What's new in MLA style?

The Modern Language Association (MLA) has updated its guidelines for college and high school writers. What follows is an overview of the major changes in MLA style in the 7th edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2009).

Italics

- ***Italics*** is now used everywhere in place of underlining—for titles, for words, etc.

Medium of publication

- Every entry has a ***medium of publication*** designation, such as the following: Print, Web, Radio, Television, CD, Audiocassette, Film, Videocassette, DVD, Performance, Lecture, and PDF file.

  Wood, James. *How Fiction Works*. New York: Farrar, 2008. Print.

Issue numbers for journals

- MLA no longer makes a distinction between journals paginated by volume and journals paginated by issue. All entries must have both volume ***and issue*** numbers for ***all*** journals.

  Wood, Michael. "Broken Dates: Fiction and the Century." *Kenyon Review* 22.3 (2000): 50-64. Print.

Online sources

- MLA guidelines assume that readers can track down most online sources by entering the author, title, or other identifying information in a search engine or a database. Consequently, MLA ***does not require a URL*** in citations for online sources.
- MLA no longer requires the location of the database (the library name, for instance).
- MLA style requires a ***sponsor or publisher*** for most online sources. If a source has no sponsor or publisher, use the abbreviation "N.p." (for "No publisher") in the sponsor position.
- If there is ***no date*** of publication or update, use "n.d." (for "no date") after the sponsor.
- For an article in an online journal or an article from a database, give ***page numbers*** if they are available; if they are not, use the abbreviation "n. pag."

Web site

Margaret Sanger Papers Project. History Dept., New York U, 18 Oct. 2000. Web. 9 Feb. 2009.

Article on a Web site (no date)

Shiva, Vandana. "Bioethics: A Third World Issue." *NativeWeb*. NativeWeb, n.d. Web. 22 Feb. 2006.

Article from a database

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Johnson, Kirk. "The Mountain Lions of Michigan." *Endangered Species Update* 19.2 (2002): 27-31. *Expanded Academic Index*. Web. 26 Feb. 2009.

In-text citations

- For unpaginated online sources (mostly Web sites), don't use a paragraph or section number (with "par." or "sec.") unless the source itself numbers its paragraphs or sections.

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