

Citing Fiction

Style and Formatting Guide for Citing a Work of Fiction

The following information is an adapted version of the style and formatting guidelines found in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (2009), published by the Modern Language Association. This sheet is to serve as a ready-reference; more in-depth descriptions can be found in the handbook.

Quoting Fiction

Authorship can be shown in a number of ways when quoting an excerpt from a work of fiction. If you have already included a direct reference to the author in the body of your essay immediately preceding the quotation, then you need only the page number in parentheses (6.3):

Mansfield describes Miss Brill's reaction to this couple: "They did not speak. This was a disappointment, for Miss Brill always looked forward to the conversation. She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen" (299).

If, however, you have not yet mentioned the author's name or it could possibly be confused with another, include the author's last name in the parenthetical citation (6.3):

Many modernist authors, such as Joyce and Mansfield, portrayed characters who simply listened to the conversations of others. Miss Brill, for instance, "had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen" (Mansfield 299).

When you quote an excerpt that the author had already placed in quotation marks, such as dialogue, replace the author's double-quotes with single-quotes (3.7.7):

Both Tweedles acknowledge a coming darkness as Alice notices that "there must be a thunderstorm coming on. 'What a thick black cloud that is!' she said" (151-152).

Ellipses & Brackets

Use an ellipsis to omit portions of the original text that is being quoted. You might need to omit words from an original text to maintain the flow of the sentence containing the quotation. Ellipses are used as shown (3.7.5):

Alice attempts to be cordial to Dumpty, but he declares, "You needn't go on making remarks like that ... they're not sensible, and they put me out" (172).

Use brackets to add to the original quote for clarification:

Alice attempts to be cordial to Dumpty, but he declares, "You needn't go on making remarks like that ... [those remarks are] not sensible, and they put me out" (172).

Use block quotation format for prose excerpts of five or more typed lines. These quotations must be double-spaced and indented one inch (ten spaces). Do not use quotation marks, and place the end punctuation before the parenthetical citation:

Near the end of *Caleb Williams*, the title character attempts to convince himself that the events and characters surrounding him are not supernatural after all:

Mr. Falkland, wise as he is and pregnant in resources, acts by human not by supernatural means. He may overtake me by surprise, and in a manner of which I had no previous expectation; but he cannot produce a great and notorious effect without some visible agency, however difficult it may be to trace that agency to its absolute author. He cannot ... shroud himself in clouds and impenetrable darkness, and scatter destruction upon the earth from his secret habitation. (Godwin 306)

Notes:

You do not need to use ellipses at the beginnings or endings of quotes or paraphrases to indicate that words have been omitted. For more information on quoting fiction and the use of ellipses and brackets, please see our “Style and Formatting Guide for Direct Quotations.”

Citing Fiction on a Works Cited Page

- Number the page in continuation with the pages before it.
- Title the page -Works Cited- and center it on the first line. Do not underline it, italicize it, bold it, or put it in quotation marks.
- Alphabetize the entries according to the first word of the entry, usually the author’s last name.
- Make the first line of a citation flush with the left margin; indent subsequent lines 1/2”.
- For each entry, specify whether the publication medium is “Print” or “Web.”
- For a complete list of Works Cited entry formats, please refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (2009).

A WORK OF FICTION BY A SINGLE AUTHOR (5.6.1):

Author’s Name. *Title of Work*. City: Publisher, Year. Print.

Fielding, Henry. *Joseph Andrews*. New York: Broadview Press, 2001. Print.

TWO WORKS OF FICTION BY THE SAME AUTHOR (5.6.5):

Author’s Name. *Title of Work*. City: Publisher, Year. Print.

***Title of Work*. City: Publisher, Year. Print.**

Woolf, Virginia. *Jacob’s Room*. New York: Harcourt, 1950. Print.

Mrs. Dalloway. New York: Harcourt, 1990. Print.

A WORK OF FICTION (Essay, Short Story, Poem) FROM AN ANTHOLOGY OR COLLECTION (5.5.6):

Author's Name. "Title of Work." *Title of Anthology*. Edition. Editors/Translators. City: Publisher, Year. Page Numbers. Print.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Masque of the Red Death." *The Heath Introduction to Literature*. 5th ed. Ed.

Alice S. Landy. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath, 1996. 202-206. Print.

A WORK OF FICTION (Play, Novel, etc.) FROM AN ANTHOLOGY OR COLLECTION DIVIDED INTO VOLUMES (5.5.6):

Author's Name. *Title of Work*. *Title of Anthology*. Edition. Editors/Translators. Volume. City: Publisher, Year. Page Numbers. Print.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*. *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*. 2nd

ed. Ed. David Damrosch. Vol. A. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004. 685-733. Print.