cite each of them, separating the names with a forward slash (/).
A translation	• … by Puig (20). *or* • The statement was … (Sullivan and Murphy 20).	Puig, Manuel. *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. Translated by Thomas Colchie, Vintage Books, 1991. Sullivan, Alan, and Timothy Murphy, translators. *Beowulf*. Edited by Sarah Anderson, Pearson, 2004. When your focus is on the translation, treat the translator as the author.
A multivolume work	Citing only one volume: • … explains the sources (Rampersad 213). • … comparative perspectives (Wellek xxii). Citing more than one volume: • As Wellek admits … (2: 213) • As Wellek admits … (5: xxii) If you borrow from more than one volume, include a volume number as well as a page reference, separating the two with a colon and a space.	Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes*. 2nd ed., vol. 2, Oxford UP, 2002. Wellek, René. *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950.* Vol. 5, Yale UP, 1986. Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes*. 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 2002. 2 vols. Wellek, René. *A History of Modern Criticism*, 1750-1950. Yale UP, 1955-92. 8 vols.
An e-book	• … trend was discussed in a work (Gikandi, 156) so that … *or* • The trend was discussed by Gikandi (156).	Gikandi, Simon. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge UP, 2000. *ACLS Humanities E-book*, hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.07588.0001.001. Accessed 20 May 2017.

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Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
Comic book	• … was showed that … (Clowes 35). • Soule et al. demonstrated in … (43).	Clowes, Daniel. David Boring. *Eightball*, no. 19, Fantagraphics, 1998. Soule, Charles, et al. *She-Hulk*. No. 1, Marvel Comics, 2014.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Elements of citation:

Author(s), editor(s) or corporate author of article – family name and initials. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal – italicised,* Contributor(s) (if available), Edition or Version (if available), vol. Volume (if available), no. Issue number (if available), Publisher, Date of publication, Page (s). Title of Database – italicised (if it is electronic resources), DOI (if available) / URL. Accessed date. – if it is electronic resource

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
An article in a journal	• Goldman (70) suggests that … *or* • According to Naomi Baron, reading is "just half … writing" (194). • Reading is "just half … writing" (Baron 194). • … the practice (Williams 1+).	Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200. Williams, Joy. "Rogue Territory." *The New York Times Book Review*, 9 Nov. 2014, pp. 1+. If a work in a periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper) is not printed on consecutive pages, include only the first page number and a plus sign, leaving no intervening space.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
An article from a library database	• … establish the authenticity of the novels (Goldman 70). *or* • There is little evidence here for … postmodernism (Chan, par. 41). If your source uses explicit paragraph numbers rather than page numbers, give the relevant number or numbers, preceded by the label. e.g., paragraphs (par., pars.), sections (sec., secs.) or chapters (ch., chs.).	Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41403188. Accessed 20 Aug. 2018. Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10, no. 3, May 2000. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/pmc.2000.0021. When possible, citing a DOI is preferable to citing a URL.
An article in a magazine	• Deresiewicz (29) categorized … *or* • … the manuscript (Deresiewicz 29).	Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur." *The Atlantic*, 28 Dec. 2014, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the-birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/. Accessed 10 Oct. 2018.
A review	• … in a review (Mackin 71).	Mackin, Joseph. Review of *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*, by Alan Jacobs. *New York Journal of Books*, 2 June 2011, www.nyjournalofbooks.com/book-review/pleasures-reading-age-distraction. Accessed 1 Feb. 2019. When a publication fact applies to more than one container, the fact is cited in the last relevant container.

NEWSPAPERS

Elements of citation:

Author(s), editor(s) or corporate author of article – family name and initials. "Title of News Article." *Title of Newspaper – italicised* Date of publication: page(s). Medium of publication.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
A newspaper article	• It was reported in February 2015 that … (Fordham 7). *or* • In February 2015, Fordham reported … (7).	Fordham, John. "Cult Director to Mastermind New Alien Film." *The Guardian* 20 Feb. 2015: 7. Print.
A newspaper article online (or from a library Database	• It was reported that … (Ashley 33). *or* • Ashely reported … (33).	Ashley, Tim. "Morgen und Abend." *The Guardian* 10 Jan. 2015: 33. PressDisplay. Web. 11 Nov. 2015. Title of the database or web site, medium of publication (format) and date of access shall be added at the end of the citation.

WEBSITES

Elements of citation:

Author(s), editor(s) or corporate author of content – family name and initials. "Title of Page." *Title of Site– italicised,* Contributor(s) (if available), Version number (if available), Name of Publisher/Organisation (if any), Date of resource creation, DOI (if available) / URL. Accessed date.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
A website	• "As we read we … construct the terrain of a book" (Hollmichel), … When a source has no page numbers or any other kind of part number, no number should be given in a parenthetical citation.	Hollmichel, Stefanie. *So Many Books.* 2003-13, somanybooksblog.com. Accessed 3 May 2018.
An article on website	• Hollmichel describes …	Hollmichel, Stefanie. "The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print." *So Many Books*, 25 Apr. 2013, somanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print/. Accessed 4 May 2018.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
A video on website	• Buffy's promise that … ("Buffy" 00:03:16-17). For time-based media (e.g. audio and video recordings), cite the relevant time or range of times.	"*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: Unaired Pilot 1996." *YouTube*, uploaded by Brian Stowe, 28 Jan. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR3Jv7QXXw. Accessed 7 Sep. 2018.
A comment on website	• Jeane comments on …	Jeane. Comment on "The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print." *So Many Books*, 25 Apr. 2013, 10:30 p.m., somanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print/#comment-83030. Accessed 10 Dec. 2018.
A web project as a whole	• Eaves et al. provides a different view...	Eaves, Morris, et al., editors. *The William Blake Archive*. 1996-2014, www.blakearchive.org/blake/. Accessed 5 Jan. 2019. Cite a range of dates if the project was developed over time.
Tweet	• From persiankiwi's message, …	@persiankiwi. "We have report of large street battles in east & west of Tehran now - #Iranelection." *Twitter*, 23 June 2009, 11:15 a.m., twitter.com/persiankiwi/status/2298106072. Accessed 6 Feb. 2019.

GOVERNMENT PULICATIONS

Elements of citation:

Name of Government, Name of Government Agency. *Title of Work – italicised*. Publisher, Date of publication.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
A government report	• It is noted by the United States Congress that … (34).	United States, Congress, House, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. *Al-Qaeda: The Many Faces of an Islamist Extremist Threat*. Government Printing Office, 2006. 109th Congress, 2nd session, House Report 615.

FILMS

Elements of citation:

Title of Film – italicised. Contributor(s), Version number (if available), Film Studio or Distributor, Year of Release.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
Film	• The film *Blade Runner* presents an intense and inspiring…	*Blade Runner*. 1982. Directed by Ridley Scott, performance by Harrison Ford, director's cut, Warner Bros., 1992. When a source has been republished, the date of original publication is placed immediately after the source's title.
Film where contribution of a particular individual is significant	• Scott has used a different way in *Blade Runner* to…	Scott, Ridley, director. *Blade Runner*. 1982. Performance by Harrison Ford, director's cut, Warner Bros., 1992.

TELEVISION AND RADIO BROADCAST

Elements of citation:

Title of Film – italicised. Contributor(s), Version number, Film Studio or Distributor, Date of Release. URL. Accessed date. – if it is electronic resource

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
Television series	• Buffy's promise that … ("*Buffy*" 00:03:16-17). For time-based media (e.g. audio and video recordings), cite the relevant time or range of times.	*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, Mutant Enemy, 1997-2003.
An episode of a television series	• In the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode "Hush" (00:03:16-17) …	"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.
Online television series	• In the episode "Under the Gun" (00:06:45-46) …	"Under the Gun." *Pretty Little Liars*, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013. *Hulu*, www.hulu.com/watch/511318. Accessed 20 Mar, 2017.
A television episode in a DVD set	• Buffy's movement that … ("*Buffy*" 00:03:16-17).	"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fourth Season*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, episode 10, Twentieth Century Fox, 2003, disc 3.
Radio Broadcast	• Terry claimed in *Fresh Air* (00:08:49-57) …	*Fresh Air*. Narrated by Terry Gross, National Public Radio, 20 May 2008. Transcript.

E-MAILS

Elements of citation:

Author(s), editor(s) or corporate author of message – family name and initials., First name. "Message Subject." Received by Whom, Date sent.

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Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
An e-mail	• Boyle suggests that …	Boyle, Anthony T. "Re: Utopia." Received by Daniel J. Cahill, 21 June 1997.

MUSIC

Elements of citation:

Author(s), editor(s) or corporate author of music – family name and initials. "Title of a song." *Title of an album– italicised*, Distributor's Name, Year of release, URL. Accessed date.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
A song or other piece of music on an album	• Beyoncé wrote in the song (02:34) …	Beyoncé. "Pretty Hurts." *Beyoncé*, Parkwood Entertainment, 2013, www.beyonce.com/album/beyonce/?media_view=songs. Accessed 20 Jun. 2016.

INDIRECT CITATIONS

If you have to cite a source cited in another source (i.e., indirect source), use "qtd. in" to indicate the source you actually consulted. In the Works Cited list, provide the details of the original sources.

Reference Type	In-text Examples	Reference List Examples
Indirect citation or secondary referencing	• Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an "extraordinary man" (qtd. in Boswell 2: 450)	Boswell, James. *The Life of Johnson*. Edited by George Birkbeck Hill and L.F. Powell, vol. 6, Oxford: Clarendon, 1935-50.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS

A direct quotation is quoted directly word by word from another author's work, or from your own previously-published work.

If you have directly quoted words from a source (in inverted commas, or in an indented paragraph), you have to format the quotation in your text. There are different requirements for quoting prose, poetry, drama, Ellipsis, etc. You can find the detailed information in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (8th ed.)*.

FURTHER HELP AND CONTACTS

If you have any difficulties using any of the reference schemes mentioned above, or any other referencing format which you have been asked to use by your instructors, please contact your librarian (https://libguides.lib.xjtlu.edu.cn/c.php?g=655374). Remember, it is always helpful to consult the person for whom you are writing, whether it is a tutor or an editor, as to which style of referencing they want you to use.

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This guide is inspired by the following pieces of work and excellent sites:

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 8th ed., the Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

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APPENDIX

Advice on creating links to e-resources in the bibliography

The following notes provide some general tips on obtaining a direct link to e-resources.

The most important thing is to make the bibliography functional. If the resource is part of an online collection subscribed by Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, it can be directly accessed on campus or accessed via VPN when off-campus. The link you create should be stable and accessible to the audience if they access the item on any University campus which has a subscription for the item. They may also be able to access the resource off-campus.

You should take care when simply copying and pasting the URL from the address bar of your Web browser. If the website you are using is available via public WWW pages then you can probably use the URL of the resource you are viewing. If the site is a subscribed collection then you will probably not be able to copy and paste the URL, since the URL may contain 'session' information and may be invalid when used later. Many systems such as Discover provide tools to create a stable link to individual e-resources.

If you conduct a search in Discover and choose one of the references to view the Detailed Record, the page will be shown as the first screenshot here. The URL in Web browser is invalid for you to cite. Discover enable you to get the stable link via 'permalink' function in the Tools panel. After you click 'permalink', you will be directed to a new page with a stable link which is derived from the website of the e-journal collection (see the second screenshot).