

FOOTNOTES AND ENDNOTES

Because long explanatory notes can be distracting to readers, most academic style guidelines (including MLA and APA, the American Psychological Association) recommend limited use of endnotes/footnotes; however, certain publishers encourage or require note references in lieu of parenthetical references.

MLA discourages extensive use of explanatory or digressive notes. MLA style does, however, allow you to use endnotes or footnotes for *bibliographic notes*, which refer to other publications your readers may consult. The following are some examples:

1. See Blackmur, especially chapters 3 and 4, for an insightful analysis of this trend.

2. On the problems related to repressed memory recovery, see Wollens 120-35; for a contrasting view, see Pyle 43; Johnson, Hull, Snyder 21-35; Krieg 78-91.

3. Several other studies point to this same conclusion. See Johnson and Hull 45-79, Kather 23-31, Krieg 50-57.

Or, you can also use endnotes/footnotes for occasional *explanatory notes* (also known as content notes), which refers to brief additional information that might be too digressive for the main text:

4. In a 1998 interview, she reiterated this point even more strongly: "I am an artist, not a politician!" (Weller 124).

Numbering endnotes and footnotes in the document body

Endnotes and footnotes in MLA format are indicated in-text by superscript arabic numbers after the punctuation of the phrase or clause to which the note refers:

Some have argued that such an investigation would be fruitless.⁶

Scholars have argued for years that this claim has no basis,⁷ so we would do well to ignore it.

Note that when a long dash appears in the text, the footnote/endnote number appears *before* the dash:

For years, scholars have failed to address this point⁸—a fact that suggests their cowardice more than their carelessness.

Do not use asterisks (*), angle brackets (>), or other symbols for note references. The list of endnotes and footnotes (either of which, for papers submitted for publication, should be listed on a separate page, as indicated below) should correspond to the note references in the text.

Formatting endnotes and footnotes

Endnotes Page

MLA recommends that all notes be listed on a separate page entitled Notes (centered, no formatting). Use Note if there is only one note. The Notes page should appear before the Works Cited page. This is especially important for papers being submitted for publication.

The notes themselves should be listed by consecutive arabic numbers that correspond to the notation in the text. Notes are double-spaced. The first line of each endnote is indented five spaces; subsequent lines are flush with the left margin. Place a period and a space after each endnote number. Provide the appropriate note after the space.

Footnotes (below the text body)

Please note that the 7th edition of the MLA Handbook does not specify explicitly how to fully format footnotes, at least not when compared to the prescriptions in the 6th edition. Consult your instructor to see what his or her preference is when formatting footnotes in MLA style.

The following comes from the 6th and 7th editions. The 6th edition of the MLA Handbook contains information on how to format footnotes, however. Begin footnotes four lines (two double-spaced lines) below the main text. Footnotes are single-space with a first-line indent. (The first line of each footnote is indented five spaces; subsequent lines are flush with the left margin.). Be sure to double-space between notes. Place a period and a space after each footnote number. Provide the appropriate note after the space.

For more information on using endnotes and footnotes, consult "Using Notes with Parenthetical Documentation" in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. sec. 6.5, 230-32), or the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, (3rd ed. sec. 7.5, 259-60).

THE BASICS

The first footnote or endnote will have full bibliographic information (see the reverse side of this handout for information to include). The second and subsequent references to a work will have only the author's name and page number. If you are using two works by the same author, give full bibliographic information for the first reference and then use the author's name, a shortened title of the piece, and the page number for second and subsequent references. If there is no author's name available (for instance, in a pamphlet or newspaper editorial), give all publication information for the first reference and then use a shortened title of the work with the page number for second and subsequent references.

Note Example:

¹ Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968) 25-27.

Subsequent references would be

² Abbey 44-46.

SAMPLE FOOTNOTES

Book With One Author:

William Zinsser asserts: "Clutter is the disease of American writing."¹

Book with Two or More Authors:

In the fourth century, Constantine I named his new Christian city Constantinople; this city is now known as Istanbul.² _____

Reference Book:

The days of the Roman Empire were coming to a close: "Rome finally fell in 410 AD with the brutal Visigoth (German) pillage."³

Translation:

Virgil may be the source of the phrase, "The trip to hell is easy."⁴

Periodical Article:

According to Nichole Kolajita, "The United States prospers daily as a result of the recent congressional policies concerning elderly abuse."⁵

Newspaper Article:

The Sunshine National Convention was a transforming event, which "brought bright smiles to the children of Rainbow Elementary."⁶

¹ William Zinsser, On Writing Well, 5th ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1976) 7.

² Web Browning and Paul Smyth, The Truth About History (San Diego: Omnia Publishing, 1949) 19-34.

³ "The Fall of Rome," The New Encyclopedia for Adults, 1988 ed.

⁴ Virgil, The Aeneid, trans. Tyrone Cobb and Troon Douds (Seattle: Perk-Up Inc., 1994) 403.

⁵ Nichole Kolajita, "Elder Abuse," News Today Oct. 1997: 66.

⁶ Charlotte Mangold, "The Joyous Children," Denver Gazette 11 Sept. 1997: A2-3.

Footnote/Endnote Practice

Practice your formatting with this Footnotes and Endnotes in MLA Format Worksheet to ensure you follow the MLA Guide when writing in this style. Ten exercises require you to recognize the correct formatting, write footnotes/endnotes and create a portion of a “Notes” page for endnotes.

Instructions

Answer the question in the first exercise. For exercises 2-5, determine whether the formatting is correct. For exercise 6-8, write footnotes/endnote per the instructions in each exercise. For the final exercise, create a “Notes” page following the notes given.

1. If you are writing a paper in MLA format, should you use endnotes or footnotes? Why?
2. Is the following footnote/endnote formatted correctly if it was to appear in the body of your paper? If yes, write “correct.” If not, correct it.
 - a. The dancers held many positions in various troupes⁸, acted in motion pictures and performed in live performances.
3. Is the following footnote/endnote formatted correctly if it was to appear in the body of your paper? If yes, write “correct.” If not, correct it.
 - a. Although Sandberg was known for his research on early childhood development—⁴namely regarding the development of social development—he worked for several years studying socialization during the teen years.
4. Is the following footnote/endnote formatted correctly if it was to appear in the body of your paper? If yes, write “correct.” If not, correct it.
 - a. The dancers held many positions in various troupes,⁸ acted in motion pictures and performed in live performances.
5. Is the following footnote/endnote formatted correctly if it was to appear in the body of your paper? If yes, write “correct.” If not, correct it.
 - a. Although Sandberg was known for his research on early childhood development⁴—namely regarding the development of social development—he worked for several years studying socialization during the teen years.
6. Write a bibliographic footnote/endnote. Make up the information, or use a source (article, book, etc.) that you have on hand for the information. Use an Arabic superscript number one (¹) to notate it.
7. Write a bibliographic footnote/endnote. Make up the information, or use a source (article, book, etc.) that you have on hand for the information. Use an Arabic superscript number two (²) to notate it.
8. Write an explanatory footnote/endnote. Make up the information, or use a source (article, book, etc.) that you have on hand for the information. Use an Arabic superscript number three (³) to notate it.
9. Create the start of an endnotes page (on a separate sheet or the back of this page). Use the three endnotes you created in exercises 6-8, and number them sequentially.