Style Guide

The purpose of this online guide is to highlight some key considerations of writing, formatting, and submitting articles and reviews for publication in the *JMMLA*. Think of the entries we have included here as a checklist to assist with your editing responsibility prior to submission.

Before submission, authors are expected to verify the following:

- articles and reviews follow the detailed recommendations in the *MLA Handbook*, 9th edition (2021);

- quotations faithfully reproduce the exact wording and punctuation of the source; and

- citations are accurate and complete according to current MLA standards.

While we expect the practice of careful self-editing to result in a clearer expression of your argument, it may also prompt an iterative process of rethinking and refining your own understanding as you consider how best to convey your ideas.

This *JMMLA* Style Guide is intended to support understanding of and compliance with the more detailed guidance found in the current edition of the *MLA Handbook*. The limited number of topics addressed herein have been selected in order to emphasize their importance to the *Journal*'s submission, review, and editing process.

Note that parenthetic references (*MLAH* 1.5, for example) are included to direct you to additional topic-related examples and explanations in the *MLA Handbook*, 9th ed.

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I. Submission Guidelines

The *JMMLA* now accepts works written in English, Spanish, French, and German.

A. Preparation of Copy

1. MLA Standards

Submissions (as Microsoft Word **.doc** or **.docx** files) must follow the MLA standards for writing and documentation, as detailed in the *MLA Handbook,* 9th edition. For examples and additional guidance, consult the MLA Style Center, online at https://style.mla.org/.

2. Works Cited

Submissions will include a complete and accurate list of works cited, formatted according to MLA specifications. For examples of citations by format, consult the MLA Style Center or the *MLA Handbook*, appendix 2.

3. Graphics

Submissions with tables, illustrations, or other graphics will include separate clearly labeled image files that contain the following:

- 300 dpi images

    .tiff, .jpg, .ppt, .eps, .bmp, or .png file extensions for **figures**

    .doc, .docx, .xls, or .xlsx file extensions for **tables**

- a list of corresponding **captions**

- source **attributions** for each image

The Word text file (.doc or .docx) will have **callouts** between paragraphs to indicate your preferred placement of the images.

example: <figure x about here>

B. Manuscript Organization

1. Articles

Articles will include these constituent parts in the following order:

- article **title**
- name(s) of **author**(s)
- manuscript **text**
- institutional **affiliation** of author(s)
- endnotes (optional)
- list of **works cited**

2. Book Reviews

Book reviews will include these constituent parts in the following order:

- **title of book** being reviewed
- name(s) of **author**(s) or editor(s) of book being reviewed
- name of **publisher**
- **date** of publication
- total number of **pages** (as specified on the publisher's web page for the book)
- text of **review**
- endnotes (optional)
- name of **review author**
- institutional **affiliation** of review author

C. Submission Procedures

The *JMMLA* uses Manuscript Manager, an online submission management platform, for article submissions. Book reviews should be emailed directly to mmla@luc.edu.

1. Account Creation

Click here to create your Manuscript Manager account (required for article submission).

2. Platform Navigation

Click here for instructions on navigating the Manuscript Manager platform.

If you have any questions or difficulties following the instructions for navigating the platform, you may search the Help Center database or contact the MMLA at mmla@luc.edu.

II. General Format

A. Page Layout

Manuscript pages will be formatted as follows:

- 1-inch **margins** for top, bottom, and sides

- Page headers with automatic **page numbers**
- **Double-spaced** lines
- Times New Roman **font**: 12-point
- Single letter-space after a period or other concluding sentence punctuation

B. Headings (MLAH 1.5)

Journal articles rarely need multiple levels for subheadings. Note that each heading level must have more than one instance.

1. Capitalization of Headings

Use headline-style (i.e., title-style) capitalization (*MLAH* 2.90).

2. Heading Levels

Indicate the level of each heading as follows:

- Level 1 – boldface roman
- Level 2 – boldface italic

C. Text

1. Paragraph Format

While paragraphing should support the coherence of the argument, try to avoid excessively long paragraphs or a series of very short paragraphs.

Use the following paragraph format:

- .5-inch **indention**
- standard **double-spacing** between paragraphs

2. List Formats (*MLAH* 1.8–1.10)

Follow these guidelines for punctuating lists:

- colon after text that introduces a list ***only*** if the introductory text is a grammatically complete sentence
- parentheses for **run-in list** numbers: (1) (2), etc.
- period after **vertical list** numbers: 1. 2., etc.

Use **bulleted lists** sparingly.

Click here for more on MLA formatting of lists.

3. Quotation format

Note that the text introducing a quotation may be followed by a colon ***only*** if the introductory text is a grammatically complete sentence.

See below for tips on incorporating prose or verse quotations into text.

A) Prose (*MLAH* 6.33)

- Enclose **run-in prose** quotations (up to four lines) in quotation marks, with parenthetical citations preceding the final punctuation of the sentence (*MLAH* 6.43).

- Set off and indent **block** quotations (more than four lines) by .5 inch. Omit quotation marks unless present in the passage being quoted.

- Use ellipses (three spaced periods) to indicate **omissions** in quoted matter (*MLAH* 6.58).

- Bracket **clarifications**, **alterations** of wording or punctuation, and the use of "sic" to indicate **errors** in the source (*MLAH* 6.65–6.67).

B) Poetry (*MLAH* 6.36)

- Enclose **run-in verse** quotations (up to three lines) in quotation marks, with parenthetical citations preceding the final punctuation of the sentence (*MLAH* 6.43).

- Indicate **line breaks in verse** with a single forward slash (/) and **stanza breaks** with two adjacent forward slashes (//), separated from text by a space before and a space after the slash or pair of slashes (*MLAH* 6.37).

- Set off and indent **block** verse quotations (more than three lines) by .5 inch, unless other spacing considerations take precedence. Omit quotation marks unless present in the lines being quoted.

- Reproduce the **spacing** of the verse quotation as precisely as possible.

- Indent to approximate the starting position of an initial **partial line**, with no ellipsis preceding.

  example: and though

  > We are not now that strength which in old days

  > Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are[.] (7)

- Indicate **omission** of one or more lines of verse within a block quotation by a single line of spaced periods.

  example: What could have made her peaceful with a mind

  > That nobleness made simple as a fire,

  > . . . .

  > Why, what could she have done, being what she is?

  > Was there another Troy for her to burn? (118)

- Allow long lines of verse to wrap to subsequent lines, using the hanging indent feature of Word. For more on creating hanging indents in Word, click here.

4. In-text Citations (*MLAH* 6.1–6.30)

Parenthetical citations in text direct your reader to the source cited. Every citation will correspond to an entry in the list of works cited, where the publication details will

guide your reader to the source. Thus your parenthetical citation will include only the information needed to find the corresponding entry in the list of works cited.

Additional instructions and examples of **concise in-text citations** are detailed in *MLAH* chapter 6.

Author's name and page number will suffice if your list of works cited contains only one publication for that author. If the author has more than one publication in the list of works cited, the source title in a shortened form will be required along with author's name and page number. See *MLAH* 6.10–6.14 for acceptable **ways to shorten the title**.

When the author's name and the specific title (if needed) are clearly identified in the text, then those elements will not be repeated: the parenthetical citation will contain only the page number.

Note that a cited **work without numbered pages** or other numbered divisions does not require a parenthetical citation if the author name and source title are clear from the text.

- Use only **a space** to separate author name from page number or to separate shortened title from page number.

  example: (Welty 47) or (*Ponder Heart* 47)

- Insert **a comma** after the author name if you are including a shortened title.

  example: (Welty, *Ponder Heart* 47)

- Separate citations of multiple sources by **a semicolon**.

  example: (McCullers 94–102; O'Connor 123–25)

- Insert parenthetic citations within the sentence—i.e., before the final punctuation—for **run-in quotations**.

  example: "Which is the dream?" wrote Hoban (*Pilgermann* 159).

- Place the parenthetic citation for a **block quotation** after the final punctuation at the end of the quotation.

For **indirect sources** (quoted from a source other than the original publication), insert the abbreviated phrase **qtd. in** before the author/title/page in the parenthetical citation (*MLAH* 6.77).

example: (qtd. in McDougall and Valentine, "Treaty 29," 243)

For **italics added** to a quotation for emphasis, include the phrase "emphasis added" after the source details in a parenthetical citation (*MLAH* 6.64). Otherwise, the italics are assumed to be in the original, and no comment is needed.

Consult *MLAH* 6.44–6.45 for recommended **consolidation** of multiple in-text citations from a single source occurring in the same paragraph.

Consult *MLAH* 6.30 for additional **punctuation** considerations for in-text citations.

Consult *MLAH* 6.43 for **placement** of in-text citations.

5. Translations *(MLAH 6.75)*

Although the *MLAH* offers two options for distinguishing translations of quotations, the *JMMLA* prefers the following treatment:

- translations of **run-in quotations** are to be enclosed in parentheses and double quotation marks, separated by a semicolon from the subsequent citations of the quotation and its translation.

  example: As Bacon noted, "nam et ipsa scientia potestas est" ("for knowledge itself is power"; 79; Spedding et al. 95).

- translation of a **block quotation** is to be formatted as a subsequent block with no quotation marks or parentheses but with its own citation of the translation source

6. Tables and illustrations *(MLAH 1.7)*

A) Images
Include 300 dpi images in a file or files of the following types:

- file extensions .tiff, .jpg, .ppt, .eps, .bmp, or .png for **figures**

- file extensions .doc, .docx, .xls, or .xlsx for **tables**

B) Captions
Include a list of captions with source attributions (and permissions as needed) for all images in the image file(s). See examples in *MLAH* 1.7.

C) Callouts
Insert a callout between paragraphs in your Word text file (.doc or .docx) to indicate the approximate position of each image.

example: <figure x about here>

7. Endnotes *(MLAH chapter 7)*

The *JMMLA* uses endnotes, not footnotes. Lengthy content notes should be incorporated into text or omitted. Click here for more on notes in MLA style.

- Use endnotes sparingly.

- Use Word's Insert or Reference feature to insert superscript numbers in text automatically.

The vertical list of numbered endnotes should be formatted with un-superscripted numerals, like other numbered lists.

example: 1. See Plag et al. for more on the zero allophone (52–54).

 2. Note that angle brackets delimit letter strings that are to be viewed as spellings rather than as lexical items.

If Word superscripts numerals in the endnote section of your manuscript, you may leave them to be reformatted after acceptance.

D. Works Cited (*MLAH* chapter 5)

1. Alphabetization of Entries (*MLAH* 5.123–130)

The MLA uses the letter-by-letter system of alphabetization, ignoring accent marks and diacriticals.

- Alphabetize by last name; if last names are the same for different authors, continue alphabetizing by first name.

- Alphabetize by the title of the work when an author has entries for more than one publication; ignore articles (*the*, *a*, *an*), as well as accent marks and other diacriticals when alphabetizing by titles.

  example: Merleau-Ponty. *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Gallimard, 1945.

  Munro, Alice. "The Bear Came Over the Mountain." *Family Furnishings*, Knopf, 2014, pp. 214–47.

  ———. "Boys and Girls." *Dance of the Happy Shades and Other Stories*, Vintage, 1996, pp. 111–27.

  Munro, Sheila. *Lives of Mothers and Daughters: Growing Up with Alice Munro*. McClelland and Stewart, 2001.

2. Indention

- Create hanging indention in Word by selecting the following sequence: Format/Paragraph/Indents and Spacing/Special: Hanging.

- Do not use tabs to force a hanging indent. If you are unable to use the Word feature for hanging indents, just allow the entries to wrap to the next lines, with no indention.

For more on creating hanging indents in Word, [click here](#).

3. Title

A) Capitalization of Titles (*MLAH* 2.89–2.98)

- Follow the guidelines for **headline-style** capitalization (a.k.a. title-style) of English prose and poetry titles, except when the first line is used as the title of an untitled poem.

- Use the same headline style for English-language **subtitles**, including capitalization of the first word of the subtitle.

- See *MLAH* 2.91 for capitalizing **non-English titles**.

B) Punctuation of Titles (*MLAH* 2.99–2.105)

Punctuate titles as in the published source, with the following exceptions:

- Insert a **colon** followed by a single letter-space between the title and subtitle, unless the title ends in a question mark or exclamation point, in which case consult *MLAH* 2.101.

- Change an **ampersand [&]** in the title to the word *and* preceded by a series comma.

- Insert a **comma** before a date (or date range) at the end of a title, unless the date is part of the title syntax.

  example: *The Collected Poems of Lucile Clifton, 1965–2010*

C) Italics and Quotation Marks in Titles (*MLAH* 2.106–2.119)

For titles within titles, consult *MLAH* 2.111.

- Italicize titles of books, plays, newspapers, journals, and films, as well as websites.

- Use quotation marks to delimit titles of shorter works, such as short stories, essays, articles, poems, chapter titles, and songs, as well as pages of a website.

4. Author/Contributors (*MLAH* 5.3–5.22; 5:39–5.40)

The first element of an entry will be, if known, the name of the author (or authors) or, in some cases, the name of the editor or other primary contributor (*MLAH* 5.3; 5.40).

5. Publication Formats (*MLAH* chapter 5; appendix 2)

- Consult *MLAH* chapter 5 for details of the components of a Works Cited entry.

- See *MLAH* appendix 2 for helpful examples of Works Cited entries by type of publication.

  [Click here](#) for the MLA Style Center's many examples of citations by format.

  [Click here](#) for detailed explanations of citations by format.

III. Mechanics of Prose

A. Spelling

American English spellings are to be used, according to the latest edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (currently the 11th edition). Consult *Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Unabridged)* or [Merriam-Webster online](#) for a more extensive set of entries.

Note that **British English spellings** in directly quoted passages should not be changed.

1. Possessives (*MLAH* 2.50–2.52)

Form the possessive of all singular **proper nouns** ending in <s> by adding an apostrophe followed by <s>.

examples: James's or Socrates's or Du Bois's

2. Capitalization and Lower Case (*MLAH* 2.64–2.70)

- Capitalize the start of a sentence and all proper nouns.

- Capitalize a **person's title** when immediately followed by the name but not when the title is used without the name.

  example: Professor Ratiu, my French professor, was later the dean of the college.

- Use lowercase for **parts of a book** or divisions of a cited source, such as chapter, introduction, or appendix.

3. Abbreviations, Initialisms, Acronyms

With regard to abbreviations, refer to *MLAH* appendix 1.

- Omit periods and spaces in initialisms, acronyms, and other abbreviations that are all (or predominantly) **capital letters**.

  examples: US or PhD or CDC

- Use periods after most abbreviations ending in **lowercase letters**.

  examples: ed. or vol. or qtd. or Feb.

- Insert periods (but no spaces) after lowercase abbreviations representing **phrases**.

  examples: p.m. or e.g.

- Use Latin phrase abbreviations **i.e.** and **e.g.** (always followed by a comma) *only* in notes or in parenthetical text. Otherwise, use "that is" and "for example."

4. Numbers (*MLAH* 2.126–2.139)

A) Words

- Spell out **cardinal** numbers if only one or two words are needed.

  examples: fifty-three or fifty thousand

- Spell out **percentages** and **monetary amounts** if only three words or fewer are needed.

  examples: thirty-one percent or seventy-five thousand dollars

- Spell out all **ordinal** numbers.

  examples: seventh month or twenty-first century or one-hundred-fiftieth line

B) Numerals

- Use numerals if more than two words would be needed to spell out the number.

  examples: 149 or 5,010

- Use numerals for percentages and monetary references if more than three words would be needed to spell out the amount.

  examples: 47.5 % or $75,300

- Specify all digits for **numeric ranges** up to one hundred.

  example: 61–65

- Use at least two digits—or more as needed for clarity—if the final number in a range of values is greater than 99.

  examples: 100–04 or 395–404 or 94–102 or 1490–1552

- Represent **numbered parts** (such as sections or chapters) as Arabic numerals even if roman numerals or spelled-out numbers are used in the source document.

  examples: part 1 or chapter 23

5. Dates (*MLAH* 2.138)

The month is to be spelled out in both date formats described here.

- Use Month-Day-Year format in prose, with commas setting off the four-digit year.

  example: October 15, 2021, was her twenty-first birthday.

- Use Day-Month-Year format in the list of works cited, with no comma between the month and year.

  example: 15 October 2021

6. Foreign Words and Phrases (*MLAH* 2.63)

A) Italic

Italicize individual foreign words or short phrases that are **not** included in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.*

examples: *lector benevole* or *remerciements*

B) Roman

Set as roman any foreign words or short phrases that are included in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, as well as most longer foreign phrases.

examples: carpe diem or habitué or dictum sapienti sat est

B. Punctuation (MLAH 2.4–2.59)

1. Period

- Insert only one letter-space after a period or other end-of-sentence punctuation.

- Insert a period and space between **initials** in a name, unless initials only are used.

  examples: C. V. Wedgwood or W. E. B. Du Bois or FDR or JFK

- Omit periods after uppercase initialisms, acronyms, or abbreviations.

  examples: CDC or NASA or US

- Insert a period after each letter of the lowercase abbreviation of a phrase.

  examples: e.g. or p.m.

- Use **three spaced periods** instead of the ellipsis insertion character to indicate omissions or hesitations in speech.

2. Comma (*MLAH* 2.5–2.25)

Except for independent clauses in a compound sentence, a pair of parallel grammatical structures connected by a coordinating conjunction is not separated by a comma (*MLAH* 2.15–2.21).

Note that if you think you need an otherwise-uncalled-for comma in order for your sentence to be read as intended, you should probably revise and restructure your sentence.

- Insert a comma after each item in a **series**, including the item preceding the coordinating conjunction (a.k.a. series comma or Oxford comma).

- Use commas to set off **nonrestrictive clauses** introduced by *which*; but omit commas for **restrictive clauses** beginning with *that*.

- Always insert a comma after an **introductory dependent clause** but not after an **introductory prepositional phrase**.

- Use a comma after abbreviations **i.e.** and **e.g.** in notes or parenthetically in text.

3. Semicolon (*MLAH* 2.26)

- Use a semicolon between the independent clauses of a **compound sentence** if commas are used in one or both of the clauses.

- Use a semicolon between phrases or **clauses in a series** or list.

4. Colon (*MLAH* 2.27)

Use a colon ***only*** after a grammatically complete sentence.

Just as you would avoid using a comma or other punctuation to separate a subject from its verb, a verb from its object, or a preposition from its object, do not insert a colon before a list that's a grammatical continuation of the sentence.

- Insert only one letter-space after a colon

- Use lowercase after a colon.

See *MLAH* 2.27 for the few specific instances when text that follows a colon may be capitalized. If you aren't sure, choose lowercase.

5. Hyphen (*MLAH* 2.33–2.48)

A) Prefixes

Prefixes are not hyphenated unless they are used with a proper noun or proper adjective (post-Victorian England) or unless the prefixed word could be misread.

Check *Merriam-Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* for closed or hyphenated forms.

examples: preexistent but pre-engineered

B) Compounds

Many **compound adjectives** that are hyphenated before the noun they modify are left open (not hyphenated) after the noun: *well-worn* trousers and trousers that were *well worn*, for example.

- Do not insert a hyphen between an **adverb ending in <-ly>** and the adjective it modifies.

  example: a scorchingly hot day

- Always use hyphens for spelled-out **simple fractions**, whatever their part of speech.

  examples: one-third of a pie or a two-thirds majority

- Check *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* to determine whether compounds are **closed** (*foxhole*), **open** (*fox fire*), or **hyphenated** (*fox-trot*).

6. Dash (*MLAH* 2.28–2.32; 2.48)

The dash has two forms, both of which are distinctive from the hyphen: the **en-dash** (the width of the letter *n*) and the **em-dash** (the width of the letter *m*).

[Click here](#) for more on the use of dashes in MLA style.

A) En-Dash (*MLAH* 2.48)

Although the en-dash is used for date ranges in publication, you may use a hyphen, which will be replaced by an en-dash after acceptance.

B) Em-Dash (*MLAH* 2.28–2.32)

While the em-dash can be used effectively, be sure it's the right punctuation for the job. Consider parentheses, commas, or a colon as possible alternatives, depending on the sense you want to convey.

- Use two consecutive hyphens to represent an em-dash; or use the Insert/Symbol/Special Characters feature of Word to select an em-dash.

- Insert the em-dash between words with no space before or after it.

- Limit your use of the em-dash within a single sentence to one pair of dashes or one unpaired dash at the end of the sentence.

- Insert three consecutive em-dashes in place of the author's name in the list of works cited to indicate additional entries for the same author.

  example: Donoghue, Emma. Afterword. *Astray*, Little Brown, 2012, pp. 261–71.

  ———. "The Long Way Home." *Astray*, Little Brown, 2012, pp. 111–22.

[Click here](#) for more on how to create dashes in Word.

7. Parentheses (*MLAH* 2.28)

Parentheses are usually a preferred alternative to a dash or pair of dashes when the text to be set off is itself a complete sentence.

8. Ellipsis (*MLAH* 6.58)

Use **three spaced periods** (instead of the ellipsis insertion character) to signal an omission or hesitation in speech. If the omission falls between grammatically complete sentences, an ellipsis (three spaced periods) will follow a period and a letter-space.

9. Apostrophe (*MLAH* 2.49–2.54)

Note that *MLAH* discourages the use of **contractions** in scholarly writing (*MLAH* 2.49).

Refer to *MLAH* 2.49–2.54 for the use of the apostrophe with **possessives** and with certain plurals.

10. Quotation Marks (*MLAH* 2.55–2.57)

Periods and commas always precede the closing quotation mark. Other punctuation, if not part of the quoted passage, will follow the closing quotation mark.

example: Additional thoughts come to mind besides "To be or not to be."

example: In which play did Hamlet consider whether "[t]o be or not to be"?

- Use "scare quotes" sparingly or not at all (*MLAH* 2.56).

- Delimit parenthetic translations of run-in quotations with quotation marks inside the parentheses (*MLAH* 6.75).

    example: Bacon wrote, "[N]am et ipsa scientia potestas est" ("for knowledge itself is power"; 79; Spedding et al. 95).

11. Brackets (*MLAH* 6.65–6.67)

One of the primary functions of brackets in academic writing is to signal an author's **alteration of quotes**, though brackets are also used for inserted clarifications and for translations of foreign-language titles.

- Bracket a letter changed from upper to lower **case** or from lower to upper case, as appropriate, when integrating quoted matter into your prose.

    example: What did Prince Hamlet mean when he said, "[O]r not to be"?

    example: Why did Churchill say that "[h]istory will be kind" to him?

- Bracket **words replaced** in quoted matter as well as **suffixes added** to the ends of quoted words in order to incorporate the quote grammatically into your prose.

    example: Parks explained that "all [she] was doing was trying to get home from work."

example: Following the Countess of Roussillon's advice, she "love[d] all, trust[ed] a few and [did] wrong to none."

Click here for ways to **avoid brackets** in quotations.

Consult *MLAH* for uses of brackets to signal **errors** in quotes (6.65) or inserted **clarifications** (6.66) and for more examples of tense adjustment and pronoun replacement (6.67).

IV. Syntax and Semantics

A. Inclusive Language (MLAH 3.1–3.7)

Carefully review and observe the **wording guidelines** set forth in the "Inclusive Language" section of the *MLA Handbook*, 9th ed.

B. Sentence Construction

1. Fragments

In scholarly writing, phrases and clauses that do not constitute grammatically complete sentences should not be punctuated as though they were actual statements.

Use coordinate conjunctions—*and*, *but*, *so*, *yet*, and possibly *or*—sparingly to begin a sentence.

Note that the conjunction *for* is never appropriate at the beginning of a sentence.

2. Relative Clauses

- Use the relative pronouns *that* or *who/whose/whom* in **restrictive** (essential) clauses not set off by commas.

  example: The unpublished source that was originally consulted offered no additional insights.

- Use relative pronouns *which* or *who/whose/whom* in **nonrestrictive** (nonessential) clauses, set off by commas.

  example: The unpublished source, which had been consulted previously, offered one additional insight.

3. Dangling Modifiers

Be sure that introductory participles, as well as adjectives and other phrases, clearly modify the noun you intended. Consider these examples:

- **dangling participle**: Waiting for her turn to sing, Annie's anxiety grew more noticeable.

  a correction: Waiting for her turn to sing, Annie became noticeably more anxious.

- **dangling adjective**: Usually eager to join the game, the unfortunate incident made the twins reluctant to play with us.

  a correction: Usually eager to join the game, the twins were reluctant to play with us after the unfortunate incident.

a correction: Although the twins were usually eager to join the game, the unfortunate incident made them reluctant to play with us.

- **dangling prepositional phrase**: As a writer, the etymology of words was fascinating to him.

  a correction: As a writer, he was fascinated by the etymology of words.

For more on dangling modifiers, click here.

4. Parallel Structure

Whenever you use a coordinating conjunction with two items or with a series of items, the items must have the **same grammatical structure**. Consider these examples:

- not parallel: This type of uncertainty is not unusual or a problem.

  Instead of using an adjective (*unusual*) and a noun (*problem*), restructure your sentence using two adjectives.

  parallel: This type of uncertainty is not unusual or problematic.

  parallel: This type of uncertainty is neither unusual nor problematic.

- not parallel: The recording not only included step-by-step instructions for the mission but also what to do in case of emergency.

  The same grammatical structure must follow **correlative conjunctions** such as *not only/but also*; *either/or*; *neither/nor*; *both/and*.

  parallel: The recording included not only step-by-step instructions for the mission but also emergency procedures in case something went wrong.

For more on parallel structure, click here.

5. Antecedents

Each pronoun must have an unambiguous antecedent: a noun, noun phrase, or noun clause that the pronoun agrees with in **person and number**.

- ambiguous antecedent: The wind blew the basket of flowers off the table even though it seemed light.

  unambiguous antecedent: Even though the wind seemed light, it blew the basket of flowers off the table.

- ambiguous antecedents: When I changed the subject of the sentence to a pronoun, it made it unclear.

  unambiguous (without antecedents): Changing the subject to a pronoun made the sentence unclear.

6. Quotations (*MLAH* 6.41–6.82)

Reproduce the source text exactly, apart from indications of omissions (*MLAH* 6.58–6.62) and other **permissible alterations**, sparingly applied (*MLAH* 6.63–6.68).

A) Prose

- Incorporate a quotation of up to **four lines** into your prose; set off a longer quotation as a block, indented a half inch from the left margin.

- Capitalize the first letter of a run-in quotation or a block quotation that is introduced by a **verb of saying** (such as *writes*, *says*, *states*) in an independent clause.

   If this requires a **change of case** from what is used in the source, enclose the initial capital letter in brackets.

   example: Churchill is said to have quipped, "[H]istory will be kind to me, for I intend to write it" (247).

- Be sure that run-in quotations are **grammatically integrated** into your statements. Indicate necessary alterations of tense and pronouns by enclosing the replacements in brackets.

   example: According to Churchill, history would "be kind to [him], for [he] intend[ed] to write it" (247).

   Such replacements are distracting and should be used sparingly. Consider paraphrasing instead; or select **distinctive phrases** to quote instead of quoting the full text.

   example: Did Churchill actually say that history would "be kind" to him because he intended "to write it" (247)?

B) Poetry

- Incorporate a verse quotation of up to **three lines** into your prose; set off a longer quotation as a block, indented a half inch from the left margin. Reproduce other **indentions and spacing** as accurately as you can within a block quotation.

- Be sure that **run-in lines or partial lines** of poetry are grammatically integrated into your statements, just as with prose quotations. Try to avoid bracketed alterations to poetic wording.

   example: How long does it take for "time remembered" to be "grief forgotten," as Swinburne asserted?

   example: When MacLeish describes a poem as "palpable and mute / As a globed fruit, // Dumb / As old medallions to the thumb," which senses are engaged?

C. Verbiage and Clarity

From the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook* comes the following rationale for MLA style:

Every time readers have to stop and figure something out—whether it's deciphering the intent of stray punctuation, puzzling over a misspelled or misused word, stumbling over an incorrectly structured citation, or wondering about a reference to a source not in the works-cited list—they are distracted from the argument at hand, and their distraction hinders engagement with the author's point. (19)

Keep in mind that the successful communication of your thought relies on your readers' unimpeded engagement with your prose.

The goal we share is to keep your reader reading.