



Endnotes and Footnotes in MLA Format

What are Endnotes and Footnotes?

Certain academic fields and advanced-level academic papers require *endnotes* or *footnotes* to cite sources. Even though the majority of professors will not require this format of documentation, a wise student will always ask his or her instructor's preference.

Disciplines that commonly use Footnotes and Endnotes:

- Art
- Theater
- Theology
- Music
- Dance
- History

MLA Format for Documenting with Notes:

- Footnotes and Endnotes have their own format for the documentation of sources. Instead of the in-text parenthetical citation used by MLA, notes refer readers by the use of small superscript numerals.
- The small superscript numerals can be placed at the end of a word or sentence. If there is more than one notation within a page or paper, the numerals are placed in order (¹, ², ³) and correspond consecutively with the respective footnotes or endnotes.
- The difference between footnotes and endnotes involves the location of the notes in the document and sometimes the type of document:
 - Footnotes are placed at the bottom of each page of the main text.
 - Endnotes are collected together at the end of the main text of the paper.
- In MLA format, endnotes are preferred for all types of documents. Check with your instructor for confirmation of his or her preference. MLA requires the first line of every note to be indented one half inch, just like the first line of a paragraph.

When a source is used for the first time in a paper, its corresponding note must include the following:

- Author's complete name
- Title of book/paper/ "article"
- Publication information
- Page(s) referred

Examples

^(number) Author's complete name, starting with first name, Title of Book/Paper/Article
(Publication info- City: Publisher, Date) Page Number(s).

Note ¹Jerome H. Buckley, Seasons of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974) 13-14.

If a source is used more than once, the authors' last names or abbreviated forms of long titles are often used. The Latin abbreviations *ibid.* (the same source as the preceding note) and *opt. cit.* (the same source by that author mentioned in the notes most recently) are not recommended by MLA.

Format Example - Subsequent Note Reference

(number) Author's last name Page number(s).

Text The root word "bildung" has a variety of connotations in German, including, "portrait, picture, shaping, and formation."¹⁷

Note ¹⁷ Buckley 13-14.

Unlike a "Works Cited" or a "Bibliography" page, a footnote or endnote ends with the page number(s) that are being referred to for that specific part of the paper.

Notes as Supplements to Research

Although MLA uses in-text parenthetical citations, notes can be used to supplement an MLA paper with extra information. The information contained within these "supplementary" notes is expanded research provided by the author to help clarify the topic being discussed. Notes are meant to refer readers to other pages or other sources of information regarding the topic. This information is generally too lengthy to fit reasonably into a parenthetical citation or an aside, such as a sentence within parentheses. These notes are meant to clarify the topic, NOT to be used as a formal documentation method.

Supplementary notes are generally no more than one or two sentences, though they can be longer if necessary. The general rule is to include as much information about a source as possible so that the reader can follow up on the research. Like endnotes for documentation, MLA requires supplementary notes to be numbered consecutively, with superscript numerals at the end of a word or sentence. MLA requires the first line of every note to be indented one half inch, just like the first line of a paragraph.

Examples of supplementary notes

TEXT Whatever the historical inaccuracies,...¹⁴

MLA Style ¹⁴ Assimilation was not a straightforward proposition for earlier generations of immigrants. According to David Hollinger, of those immigrants who came to the United States during the great migration of 1880 to 1924, about one-third returned to their country of origin. David A. Hollinger, Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism (New York, 1995).