



Hassiba Benbouali University, Chlef
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English



MLA Style Techniques and Practice

Master 2 Literature and Civilisation

By :

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MLA Style Techniques and Practice

University of Hassiba Ben Bouali University, Chlef

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English

Course details

Course title : MLA Style Techniques and Practice

Credit hours: 3h per Week (TD)

Level : Master 02 Literature and Civilisation

Coefficient : 2

Credits : 4

UE : Methodology

Type of Assessment : Ongoing Assessment

Instruction :

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Course Objectives

By the end of this course, learners will be able to :

- Understanding Research Concepts
- Understand and respect the ethical standards in research, including issues of consent, confidentiality, and integrity.
- Understand the basic ideas and terms that are important in research, so you can feel confident and knowledgeable in your field.
- Learn how to design and carry out research projects, so the learner can investigate questions that interest him/her
- Get comfortable with different research methods, whether in working with numbers or stories, and know when to use each one.
- Learn the rules for conducting research in an ethical way, respecting people's privacy and rights throughout your work.
- Discover how to gather and make sense of data, using tools that help you manage and analyse your findings effectively.
- Get good at creating clear research questions and plans, so your projects have a solid structure and direction.
- Improve your writing skills, so you can share your research findings in a clear and engaging way that others can easily understand.
- Develop strategies for overcoming the challenges that pop up during research, so you can keep your projects on track.

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By focusing on these objectives, the learner will be well-prepared to tackle complex research projects and make meaningful contributions to his/her academic and professional community.

Course description

MLA Style Techniques and Practice is a module designed for Master 02 students Literature and Civilization in the Department of English Faculty of Foreign Languages, Chlef University. This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, a critical framework for writing and documenting research in the humanities. The course focus on students in English studies, literature, and cultural studies, the course aims to equip the learners with the skills necessary to apply MLA style effectively in their academic writing. MLA Style Techniques and Practice is a one-semester course for second-year Master students specializing in Literature and Civilization. This document offers learners a comprehensive, step-by-step guide and structured roadmap for preparing a dissertation. It is designed to walk students through each stage of the dissertation process, from initial topic selection and research design to the final writing and submission, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary tools and strategies to produce a well-organized and academically rigorous dissertation.

Evaluation Mode

The evaluation for this course will consist of either a written exam or an oral presentation, depending on the specific requirements set by the instructor.

Course Contents : MLA Style Techniques and Practice is in UE Methodology as introduced in the Canvas.

- **Semester 03**

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

Lecture 01 : Crafting a Master`s Dissertation

Lecture 02 : Guidelines for the Different Parts of a Dissertation

Lecture 03 : Reviewing the Literature

Lecture 04 : Plagiarism

Lecture 05 : Citing and Referencing

Lecture 06 : MLA Style Referencing Guide

Lecture 07 : Writing an Abstract

Lecture 08 : Writing a General Introduction

Lecture 09 : Writing a General Conclusion

Lecture 10 : Viva Oral Presentation

Crafting a Master`s Dissertation

1. Introduction

Research is undertaken to investigate ideas, examine issues, address problems, or formulate arguments based on existing literature. This process necessitates the exploration of resources beyond one's immediate knowledge base. The culmination of such inquiry is typically presented in the form of a research paper generally called dissertation. A dissertation, is a scholarly writing required by most master`s programs that uses critical analysis and existing research to dive into a topic.

1.2 Understanding a Master`s Dissertation

A dissertation is a lengthy piece of academic writing based on research undertaken by the students and submitted by them in a partial fulfilment of the requirement for a master degree. It is a term sometimes used interchangeably with thesis, although in most universities it is used to assess candidates at a level lower than that of doctorate. Its purpose is to allow the learners to demonstrate their mastery of the skills of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, argumentation, and data collection and handling by applying them to a specific topic. The process involves proposing a research topic, conducting thorough literature review, formulating research questions, collecting and analysing data, and drawing conclusions. After submission, the dissertation undergoes a review by a committee and is often defended orally. Some master`s programs also require a dissertation which tend to be shorter and less exhaustive than doctorate thesis.

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In completing your dissertation, you will be allocated a supervisor who will advise you throughout the project. It's essential to be aware of their obligations and deadlines. It's the student's responsibility to communicate with the supervisor. Keeping your supervisor informed of your progress is crucial ; generally, students perform better if they maintain regular contact. Communicate early and don't send work to your supervisor just before your deadline, as you won't have time to make any adjustments based on their suggestions, such as interviewing a bigger sample. Remember, the supervisor's role is to advise and guide, not to dictate what you should do. If you're unsure about something, they can provide advice, but you need to initiate the discussion with your suggestions.

The structure of a dissertation depends on a variety of components, such as, your discipline, your topic, and your theoretical approach. Humanities dissertations are often structured more like a longer-form essay. In both social sciences, dissertations typically include an introduction, literature review, methodology section, results section, discussion section, and conclusion section.

What elements/sections are typically included in a Dissertation ? A Dissertation will typically be made up of some or possibly all of the following:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Research approach
- Research design

- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

1.2 Structure of a Dissertation

A dissertation should contain three main parts : the opening, the body, and the end.

1.2.1 The Opening: it contains

- Front page
- Dedication
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract (with keywords)
- Table of Contents
- List of Abbreviations (if any)
- List of Acronyms (if any)
- List of Figures (if any)
- List of Maps (if any)
- List of Tables (if any)
- List of Appendices (if any)
- General Introduction

1.2.2 The Body : It contains

- First chapter : The theoretical Approach
- Second chapter : research methodology and design (research tools)

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- Third chapter : results (analysis, interpretation, recommendations and implications)

NB : The organization of the body depends on the field of research, the subject being explored, and the supervisor.

1.2.3 The End : it contains

- General conclusion
- Works cited list as named in MLA style for instance.
- Appendices

1.3 Conclusion

Research is conducted to explore ideas, analyze issues, address specific problems, or develop arguments grounded in existing literature. This process requires delving into resources beyond one's immediate knowledge. The culmination of this inquiry is typically presented as a dissertation, a scholarly document required by most master's programs. A dissertation involves critical analysis and the synthesis of existing research to deeply investigate a particular topic.

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Guidelines for the Different Parts of a Dissertation

Introduction

Writing a dissertation is a complex process that requires adherence to a structured format. The structure is not merely a formality; it serves as a roadmap that guides both the writer and the reader. A well-organized dissertation not only helps in clearly communicating your findings but also ensures that your research is academic, comprehensive, and credible. Each part of the dissertation has a specific purpose that contributes to the overall coherence and depth of the research. For instance, the introduction sets the stage by contextualizing the research problem, stating the objectives, and outlining the significance of the study. It engages the reader's interest and frames the questions that your research will answer. The literature review then builds on this by critically evaluating existing research and identifying gaps that your study will address, thereby situating your work within the broader academic field..

In fact, following a structured format in your dissertation is not just about fulfilling academic requirements; it is about constructing a clear, logical, and persuasive argument that effectively communicates the value of your research. Each part of the dissertation plays a vital role in building this argument, contributing to a final product that is both comprehensive and effective.

The dissertation format provided by Hassiba Benbouali University in Chlef, particularly within the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Department of English, adheres to a specific structure designed to meet the institution's academic standards. The title page prominently displays the title of the dissertation, followed by a statement indicating that the dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in

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Literature and Civilization. The document is presented by the student, whose name is listed without any titles, and is supervised by a faculty member, typically a professor or doctor, whose name and title are also included. The board of examiners comprises members of the academic faculty, with designated roles such as the president, supervisor, and examiner, all affiliated with the University of Chlef. The academic year during which the dissertation is submitted is clearly indicated at the bottom of the page. (see the page below).

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Hassiba Benbouali University, Chlef

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English

Title of the Dissertation

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master's Degree in Literature and
Civilisation

Presented by :

Supervised by :

First Name last Name (with no titles)

Prof/Dr.....

Board of Examiners

Prof./ Dr. : President

University of Chlef

Prof./ Dr : Supervisor

University of Chlef

Prof./ Dr : Examiner

University of Chlef

Academic Year : 2020 – 2021

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1. Acknowledgements

The **acknowledgements** section is where you thank those who have helped and supported you during the research and writing process. This section is optional, and should be no longer than one page.

Move from thanking the people most formally involved (supervisors, academics) to those who have supported you in other ways (friends and family).

If you include acknowledgements, make sure to thank your supervisor, and the members of the jury who accepted to read and evaluate your paper.

Abstract

The **abstract** is a short summary of your entire thesis. It concisely reports the aims and outcomes of your research, and is generally around 150-300 words long, or no more than one page. Write the abstract last, when you've completed the rest of the thesis.

State your **research problem** and objectives :

- Briefly describe the problem or question your dissertation addresses.
- State your specific objectives.
- Use the present or simple past tense.

Describe your **methods**

- Describe how data was gathered and analysed.
- Use the simple past tense.

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Summarize your key **results or arguments**

- Highlight the most important findings here.
- Use the simple past tense.

Present your **conclusion**

- Mention any important limitations or recommendations.
 - Use the present tense.
-

Table of Contents

The **Table of Contents** lists every section that comes after it (i.e. not the title page, acknowledgements, or abstract). A table of contents can be auto-generated in Word.

List of figures.....	5
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Appendix 1 : [Title] Students` Questionnaire	15
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List of Figures

A **List of Figures** is included if you've used a lot of figures (e.g. graphs, images, illustrations) in your text. It lists the figures in the same numbered order as they appear in the text, and can be auto-generated in the same way as the table of contents.

Figure 1.1: {Title of the figure1 in chapter 1}	11
Figure 2.1: {Title of the figure 1 in chapter 2}	26

List of Tables

Much like the **List of Tables**, the List of Tables is included if you have a lot of tables, and lists them in numbered order as they appear in the text.

Table 1.1: {Title of the table 1 in chapter 1}	10
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List of Abbreviations

The **List of Abbreviations** is optional. It should be included if you use a lot of abbreviations that are likely to be unfamiliar to readers. Present it as an alphabetized list or table, e.g. :

ACS	Accrediting Commission for Schools
FSC	Fundamental of science
HKEA	Hong Kong Examinations Authority

Glossary

A **glossary** is optional. Include one if you use a lot of specialist terms (other than abbreviations) that readers might not know. Present terms and their definitions in an alphabetized list or table, e.g. :

Compound interest : Interest calculated on the initial amount as well as on the interest of previous periods of a loan.

Variable costs: Costs that change according to the amount of goods provided.

General Introduction

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In the **general introduction**, set up your dissertation topic, purpose, and relevance, and tell the reader what to expect in the rest of the text.

Establish **your research topic**

- Introduce your broad topic in an engaging way.
- Provide relevant background information to contextualize your work.

Narrow down the focus

- Go into more detail about the specific area you'll be focusing on.
- Define the scope of the research.

Discuss existing research

- Briefly discuss the current state of knowledge on your topic.
- Show your work's relevance to a broader problem or debate.

Research questions and objectives

- State the questions you set out to answer in your thesis.
- Describe your concrete objectives in conducting the research.

Overview

- Give an overview of the structure of the rest of the thesis.
- Use the present tense, e.g. "Section 4 discusses..."

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

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In the **literature review**, you survey existing research on your topic, developing a coherent structure and argument that leads to a clear basis or justification for your own approach.

Survey the literature

- Describe how much research has been done into your topic, and what kinds.
- Synthesize key findings from relevant studies.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of previous research.
- Highlight any gaps or limitations in existing research.

Show how your research does one or more of the following

- Addresses a gap in the literature.
- Takes a new theoretical or methodological approach to the topic.
- Propose a solution to an unresolved problem.
- Builds on and strengthens existing knowledge with new data.
- Advances a theoretical debate.

Present the Theoretical Framework

- Discuss the theory that informs your research.
- Define key terms and explain relevant concepts.
- Present any relevant models that help interpret your findings.

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Research Methodology

The **methodology** section describes exactly how you collected and analysed your data, allowing your reader to assess the validity of your findings.

Introduce your overall approach

- Is your research qualitative or quantitative (or a combination of both)?
- What type of research design did you use (e.g. longitudinal, experimental, case study, ethnography...) ?
- The specific terms you use to describe your approach should follow the conventions of your field.

Give the details

- Where, when, and with whom the research took place (including your **sampling methods** if relevant).
- Your methods of **collecting data** (e.g. interviews, surveys, archives).
- Your methods of analyzing data (e.g. **statistical analysis**, **discourse analysis**).
- Tools and materials you used (e.g. computer programs, lab equipment).

Evaluate your methods

- Discuss any noteworthy obstacles you faced in conducting the research and how you overcame them.
- Assess whether your approach was effective overall.

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- If you used novel or unconventional methods, justify why this was the best approach to answering your research question.
-

Results

The **results** section is where you list the findings of your research. Report the results concisely and objectively, without interpreting their meaning.

In some types of qualitative research, the results and discussion sections may be combined.

Presenting quantitative results

- Structure the results around your research questions or hypotheses.
- Report all results that are relevant to your questions, including any that didn't fit with your expectations.

For each question or hypothesis

- Summarize the relevant results, including descriptive statistics and the results of any statistical tests used.
- Briefly state how the result relates to the question or whether the hypothesis was supported.
- Don't give subjective interpretations or speculation.

Tables and figures

- Include tables and figures if they help the reader understand your results.

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- Tables can be used to present exact values in a concise overview.
- Graphs and charts can be used to visualize patterns and relationships.
- Refer to all tables and figures in the text, and give them clear titles and labels.

Presenting qualitative results

- Structure the results around research questions or key themes.
- Make general observations about what the data showed.
- Mention recurring points of agreement or disagreement, patterns and trends.
- Highlight individual responses that were particularly noteworthy.
- Support with direct quotations.

Discussion

The discussion section is where you delve into the meaning and relevance of your results. Give your own interpretations and cite relevant sources to put your results in context.

Interpret your results

- What do the results tell us ?
- Did they meet your expectations ? If not, why might that be ?
- Are there any alternative explanations for your findings?

Discuss the implications

- Are the results consistent with previous studies ?

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- Do the results support or challenge an existing theory ?
- Why do these results matter ?
- Are there any practical implications ?

Acknowledge the limitations

- What can the results not tell us ?
 - Does the data have limited generalizability (e.g. due to your methods or sample size) ?
 - Are there any potentially relevant variables that you didn't take into account ?
-

General Conclusion

The **general conclusion** is the last part of your main text. It's where you wrap up your thesis, summarizing your main findings and recommendations. No new information or arguments should appear in the conclusion.

Answer the main research question

- Clearly and concisely state the overall conclusion that your research has led you to.

Reflect on the research

- To what extent was your approach effective in answering your questions ?
- Did the research raise any new questions or unexpected insights ?

Make Recommendations

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- You can make recommendations for practice (e.g. in business or policy) or for future research.
- Frame practical recommendations as suggestions, not instructions.
- Be specific about research recommendations, explaining how future studies can build on your conclusions.

Emphasize your contribution

- Show what new knowledge you have contributed.
- Leave the reader with a clear impression of why your research matters.

Reference List

The **reference list** (sometimes called a bibliography) lists full information on all of the sources cited in your dissertation.

Notes

- The format and exact information included vary according to the citation style used (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago).
- Scribbr offers free citation generators to easily create your reference list in APA or MLA.

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Appendices

Documents that do not fit into the main body of your dissertation but that may be useful to your reader (such as interview transcripts, full questionnaires, or tables with raw data) can be added as appendices.

- Only include appendices that are referenced in some way in your main text.
- Refer to appendices in the text with statements like “see Appendix 1.”
- If you have just one appendix, no number is needed; otherwise, they should be numbered Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc.
- Give each appendix a clear, descriptive title
- Start a new page for each appendix.
- Introduce each appendix with a sentence or two explaining what it is.

Reviewing the Literature

1. Introduction

Once a student has identified his /her research question, the next step in any research project is to search the existing literature and write a literature review. The main task at this early stage involves reviewing the main ideas and research relating to your chosen area of interest. This course will help students to know how to go about searching the literature and engaging critically with the ideas of other writers.

1.2 Reviewing the Existing Literature

Reviewing the existing literature relating to your topic of interest is a crucial stage in conducting research. The aim of the literature review is to establish what is already known about the topic and to frame the review in such a way that it can act as a background and justification for your investigation. A distinction is drawn between two kinds of literature review, narrative reviews and systematic reviews.

1.2.1 Narrative Review

Most literature reviews take the form of **narrative reviews**. This means that they seek to arrive at an overview of a field of study through a reasonably comprehensive assessment and critical interpretation of the literature, usually as a prelude to conducting one's own research in the area. Narrative reviews are the traditional kind of literature review in which the researcher provides an account of what is already known about the area of interest as a prelude to conducting his or her own research. Narrative reviews can be stand-alone reviews, in other words, the aim may be to provide an account of the literature as an end in itself. For instance, the researcher may want to review the research on British migrants abroad and to

link the findings to theories of identity. In such a case, the narrative review is not a prelude to doing research.

1.2.2 Systematic Reviews

Systematic reviewers use very explicit procedures to arrive at a synthesis of a body of literature. It has been defined as a replicable, scientific and transparent process that aims to minimize bias through exhaustive literature searches of published and unpublished studies and by providing an audit trail of the reviewer's decisions, procedures and conclusions` (**Tranfield et al, 2003 :209**). Such a review is often contrasted with the traditional narrative review. The proponents of systematic review suggest that it is more likely to generate unbiased and comprehensive accounts of the literature, especially in fields in which the aim is to understand whether a particular intervention has particular benefits, than those using the traditional review, which is often depicted by these proponents as haphazard. A systematic review that includes only quantitative studies and which seeks to summarize those studies quantitatively ia a **meta-analysis**. In recent times, the development of systematic review procedures for qualitative studies has attracted a great deal of attention, especially in the social sciences. Meta-ethnography is one such approach to the synthesis of qualitative findings, but currently there are several different methods, none of which is in widespread use (Mays et al, 2005). The systematic review process vary slightly, there are some steps to follow :

- Define the purpose and scope of the review. For a systematic review, the researcher should present the research question(s) to be examined.
- Seek out studies relevant to the scope and purpose of the review. The reviewer should seek out studies relevant to the research question(s). The search will be based on keywords and terms relevant to the purpose defined in step 1.

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- Assess the relevance of each study for the research question(s). This stage usually entails examining abstracts of articles and often articles themselves in order to establish their appropriateness and rejecting those that do not fit.
- This stage necessitates a specification of quality criteria, such as whether an appropriate research design and research methods were used and whether the chosen research design and research methods were implemented according to the standards of good research practice for those research designs and research methods.
- Extract the results of each study and synthesize the results.

1.3 Reasons for Writing a Literature Review

The following is a list of reasons for writing a literature review:

- You need to know what is already known in connection with your research area, because you do not want to be accused of reinventing the wheel.
- The person reading and assessing your work may not be familiar with the specific details of the area you are researching and so needs to be given some background information about it.
- You can learn from other researchers' mistakes and avoid making the same ones.
- You can learn about different theoretical and methodological approaches to your research area.
- It may help you to develop an analytic framework.
- It may lead you to consider the inclusion of variables in your research that you might not otherwise have thought about.
- It may suggest further research question for you.

- It will help with the interpretation of your findings.
- It gives you some pegs on which to hang your findings
- It provides a platform for you to establish the significance of your research.
- It is expected.

1.4 Importance of Literature Review

Reviewing literature can be time-consuming and daunting. The aim of literature review is to highlight what has been done so far in the field of interest and how your findings relate to earlier research. The review of literature also indicates the following:

- a. Approaches ;
- b. Methods ;
- c. Variables used; and
- d. Statistical procedure.

Generally, review of literature provides in-depth understanding and explanation on how your findings are similar to or novel from previous research work.

The following are the main importance of literature review:

(a) Improve your Research Methodology

Literature review helps you to acquire methodologies used by other researchers to find and solve research questions similar to the ones you are investigating. It will explain the procedures other researchers used and methods similar to the ones you are proposing. It will give you an idea whether the methods other researchers used worked for them and what are

the problems they faced. By doing a review of literature, you will become aware of pitfalls and problems and could strategize well to select a methodology that you feel will suit your research work better.

(b) Focus on Research Problem

Review of literature could help you shape your research problem because the process of reviewing the literature helps you to understand the subject area better and thus helps you to conceptualise your research problem clearly and precisely. In addition, it also helps to understand the relationship between your research problem and body of knowledge in your research area.

(c) Cater to Knowledge Base for Research Area

One of the most important objectives of literature review is to ensure that you read widely around the subject area in which you intend to conduct research study. It is fundamental that you know what others are doing in your field of interest or the similar topic you have been working on as well as understanding theories that have been put forward and gaps that exist in the particular field. M.Sc and PhD candidates are expected to be experts in their area of study, therefore a thorough review of literature helps to fulfil this expectation.

d. Contextualising Research Findings

Obtaining answers for your research questions is easy. The difficulties lies in how you examine your research findings in the existing body of knowledge. How do you answer your research questions compared to what other researchers concluded? What is the new knowledge contribution from your research work? How are your findings distinguished from those of other researchers? To answer these questions, you need to go back to the review of

literature. It is important to put your findings in the context of what is already known and understood in your field of research.

(e) Ensure Novelty in your Work

By doing a review of literature, you do not run the risk of „reinventing the wheel,“ meaning that wasting efforts on trying to rediscover something that is already known or published in the research arena. Therefore, through literature review, you could ensure novelty and new contribution in your research work

1.5 Common Weaknesses in Literature Review

Normally, beginners in research make the following mistakes as soon as they start writing the review of literature:

- (a) The review made is a mere description of various materials without making an effort to show the relation between the studies and main objective of the research topic.
- (b) Students tend to cut and paste, which SHOULD NOT be encouraged. Original works should be cited and quoted.
- (c) Journals or reports that are included are not critically evaluated. Critically evaluate the research questions, the methodology used and recommendations made by the researcher.

There is some evidence to suggest that students have not read the original works but instead have taken someone's work and cited it as though they had read the primary source.

1.6 When to stop

It is important to keep control of the reading process, and to keep your research focus in mind. Rudestam and Newton (1992 :49) remind us that the aim is to 'Build an argument, not a library'. It is also important to see the writing stage as part of the research process, not

something that happens after you have finished reading the literature. Wellington et al (2005 :80) suggest ‘Writing while you collect and collecting while you write.’ Once you are part way through your reading you can have a go at writing the literature review, in anticipation of revising it later on. It is often not until you start explaining something in writing that you find where your argument is weak, and you need to collect more evidence.

A skill that helps in curtailing the reading is: knowing where to set boundaries. For example, a study of the performance of a clinical team working in gerontology might involve reading literature within medicine; nursing; other allied healthcare specialties; psychology; and sociology; as well as perhaps healthcare policy; and patients’ experiences of healthcare. Decisions need to be made about where to focus your reading, and where you can refer briefly to an area but explain why you will not be going into it in more detail.

1.7 How to Structure your Literature Review

As with any piece of extended writing, structure is crucial. There may be specific guidance on structure within your department, or you may need to devise your own.

Examples of ways you might structure your literature review are :

- ❖ chronologically; although be careful not just to list items; you need to write critically, not just descriptively;
- ❖ By theme; this is useful if there are several strands within your topic that can logically be considered separately before being brought together;

By sector e.g. : political background, practice background, methodological background, geographical background, literary background ;

- ❖ By development of ideas; this could be useful if there are identifiable stages of idea development that can be looked at in turn;

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- ❖ By some combination of the above, or by another structure you create.

There are many possible structures, and you need to establish one that will best fit the ‘story’ you are telling of the reason for your study. Once you have established your structure you need to outline it for your reader.

1.8 Citing Literature in Your Text

When you use information from sources you have read, you need to choose a suitable reporting verb to introduce it. There are three basic reasons for using a reporting verb

1. To present the aim of the study you are summarising/quoting e.g. Smith (2009) examined the relationship between food insecurity and anxiety.
2. To talk about the results the author you are summarising/quoting has found e.g. Al-Mawali (2018) found that food insecurity is particularly high in rural or remote populations.
3. To give the opinion of the author you are summarising/quoting e.g. Marklin (2014) argued that “ambivalent or mixed feelings about a divorce are common.” (p.76).

1.9 Common Reporting Verbs

Note : some verbs (marked *) can be used to introduce either results or opinion, depending on the context/grammar.

Aim of study	Results	Opinion

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Investigate	Show	State
examine	Suggest	Believe
analyse	Find	Argue
look at	Indicate	Note
focus on	The literature reveals	Point out
consider	Reveal	Observe
identify	Establish	Consider
report (on)	Confirm	Hold
Be concerned with	Conclude	Claim
	Demonstrate	According to(author)
	Research by (author(s) found	Emphasise/ stress
		Proposes
		Implies
		Identify x as

1.10 Evaluation and Selecting Sources

When searching for relevant literature for an academic production, it is important to

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carefully consider the authority, credibility, recency, quality and relevance of the literature sources that you are reading. When writing an academic document, one should give precedence to :

- Articles from peer-reviewed academic journals, such as those available on the Library's e-journal platforms.
- textbooks or monographs (i.e., books) written by academic authors that are primarily aimed an academic audience;
- Articles from reputable professional journals or magazines aimed at practitioners in a particular industry (e.g., the Harvard Business Review);
- Reports published by government departments (e.g., Statistics South Africa), parastatal organisations (e.g., the South African Reserve Bank) or credible international as well as non-governmental organisations (e.g., the United Nations);
- Subject-specific dictionaries, encyclopaedia as well as reference works compiled by acknowledged subject-specialists. The following literature sources are problematic and should best not be used in an academic document :

- Anonymous or undated sources
- Wikipedia
- Articles in popular (non-academic) magazines such as Cosmopolitan, FHM, Popular Mechanics, Huisgenoot / You and Fair Lady.
- Any sources that are not in the public domain (e.g., internal company reports)

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- Entries in blogs, wikis, and chat rooms
- Newspaper articles (especially where factual claims cannot be verified)

Consider the following general guidelines when searching for relevant sources

- Be sceptical about everything you read (especially on the Internet) until its credibility and quality have been verified.

• Quinton and Smallbone (2006 :79-80) provide the following checklist for evaluating the authority, credibility, recency and quality of sources found on the Internet :

- Is the identity of the author, publisher or organisation responsible for the document known ?
- Are the affiliations of the author clearly stated ?
- Is there any information available about the person or organisation responsible for the document that can be used to judge how credible/authoritative/reputable it is.
- Is the publication date or revision date of the document clearly stated ?
- Is a printed version of the document available? (This may reinforce its credibility)
- Are the sources used in compiling the document clearly listed ? (This should add to the document's credibility and make it possible to verify its contents.)
- Is there an editor or any evidence that has the document been through an editorial or peer review process ?
- Is the grammar and spelling used in the document correct

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The more negative answers you get to these questions, the lower the credibility and authority of the particular source.

- Reports, books and articles by consultants, “industry experts” or consulting firms may be used but should generally be treated with caution unless their perspectives and/or prescriptions have been subjected to academic/industry scrutiny.
- Many academics publish working papers, draft articles and non-peer-reviewed conference papers on the Web. While these are legitimate sources of information, one should always look for and preferably use the published, peer-reviewed versions of such papers.
- If you cannot find the answer you want in a reputable subject-specific reference work, then be sure to use reputable general dictionaries (e.g., the Oxford Dictionary) or encyclopaedias (e.g., the Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Practice

Below is a **sample literature review** for a **Master’s dissertation in literary and cultural studies**. The topic focuses on **Postcolonial Identity in Contemporary African Fiction**.

Sample Literature Review

Title : **Postcolonial Identity in Contemporary African Fiction**

1. Introduction

The construction and negotiation of postcolonial identity has been a central concern in contemporary African literature. Writers from various African nations have employed fiction as a vehicle to articulate the complexities of identity in the aftermath of colonialism. This literature review examines key scholarly perspectives on postcolonial identity, hybridity, cultural displacement, and resistance in African fiction, focusing particularly on the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Tayeb Salih.

2. Postcolonial Theory and African Literary Criticism

Postcolonial literary studies have provided the theoretical foundation for analyzing identity in African literature. Foundational theorists such as **Edward Said (1978)**, **Homi Bhabha (1994)**, and **Gayatri Spivak (1988)** have offered critical frameworks to understand how colonial discourses shape cultural representation and subjectivity. Bhabha's concept of **hybridity** is particularly relevant to African fiction, as it describes the cultural negotiation that arises in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Scholars like **Frantz Fanon (1961)** also emphasize the psychological trauma and alienation experienced by colonized subjects, a theme extensively explored in African narratives.

3. Negotiating Identity in Postcolonial African Fiction

Several critics have discussed how African novelists depict identity as a site of tension between tradition and modernity, indigenous cultures and colonial legacies. **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**, in *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), argues for the rejection of colonial languages and the reassertion of African linguistic and cultural identity. His fiction, such as *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), portrays characters grappling with the residual effects of colonialism on national and personal identity.

In contrast, **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's** works, especially *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013), present more nuanced portrayals of identity as fragmented and diasporic. Scholars like **Julie Cairnie (2009)** and **Obu Udeozo (2015)** have explored how Adichie's characters navigate the intersections of race, class, gender, and nationality in global contexts, reflecting the complexities of postcolonial subjectivities in a globalized world.

4. Cultural Hybridity and Displacement

Bhabha's theory of hybridity is widely applied in analyses of African fiction. **Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966)** is frequently cited as a prime example of the hybridized postcolonial subject. The protagonist's identity oscillates between Sudanese tradition and European influence, leading to a crisis of selfhood. Scholars such as **Amin Malak (1987)** and **Lindsey Moore (2008)** argue that the novel critiques both colonial domination and the dangers of mimicry, illustrating how identity becomes a battleground for cultural power.

5. Gendered Identities in African Literature

Recent scholarship has also emphasized the gendered dimensions of postcolonial identity. Feminist critics such as **Molara Ogundipe-Leslie** and **Florence Stratton** argue that African women writers challenge both colonial and patriarchal systems of oppression. In this regard, Adichie and **Buchi Emecheta** foreground the intersection of gender, culture, and identity, offering alternative narratives that resist male-dominated nationalist discourse.

6. Conclusion

The literature on postcolonial identity in African fiction reveals a rich and evolving field of inquiry. While earlier works focused on anti-colonial resistance and cultural

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reclamation, contemporary studies highlight identity as a fluid, contested, and intersectional construct. African authors continue to navigate and narrate the complexities of belonging, displacement, and self-definition in ways that challenge and enrich postcolonial theory. Future research may further explore the impact of digital media, globalization, and migration on African identities in literature.

List of References

- Adichie, C. N. (2006). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Knopf.
- Adichie, C. N. (2013). *Americanah*. Knopf.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
- Cairnie, J. (2009). "Contemporary Nigerian Fiction and the Politics of Identity." *Research in African Literatures*, 40(2), 140–155.
- Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press.
- Moore, L. (2008). *Arab, Muslim, Woman: Voice and Vision in Postcolonial Literature and Film*. Routledge.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. (1986). *Decolonising the Mind*. Heinemann.
- Salih, T. (1966). *Season of Migration to the North*. Heinemann.

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Citing and Referencing

1) Introduction

There are many styles that can be used for referencing. When you are given coursework or dissertation guidelines, check which style of referencing your lecturer or department asks you to use. If you don't check, and you use a style that is not the one stated in your guidelines, you could find you lose marks. When you begin your research for any piece of work, it is important that you record the details of all the information you find. You will need these details to provide accurate references, and to enable you to locate the information again at a later date.

2) What is Referencing ?

Referencing is a method used to demonstrate to your readers that you have conducted a thorough and appropriate literature search, and reading. Equally, referencing is an acknowledgement that you have used the ideas and written material belonging to other authors in your own work. References give details about where the information or ideas in your written work come from. Referencing is really important as you are highlighting to the reader that the ideas you have presented are not your own. Often people will refer to somebody else's ideas in their written work and will then discuss and analyse these ideas using their own words. Sometimes references are called citations.

3) When Do I Reference ?

You will need to reference if you are using a direct quote from another source or if you are paraphrasing ideas from somebody else's work. You will also need to reference if you are summarising the ideas of one or more author in your own words. If you are using a

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direct quote it's important that you use exactly the same words as the author, right down to the same punctuation, capitalisations and so on.

4) Why Should I Reference ?

It gives credit to the author(s) you have read

- It shows that your ideas are based on previous research
- It shows that you have read widely about the subject you are researching, and that you have understood the sources you have read
- Your ideas will be supported by referring to the work of expert authors
- It allows your reader to follow up any of the sources which they are interested in
- If you have included the ideas of others and not referenced them, you may be accused of plagiarism.

5. Types of Referencing/Citation

1. An in-text citation

2. A reference list at the end of academic writing e.g. Journal article and thesis.

The two types of referencing go together. Once you have an in-text citation in the academic work, you should also enter the same under the reference list at the end of the academic work.

1. An in-text citation

An in-text citation is inserted in the body of your academic work or writing and indicates that you are referring to, talking about or paraphrasing another person's work. It is also required when you directly quote another author's original words. It usually includes

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minimal details such as the name(s) of the author(s) as well as the date of the publication (author-date method). It is important to understand that a citation that comes at the end of a paragraph has to appear in brackets just before the full stop in the last sentence of such a paragraph.

Pillay et al. (2022) opine that in-text citations are required when there is a need to :

- Paraphrase information (by using your own words), and credit has to be given to the original owner of the idea or thought at the end of the sentence(s) or paragraph(s), as the case may be.
- Use direct quotes from other sources with a view to validating arguments you make in any academic writing.
- Use phrases like “According to...” to state the source and corresponding information.

Examples:

- In-text citation/referencing

- **Direct quote:**

“The concept of Work-From-Home (WFH) was first used by Nilles as far back as 1973”
(Badaru et al., 2022, p. 288).

- **Paraphrasing:**

Work-From-Home (WFH) was an idea first used in 1973 by Nilles (Badaru et al., 2022).

There are some numeric referencing methods which utilise footnotes. It is important to note that in-text citations provide adequate information for readers to locate the full references in the list at the end of academic writing (The Open University, 2020).

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According to Mphahlele and Maphalala (2023), the democratically elected government of South Africa took over an unequal and divided educational system from the apartheid regime.

The democratically-elected government of South Africa took over an unequal and divided educational system from the apartheid regime (Mphahlele & Maphalala, 2023).

- **Summarising**

When you summarise concepts and arguments from a paragraph or an entire book or journal article written by another scholar or author, a citation must be given. By summarising, we mean that you explain the key concepts from pertinent sources of information that will be incorporated into the new academic writing.

Reference List at the end of Academic Writing

A reference list is a complete list of references related to sources cited in academic writing. Again, all in-text citations used in academic writing must be included as detailed references under the reference section at the end of the work.

Badaru, K. A., Adu, K. O., Adu, E. O., & Duku, N. (2022). Teaching in a Pandemic:

An Exploratory Study into University Instructors' Perceptions of Work-from-Home

Opportunities and Challenges during the COVID-19 Lockdown in South

Africa. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(7).

<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.7.15>

Note that punctuation marks such as the full stops (.), colon (:), and comma (,) may be used in specific positions in the references.

5) Sources to be Referenced in Academic Writing

- Electronic or online journals
- Printed books or eBooks.
- Tutorials
- Video and audio materials
- Photos and images
- Forum or blog posts
- Module materials
- Websites
- Government reports
- Social media posts
- Newspapers/Magazines/Periodicals

6) Referencing Styles/Techniques

In order to enable others to locate these sources, and to acknowledge the original authors, you will be required to provide reference details using a specific referencing style. Referencing styles are guides designed to help you to cite and reference correctly. They offer standard formats to ensure that you include all the information your readers will need to find the work you are referring to. Using referencing strategies or styles is a common practice in academic papers. Whatever referencing style is used, it must be applied consistently throughout the academic work. Example of some common referencing styles.

- American Psychological Association (**APA**)
- Harvard
- Modern Language Association of America (**MLA**)
- Chicago Manual of Style

7) What details should I include in a reference?

It is mentioned that there are standard formats for including the full details of the sources you have mentioned in your work. Depending on your source, and referencing style, you may need to include a selection of the following details :

- Author
- Year of publication
- Title of article or chapter
- Title of the publication
- Issue and volume numbers
- Place of publication
- Publisher
- Edition
- Page numbers
- URL
- Date you accessed the material

8. What Referencing Style to Use

The referencing style you choose largely depends on the subject or the academic discipline you're involved in. Some instructors require students to use a specific referencing style for their work, so it's always best to check with the professor or instructor before submitting your paper. You can also check your course handbook to see what the discipline's preferred referencing style is. For manuscripts, refer to the publisher to see if they need the citations in a certain style. If you're allowed to choose your own style, do so with discretion

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as some styles suit certain subjects better than others. For example, the Journals of Marketing and Management use the APA style, whereas the EU Journal of Criminology uses the Harvard citation style. Humanities use the MLA style, while Business, History, and the Fine Arts use the Chicago/Turabian style, and so on. Here are some of the most used referencing styles in alphabetical order:

➤ . APA (American Psychological Association)

The APA (**American Psychological Association**) style is mostly used to cite sources within the Social Sciences category. It consists of two main elements: in-text citations and a list of references at the end. In-text citations list the name of the author(s), the publication year, and the page number. You can use either parenthetical or narrative format, wherein the former enclose the author's name and publication date between parentheses while the latter inserts the information in the sentence. Reference note list the Author(s), Publication Year, Title, Edition, and Publisher. For example:

- Smith, A. (1992). Nature vs. Nurture: The Twin Experiment. 23. The Guardian.

➤ Chicago Referencing Style

The Chicago Referencing Style, also known as the Chicago Manual of Style, is a referencing guide published by the University of Chicago Press in 1906. It's one of the most common and widely used style guides in the United States and most of the world. This style comes in two varieties: author-date and notes and bibliography. The author-date system is often used by those working in the sciences and social sciences. Sources are cited in parentheses in the text itself. The notes and bibliography system is used by those working in humanities; i.e., Literature, History, and Fine Arts. In this format, sources are cited in

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numbered endnotes or footnotes. If you're asked to use Chicago-style citations, consult your professor/publisher as to what format you should use, whether author-date or notes and bibliography.

➤ **Harvard Referencing ?**

Harvard referencing, also known as the author-date system or Parenthetical Referencing, is a method of referencing sources in academic writing and is widely used in the social sciences, business, and humanities. The system was developed by the Harvard University Library and is now used by universities and institutions worldwide. Using the Harvard referencing style means that you will include the author's name and the date of publication within the text of your writing, and include full details of the source in the Reference List at the end of your document. Harvard referencing requires you to include in-text citations within the body of your work and a reference list at the end of your document.

In-text citations in the Harvard referencing style typically include the author's last name and the year of publication in parentheses. For example, (Smith, 2008) or (Jones and Smith, 2010). The reference list at the end of the document provides detailed information about each source, including the author's name, the title of the work, the year of publication, the publisher, and any relevant page numbers.

Practice

Question : Correct the following in-text citations in the examples below:

1. In his book Constructing a Good Dissertation, Erik Hofstee (2006:5) argues that

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2. According to Statistics South Africa (2007 :23), nearly 20% of all adult South Africans are functionally illiterate.
3. The World Food Programme (2006 :23) argues that global warming poses a serious threat to the sustainability of current agricultural practices.
4. According to Gardner & Sheldon (1967 :12), all diagnostic procedures should be explained to the patient.
5. All diagnostic procedures should be explained to the patient (Gardner and Sheldon, 1967 :12).

Key answers.

1. In his book Constructing a Good Dissertation, Erik Hofstee (2006 :5) argues that **(Wrong)**

Hofstee (2006 :5) argues that...**(R i g h t)**

It is best not to refer to an author's first name or to the title of a source in an academic document).

2. According to Statistics South Africa (2007 :23), nearly 20% of all adult South Africans are functionally illiterate.**(Wrong)**

Nearly 20% of all adult South Africans are functionally illiterate (Statistics South Africa, 2007 :23). **(Right)**

3. The World Food Programme (2006 :23) argues that global warming poses a serious threat to the sustainability of current agricultural practices. **(Wrong)**
Global warming poses a serious threat to the sustainability of current agricultural practices (World Food Programme, 2006 :23). **(Right)**

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You emphasise the identity of the authors of the source from which you have borrowed information, only if the authors are identifiable as human beings, not an organisation as in sentence 2 and 3.

Questions for Review

1. What is the difference between a reference list and a bibliography?
2. Do I need to include page numbers in my in-text reference?
3. Where do I put in-text references, at the beginning or at the end of the sentence ?
4. Should I use quotations or paraphrase ?
5. What do you do if every book you read says the same thing that is common knowledge?
6. What do you do if you write a summary that has been synthesised from a number of different sources ?
7. If a book was reprinted several times, which date do you use ?
8. How do you reference an internet site that doesn't have an author?
9. I have written this in my own words, do I need to reference it in the text?
10. How do I reference sources from which there are missing elements, for example, no author is mentioned?
11. Is it ok to refer to an author's idea found within another author's text?
12. When you cannot avoid using a secondary source how do you reference it?
13. What do I do if there are more than three authors?
14. What is the correct way to acknowledge an organisation as the author?
15. How do I reference personal communications ?
16. How do I reference electronic sources

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17. How do I indicate I have added italics to emphasise words within a quote?
18. Do I need to clarify the author's use of italics within the original when I quote?
19. How do I show that I have omitted a word or words from within a quote?
20. What should I do if there's an error or a discriminatory expression within a quote?
21. Do I have to reference myself if I refer to my previous work?

Key Answers

In an immediate sense, the purpose of referencing is to provide enough information to enable the reader to check the author's sources and no more. The referencing information provided is designed for this purpose. For the most part there are strict rules or conventions about how this is to be done. It is important to use the referencing conventions appropriate to your discipline or publisher, to be precise and correct in every detail, and to systematically record publishing details for every item you refer to as you go.

In some instances it is unclear what information should be provided or how it should be presented. Some of these have been covered below. If you are still unsure, follow common sense, that is, provide the key information required to locate your source, and always use a consistent format

1. What is the difference between a reference list and a bibliography?

A reference list includes only the sources that have been included in the text. A bibliography includes all sources gathered together, some of which are not directly included in the text. Research proposals often include both a reference list and a bibliography. This is because it is not always possible to cover all the important literature in the first phase of the research. The bibliography gives readers an indication of the relevant fields of literature and

the future direction the research will take. Bibliographies are less common in the thesis which has a more definitive tone.

2. Do I need to include page numbers in my in-text reference?

If what you have written is not the key argument or finding, but a side point discussed on a specific page or pages, then include a page number or page numbers (for example, pp. 10–20). If the idea is central to the whole article, chapter or book, a page number is not required. This is because it is assumed that whatever comes before a date-only reference is the main argument or finding of the book or article. This highlights how important it is to read and to refer to key ideas, or to provide page numbers.

3. Where do I put in-text references, at the beginning or at the end of the sentence ?

If the sentence is long and only part of it pertains to the author being referred to, put the citation at the end of the relevant clause. Other than this, there is no general rule about position of reference in the sentence, however the position of the reference within the sentence can influence the tone of the writing. Authors names can be placed at the end of the sentence to give the writing a more assertive stance or to foreground your own voice when discussing the ideas of others. This pattern is called information prominent. For example, 'The sky is blue' (Brown, 1999). An alternative, author integral pattern places the author towards the front of the sentence. For example, 'According to Brown (1999), the sky is blue'. Texts that rely heavily on author integral citation patterns can be unclear because it becomes difficult to know what the writer thinks. For examples see the research proposal online resources.

The author integral style is useful however in highlighting the author, and to give the writer some distance to the idea expressed in the source referred to. For example, 'Brown (2011) finds a significant improvement in the Mini State Mental Examination of adults who

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undertake regular Tai Chi classes'. Or 'Brown (2011) claims that Tai Chi classes improve physical fitness'. On the other hand, placing the reference at the end of the sentence indicates agreement. For example, 'It has long been recognized that regular Tai Chi classes can improve the physical fitness of adults' (Brown 2011). Or, 'Regular Tai Chi classes improve the physical fitness of adults' (Brown 2011).

4. Should I use quotations or paraphrase ?

To some extent this depends on discipline. Humanities and some social science disciplines use quotations more frequently than other discipline areas. Even in these disciplines however, quotations should be used sparingly. Quotations should be used when the exact words are essential to convey meaning. This may occur when an idea is expressed using terminology or phrasing peculiar to a specific author, or when the idea is expressed in a particularly eloquent or compelling manner. In general, use your own words, paraphrase and provide a reference. Quotations, when used properly are time consuming as they require a lead in sentence or phrase, as well as discussion of their meaning for your argument.

5. What do you do if every book you read says the same thing that is common knowledge?

Common knowledge does not need to be referenced. For example, 'Darwin sailed on the Beagle'. Reference the overall finding or argument based on original data or argumentation, or a specific idea or finding, in which case a page number should be provided. To refer to well established or accepted findings and arguments in your field, refer to the original source if possible.

6. What do you do if you write a summary that has been synthesised from a number of different sources ?

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If the summary is the key idea of a number of books and articles, cite all of the sources used and list them in chronological order in the text. For example: 'The modernist view of the subject has received significant criticism among contemporary feminist scholars (see for example Lloyd 1984; Butler 1990, 1993; Hekman 1990; Diprose 1994; Grosz 1994). One of the key criticisms has been ... (describe core ideas held in common, but do not repeat references).' If different clauses within the summary belong to different sources, indicate which belongs to which by placing the references at the end of the relevant clause. For example, 'Brown dogs are more placid than other dogs (Brown 2011 ; Black 2013), while black dogs are more inquisitive (Samuel 2010 ; Chaney 2012).'

7. If a book was reprinted several times, which date do you use ?

If the work cited is not a first edition, use the current edition date because information is often updated and may be different from one edition to the next.

8. How do you reference an internet site that doesn't have an author ?

Use the title as the main reference as you would with any work that is anonymous. Make sure that you include the URL so that your readers can locate the source. Write n.d. if there is no date – there is sometimes a date though at the very bottom or top of the website.

9. I have written this in my own words, do I need to reference it in the text?

Rephrasing someone else's idea in your own words is called paraphrasing. Although you are able to write about the idea in your own way (which is recommended practice), you are still using ideas from another source. Therefore it needs to be referenced.

10. How do I reference sources from which there are missing elements, for example, no author is mentioned?

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Some sources of information do not include all identifying elements, and are quite unorthodox in their provision of publication details. In these cases, apply the basic principle of referencing; provide enough details so that readers can locate the original source of information. Finding the exact source is facilitated by the citation in the reference list including all essential elements of referencing, namely: author, date, title, and source. Therefore, where possible include all of these elements in the reference list. If one of these elements is not recorded in the original source, then you can only use the other elements provided.

11. Is it ok to refer to an author's idea found within another author's text?

It is best to go to the original text yourself and to cite secondary sources rarely or not at all. This is because of the danger of misquoting the original author whose ideas are now twice removed from their original source. Sometimes the secondary source you are reading may have misquoted, taken out of context or misinterpreted the source. Sometimes however it is unavoidable, when for example you cannot locate the original source.

12. When you cannot avoid using a secondary source how do you reference it?

Both authors must be mentioned in the text, but only the text you read is provided in the reference list. There are a few ways to refer to an author cited in another text within your research writing. Marini (in Tan 1992, p. 71) stated that ... or ... Marini's study in 1975 (cited in Tan 1992, p. 71) stated that ... or ... Tan (1992, p. 71), reporting Marini's study, states ... In each case Marini is the primary reference contained in a book by Tan (secondary reference).

13. What do I do if there are more than three authors?

If there are more than three authors, use the first name followed by et al. For example, (Brown et al 1967).

14. What is the correct way to acknowledge an organisation as the author?

If there is no author on the title page, and the publication was sponsored by an agency, association or corporation, the organisation should be cited. For example: 'A publication by the World Health Organisation (2007) reports ...'.

15. How do I reference personal communications ?

For personal communications including emails, personal letters, conversations and faxes, provide a reference in the body of the text only. For example:

It has been confirmed by Black (2005, pers. comm. 28 July) that this practice is widespread.

No entry is given in the reference list. You must obtain permission from the person being referred to before including the reference in your text. reference in the body of the text only.

For example:

It has been confirmed by Black (2005, pers. comm. 28 July) that this practice is widespread.

No entry is given in the reference list. You must obtain permission from the person being referred to before including the reference in your text.

16. How do I reference electronic sources

The order of information is: author, date when the publication was created, title, type of medium, journal volume and page range (for journal articles), internet address, date accessed. The author is the first element provided. The author might be an organisation. If the author is unknown, the title comes first. This is followed by the date when the publication was created. For books and journals the year and month are provided. For magazines, newspapers or newsletters provide the day, month and year if available. If the site is regularly updated, provide the date on which it was last updated. If there is no date, write 'no date' or 'n.d'.

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The **title** follows the date. The title appears first if the author is unknown. For a journal, magazine or news letter article, provide the title of the piece followed by the title of the periodical in italics. **Type of medium** follows the title and is used to indicate electronic sources from print sources. When citing articles in journals, magazines or newsletters, provide the **journal volume number followed by the page range**. Instead of place of publication and publisher, online or electronic sources provide **the internet address** after the type of medium. The last element of electronic sources is the date the source was accessed including the year, month and day. This is needed because electronic sources change and disappear regularly.

17. How do I indicate I have added italics to emphasise words within a quote?

Insert square bracket with 'emphasis added' after the page number, for example, ' ... raises the question of what desire is' (Smith 1991, p. 343 [emphasis added]).

18. Do I need to clarify the author's use of italics within the original when I quote?

Yes. This is done by inserting square bracket with 'original emphasis' added after the page number, for example, 'identities that are not simple to describe' (Smith 1991, p. 26 [original emphasis]).

19. How do I show that I have omitted a word or words from within a quote?

Missing text is identified with ellipsis points consisting of three full stops ... where the missing words should be. If a paragraph or more is omitted from a block quotation, the ellipsis points can be placed on a line of their own.

20. What should I do if there's an error or a discriminatory expression within a quote?

Consider carefully whether to reproduce the quote and try to avoid doing so. If you cannot avoid using the quote, you should reproduce it exactly as it occurs in the original.

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However, you can indicate that the expression is not your own by adding 'sic' after the text enclosed in brackets. This strategy should not be used if there is more than one discriminatory expression. Do not reproduce discriminatory expressions when paraphrasing

21. Do I have to reference myself if I refer to my previous work?

Yes. There are two instances where you must reference your own work. The first is when referring to work submitted for a previous degree. The second is when referring to work that has been published. Regarding work submitted for a previous degree, the University guidelines stipulate that 'work that has been submitted for any other academic award may not be submitted as the main content of the thesis. Where the main content of the thesis consists of any significant extension or elaboration of the candidate's earlier work, that portion referring to previous work must be clearly indicated'. In order to avoid academic misconduct, use the same conventions to refer to your own work as you would for any other author. Where work has been submitted for publication, either in full or part, this must be declared within the thesis. If you are submitting your thesis for the award of PhD by Portfolio of Publications, you would attach your previous publications in full, and indicate this in the introduction of the thesis being careful not to infringe any copyright agreements you have entered into. You can also draw upon previously published work without reproducing it in full. Again this must be clearly indicated. Use the same conventions to refer to your own work as you would for any other author. In addition, explain how previously published work has been incorporated in the introduction of the thesis. For example: 'A version of Section 6 appears in [insert publication details]'. You would then reference your chapter/article/conference paper in full in the reference list at the end of your thesis. You may also wish to mention the journals, books, or conference committees responsible for getting your work reviewed, as well as any reviewers whose names you are aware of in the

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acknowledgements section at the beginning of your thesis. For example: 'I would like to thank several individuals for assistance in preparing my work for publication. Joe Public and the anonymous reviewers assisted me in the preparation of my chapter for publication in Ethics in Teaching (2002).

Practice

Task 1 : Multiple Choices

Choose the correct answer for each question :

- 1. Which of the following is an example of in-text referencing?**
 - a) A bibliography at the end of the paper
 - b) A footnote explaining a quote
 - c) (Achebe 45)
 - d) A list of books used in your research
- 2. Which referencing style is typically used in literature and humanities?**
 - a) APA
 - b) Chicago
 - c) MLA
 - d) Harvard
- 3. What is the purpose of a bibliography or works cited page?**
 - a) To provide definitions of key terms
 - b) To thank your supervisor
 - c) To list all sources consulted or cited
 - d) To summarize your argument

Task 2 : True or False

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Write **True** or **False** for each statement:

1. Referencing helps avoid plagiarism.
2. Referencing weakens your academic argument.
3. A properly referenced paper shows academic honesty.
4. You only need to reference direct quotations.
5. Referencing allows readers to locate your sources.

Task 3 : Matching : Match the term with its definition

Term	Definition
A. In-text citation	1. A list of all sources used, usually at the end of a paper
B. Footnote	2. A short note placed at the bottom of the page giving citation info
C. Works Cited	3. A brief citation within the body of the text (e.g., (Woolf 12))

Task 4 : Short Answer

Answer the following question in 3–4 sentences :

Why is referencing important in academic writing, especially in literature and humanities research?

Task 5 : Sorting

Group the following styles into the correct academic disciplines :

- MLA
- APA
- Chicago

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- Harvard

Humanities (e.g., literature) :

Social Sciences (e.g., psychology):

History:

General sciences/business :

Plagiarism

❖ What is Plagiarism ?

The University of Pretoria's Plagiarism Prevention Policy defines plagiarism as

Follows:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work, words, images, ideas, opinions, discoveries, artwork, music, recordings or computer-generated work (including circuitry, computer programs or software, websites, the Internet or other electronic resources) whether published or not, as one's own work, or alternatively appropriating the work, words, images, ideas, opinions, discoveries, artwork, music, recordings or computer-generated work (including circuitry, computer programs or software, websites, the Internet or other electronic resource) of others, without properly acknowledging the source, with or without the source's permission.

(University of Pretoria, 2009:3)

Plagiarism occurs whenever you present another person's words, ideas or opinions whether published or unpublished and regardless of the form or media in which the words, ideas or opinions were originally expressed as your own without acknowledging the source. In essence, plagiarism refers to the "theft" of someone else's intellectual capital.

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Plagiarism does not only occur when you use the exact words or expressions of the original source without acknowledgement, but even if you paraphrase the original source without acknowledgement.

From a practical point of view, you will be committing plagiarism whenever you:

- ✓ Copy information from any original source, including a journal article, book, web page or CD ROM (either directly or in an amended (paraphrased) format), and present it as your own thoughts, opinions and/or conclusions without acknowledging the original source ;
- ✓ Translate information taken from any original source and present it as your own thoughts, opinions and/or conclusions without acknowledging the original source ;
- ✓ Copy from a current or previous student's assignments or submit a current or previous student's assignments as your own;
- ✓ Copy and paste information **directly** from an electronic source (e.g., a web site,

electronic journal article or CD ROM) without paraphrasing or placing it in quotation marks **even if you acknowledge the source;**

- ✓ resubmit the whole or sections of your own previously graded (evaluated) work for a new assignment;

- ✓ Copy information from course material, including study guides, PowerPoint class slides, course notes/handouts, previous test or exam memoranda or previous homework answers without acknowledging the source;

- ✓ present work as your own independent work when, in fact, it has been produced in whole or in part in cooperation (collusion) with other people; **or**

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✓ submit work as your own independent work when, in fact, it has been produced in whole or in part by a “ghost-writer”, professional agency or any other party on your behalf.

❖ Why is Plagiarism Wrong?

Because plagiarism constitutes the theft of someone else’s “intellectual property”, it is regarded as **unethical** and even **illegal** (i.e., in some instances, plagiarism may constitute a **criminal offence** in terms of the Copyright Act). Plagiarism is unethical because:

- it is in conflict with the University’s values of trust and academic integrity;
- it is dishonest;
- it shows disrespect for the rights of the original author and for the values of the academic community;
- it may tarnish the reputation of the University, your home department and your supervisor; and
- It casts suspicion on the honest work of other students.

❖ What are the Potential Consequences for Students who Commit Plagiarism ?

Because plagiarism is regarded as a very serious violation of the University’s ethical values, it is regarded as a serious form of misconduct which can lead to a student’s expulsion from the University (University of Pretoria, 2009:3). The University’s policy in this regard can be found on the Internet at:
<http://www.library.up.ac.za/plagiarism/index.htm>

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Please note the following extract from the University's Plagiarism Prevention Policy

(University of Pretoria, 2009 :2):

- ✓ Irrespective of whether plagiarism occurred with or without the intent to plagiarise, it remains plagiarism.
- ✓ Plagiarism is a form of misconduct for which a student may be disciplined in terms of the University's disciplinary code (when an assignment is submitted for assessment, plagiarism is the equivalent of cheating in an exam).
- ✓ Plagiarism is also not dependent on the verbatim presentation of a specific number of words, as, under certain circumstances, the use of a single phrase or idea can be judged to constitute plagiarism.

In addition, you have to include a signed copy of the prescribed declaration regarding plagiarism in all your assignments

❖ **Types of plagiarism**

✓ **Copying and Pasting**

Copying a sentence, paragraph, passage, page, or entire written work, then pasting it into your own document to hand in as your own work is plagiarism. This is the most obvious and popular type of content plagiarism.

✓ **Imitating Reasoning Style**

This is taking a piece of content, and go sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, copying the ideas and rationales the writer used, but wording the sentences differently. It is copying the author's reasoning style, and the format that was used in the original work.

✓ **Switching Words**

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This type of plagiarism involves changing the word order from that of the original by using synonyms for many words in the passage, but has not changed the structure of the work.

✓ **Copying Metaphors**

Writers will often use metaphors to enhance their work, and to provide vivid visualizations of items or ideas they're presenting.

✓ **Taking Ideas**

This plagiarism relates to when writers present new ideas based on existing ideas or coming up with new ideas built on existing work and presenting them as their own.

❖ **How Can I Avoid Committing Plagiarism ?**

You can prevent plagiarism by considering the following guidelines :

- ✓ Make sure that you understand what plagiarism is
- ✓ Do not intentionally commit plagiarism (e.g., if you are pressed for time). It may spell the end of your academic career.
- ✓ Only hand in original work that you have prepared yourself. Do not copy another student's work, submit work that someone else has prepared on your behalf or submit work that you have previously submitted as an assignment in the same or a different course.
- ✓ Always put information taken from another source into your own words and remember to acknowledge the source by including an appropriate citation (i.e., in-text reference).
- ✓ Use the correct referencing methods outlined in this document.
- ✓ Do not cut and paste information directly from electronic sources, such as the Internet or electronic journal articles. Either paraphrase the information in your own words or

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present it as a direct quotation. Always use the correct referencing method whenever you take information from an electronic source.

IMPORTANT

You must complete and sign the declaration regarding plagiarism. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and signed, and is included in the dissertation.

Practice

Task 1: Identify the Type of Plagiarism

Read the following statements and identify the type of plagiarism involved (e.g., **direct plagiarism, self-plagiarism, paraphrasing without citation, mosaic plagiarism, or no plagiarism**).

Questions :

1. Student A copies a paragraph word-for-word from an article without using quotation marks or providing a citation.
2. Student B submits a paper they previously wrote for another course.
3. Student C rewrites an author's ideas in their own words but does not provide a citation.
4. Student D takes phrases from multiple sources, blends them into a paragraph, and cites only one of them.
5. Student E reads a critical essay, summarizes the author's viewpoint, and cites the source properly.

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Correction :

1. **Direct plagiarism**
 2. **Self-plagiarism**
 3. **Paraphrasing without citation**
 4. **Mosaic plagiarism**
 5. **No plagiarism**
-

Task 2 : Plagiarism or Not?

Mark each of the following as **Plagiarism (P)** or **Not Plagiarism (NP)**.

1. Copying a famous quote from Shakespeare without citation.
2. Using common knowledge like “Shakespeare was born in 1564.”
3. Rewriting someone’s argument and citing them at the end.
4. Including statistics from a study without attribution.
5. Quoting from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* and citing the source in MLA format.

Key answer:

1. **P**
2. **NP**
3. **P** (needs in-text citation near the paraphrase, not just at the end)
4. **P**
5. **N**

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Task 3: Revise the Passage to Avoid Plagiarism

The following passage is plagiarized. Rewrite it to make it academically acceptable (use quotation marks, paraphrasing, and proper citation as needed).

Original Source (from Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*):

"He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."

Student's Version:

Achebe says the colonizers destroyed the African way of life and everything has fallen apart.

Answer

Paraphrased:

Achebe reflects on how colonialism disrupted the unity of traditional African societies, resulting in cultural collapse (*Things Fall Apart* 176).

Quoted:

As Achebe powerfully states, "He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (*Things Fall Apart* 176).

(Note: Page number may vary based on the edition used; students should always check.)

Task 4: Citation Matching

Match each quote with the correct citation format (MLA).

Quotes:

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- A. “The past is not dead. It’s not even past.”
- B. “A man is not dead while his name is still spoken.”
- C. “Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

Citations :

1. Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Heinemann, 1958.
2. Pratchett, Terry. *Going Postal*. Harper, 2004.
3. Faulkner, William. *Requiem for a Nun*. Vintage, 1951.

Answer Key:

- A → 3
- B → 2
- C → 1 (Note: This proverb is often attributed to African oral tradition but is widely popularized in postcolonial literature.)

Task 5: Short Essay Evaluation

Read the following paragraph and decide whether it is plagiarized. Justify your answer.

Student Essay

In his novel *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad explores the theme of European imperialism in Africa. The novel shows how imperialism dehumanizes both the colonizers and the colonized. The “darkness” refers not only to the African continent but to the human soul.

Answer:

Not Plagiarism, if the ideas are the student’s interpretation and no specific phrases from

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another source are used. However, if these ideas were drawn from a secondary source and not cited, then it would be **paraphrasing without citation**. A citation like (Conrad 1902) or a secondary critic's name might be required depending on the origin of the ideas.

Task 6: Spot the Error

Each sentence below contains a potential citation or plagiarism mistake. Identify the **error** and **suggest a correction**.

1. According to Harold Bloom, Shakespeare is the inventor of the human.
2. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir writes, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (p. 267).
3. Derrida's theory of deconstruction is widely known, so I don't need to cite him.
4. Toni Morrison's style is unique and powerful. She was born in Ohio.
5. The critic said: "The poem's power lies in its ambiguity" (Literary Theory Today, p. 45).

Answer

1. **Error:** No citation.

Correction : Add in-text citation : *According to Harold Bloom, Shakespeare is the inventor of the human* (Bloom 15).

2. **Error:** Wrong citation format (MLA doesn't use "p.").

Correction : Use MLA format : *...a woman" (de Beauvoir 267)*.

3. **Error:** Incorrect assumption all ideas from sources must be cited unless truly common knowledge.

Correction : Cite the source of the theory if referring to a specific text: (*Derrida 1976*).

4. **No error.** Facts like birthplace are **common knowledge**, so no citation is needed.

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5. **Error:** Missing author.

Correction : Include author/editor name if available: “*The poem’s power lies in its ambiguity*” (Smith 45).

Task 7: Paraphrase Practice

Paraphrase the following excerpt in your own words **without changing the meaning**. Then provide a correct MLA citation.

Original Text:

“Colonialism did not only alter the landscape of Africa; it reconstructed the African identity through a foreign lens.” Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

Answer

Edward Said argue that colonialism not only transformed Africa’s physical environment but also reshaped African self-perception based on outside perspectives (*Culture and Imperialism*

Task 8 : Real vs. Fabricated Citations

Below are some in-text citations. Identify which are **real** (R) and which are **fabricated or unverifiable** (F).

1. (Achebe 114)
2. (Smith & White 2022)
3. (Aristotle, *Poetics*, Oxford UP, 1995, p. 77)
4. (Johnson 31) No corresponding work in the reference list
5. (Bakhtin 1992)

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Answer

1. **R**
2. **R** (assuming it matches a full citation in the bibliography)
3. **R**
4. **F** (if the source is missing from the Works Cited page)
5. **R**

Task 9: Create Proper Citations

Create MLA-style citations for the following sources.

1. A book titled *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, published by Routledge in 2010.
2. An article titled “African Myth and Literary Representation” by Aisha Mohamed, published in *Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2021, pages 200–215.
3. A chapter titled “Narrating the Nation” by Homi Bhabha in the book *Nation and Narration*, edited by Bhabha and published by Routledge in 1990, pages 1–7.

Answer Key (MLA 9 format)

1. Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*. Routledge, 2010.
2. Mohamed, Aisha. “African Myth and Literary Representation.” *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2021, pp. 200–215.
3. Bhabha, Homi. “Narrating the Nation.” *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi Bhabha, Routledge, 1990, pp. 1–7.

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MLA Style Guide

Introduction

MLA stands for **Modern Language Association**. This style is commonly used in the humanities, especially in literature, cultural studies, and languages. MLA allows you to document the sources you use in your paper. In the body of your paper, you apply **in-text citations** when you incorporate the ideas or words of other authors into your discussion. At the end of your paper on **the Works Cited page**, you create a list of all the sources you used.

Format

- **Margins:** Margins are 1 inch on all sides of the page.
- **Font:** Standard font is 12-point Times New Roman. For other fonts, MLA recommends a font that when the word is italicized the difference is clear. Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- **Paragraph and line spacing:** Indent the first line of each paragraph 0.5 in. Text is double-spaced. No extra spaces before or after headings or between paragraphs.
- **Citations:**
 - In-text citations **are used to credit the work of others and refer readers to the source on your Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations include the author's last name and page numbers. Enclose citations in parentheses and follow by a period.**
- **Works Cited :**

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Begin a new page. Title as “Works Cited” centred on the top of the page. List all sources used alphabetically.

- **MLA IN-TEXT CITATIONS**

- **Citing in the Text**

In MLA, every time you use the work or thoughts of another, you need to cite the original author. The use of others’ work or thoughts includes summary, paraphrase, and direct quotations. To cite the source, you will need an in-text citation, which typically consists of the author’s last name and the page number where the material comes from. In-text citations are enclosed in parentheses and followed by a period.

In-text Citation	Sample examples
Single Author If introducing the author in the text, use their first name and last name the first time it is used and then use only the surname thereafter. If introducing the author in the parenthetical citation, list only the author’s last name followed by the page number.	Example with single author The text portrays the mind set of millennials through lines like this: “[Alice thinks] of the twentieth century as one long question, and in the end we got the answer wrong” (Rooney 101).

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Two Authors If a source has two authors, list the authors' names in the parenthetical citation or in the text and connect them with an 'and':	Example with two authors The first time the character Viktor is introduced, he's described as "[...]the lowliest of the lot" (Charaipotra and Clayton 18).
Three or More Authors List the first author's last name followed by the abbreviation "et al." (and others).	Example with Three or More Authors Heat is a significant symbol in the book Blackout. The very first page discussed how "tensions matching the temperature make people do stupid things in a city full of millions" (Clayton et al. 1).
Organization or Group Author If no author is listed and/or the source is published by an organization or group, list the group's full name in the text or citation (with the page number), followed by the abbreviation if well known. Use the acronym for	Organization or Group Author Example According to The Modern Language Association (MLA), "whenever you use the title of a source in your writing, take the title from an authoritative location in the work" (53).

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every subsequent citation. If no known acronym is given, shorten the organization name to the shortest noun phrase within the parenthetical citation. Narrative Citation If you introduce the author before quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing, then only the page number is included in the in-text citation: Example of Narrative Citation According to music critic Mark Prindle, Minneapolis rock combo The Cows are an acquired taste (259).	
Unknown Author If the author's name is unknown, and there is no group author, include a shortened version of the publication title in quotations if it's a short work or italics if it's a longer work. Include	Block Quotations When using a direct quotation that runs four or more lines long, the quotation is introduced by a colon, set off from the main text, and indented an extra half inch from the left margin. Do not indent the first line, add quotation marks not present in the

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a page number if it's available. Unknown Author Example When thinking about what kind of photography to use, it's important to consider that, "[d]igital photography is more eco-friendly than traditional photography" (Eco-tography 119).	original, or adjust the line spacing. Include the parenthetical citation after the final period or punctuation mark of the block quote. Block Quotations Example Fitzgerald movingly describes how the personality traits of Gatsby: Only in Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. (Fitzgerald 6)
Omissions or Alterations to	Common Knowledge

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Quotations Place an ellipsis (...) where parts of a quote were omitted in the middle of the sentence (e.g. “Grammar... is the study of writing techniques”). Ellipses are not necessary to indicate the first part of a phrase was omitted. Put brackets [text] around necessary alterations made to quotations for clarity, as in “[They] said...”	Facts or information that you already know, is widely available, and undisputed is considered common knowledge, which does not require an in-text citation. Common knowledge includes biographical information, dates of historical events, and other information that reasonable readers would accept as fact. Common Knowledge Example Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States.
Primary and secondary sources : If you quote an author’s quotation of another author’s work, put the phrase “qtd. in” (short for “quoted in”) in the parenthetical citation, followed by the secondary source (e.g. qtd. in Jacobson). The abbreviation isn’t necessary if it’s made clear in prose it’s an indirect quote. Always try to find the direct source if you can!	Timed media : For timed media such as videos or songs, cite the time in parentheses (e.g. Eilish 2:57-3:15).

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Multiples sources : In-text citations with multiple sources are separated by a semicolon. The order should correspond with the order of the research (e.g. Offerman, 52; Yong, 33). However, if delineating the specific attribution is needed, avoid combining the citations and instead separate each source into its own sentence.	Multiple works by one author: Include the title of the work within the in-text citation (with a comma before it) or in prose (e.g. Tolkien, The Hobbit 237).
Personal communication : If citing a personal communication such as an email, interview, or telephone conversation, include the name of the person, the date, and the type of communication. If citing a lecture, include the subject of the lecture. Where possible, include the author's name in a narrative citation to avoid the long parenthetical entry.	Consecutive use of one or more sources : When referencing one source multiple times consecutively, you can avoid multiple parenthetical citations by first introducing the source. Refer to the author in text using the known-new contract, adding page numbers for quotes where needed.

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WORKS CITED ENTRIES

Writing Bibliography Entries

MLA style requires a **works cited page** that includes full citation information for each source. Begin by starting on another page titled “Works Cited” centred in the page. Alphabetize each entry by the last name of the first author listed. Hanging indents are an important characteristic of work cited pages. To make a hanging indent, The second and following lines are indented 1/2 inch after the first line. MLA style customizes entries for each type of source, meaning that each citation will be unique.

- **Webpage from a Website** title can start the citation : Author Last Name, Author First Name. Book Title. Publisher, Year Published. Pratchett, Terry. Guards! Guards! Gollancz, 1989. Work from a Collection The type of works in this category may include an essay in an edited collection/anthology or a chapter of a book. Here’s the basic form: Last Name, First Name. “Chapter Title.” Title of

Website citations follow a basic format for all types of websites. For sources without authors, list the group or organization as the author. If no group or organization is given, move the website name to the author position.

- **Webpage from a Website Example**

Author Last Name, Author First Name. “Article Title.” *Publisher*, Day Month Year, URL.

Boise State University Writing Center. “Welcome to the Writing Center.” *Boise State University*. <https://www.boisestate.edu/writingcenter/>. Accessed 9 Sep. 2022...

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❖ Book

List the author, the title, the publisher, and the year it was published. Include the editor/translator/any other type of contributor before the publisher if it can be found.

The title can start the citation : Author Last Name, Author First Name. Book Title. Publisher, Year Published.

EX: Pratchett, Terry. *Guards! Guards!* Gollancz, 1989.

❖ Work from a Collection

The type of works in this category may include an essay in an edited collection/anthology or a chapter of a book. Here's the basic form: Last Name, First Name. "Chapter Title." Title of Book, edited by Editor's Name(s), Publisher, Year, Page Range.

EX: Kinsella, Sophie. "Seven." *The Party Crasher*, edited by Kara Cesare et. al., The Dial Press, 2021, pp. 95-119.

❖ Journal articles,

Journal articles or periodicals, are print and electronic sources issued within larger journals: Author(s). "Article Title." Journal Title, Volume (vol. #), Issue Number (no. #), Year, Page Range (pp.). DOI if available

EX: Hollingdale, Jack et. al. "Impact of COVID-19 for people living and working with ADHD: A brief review of the literature." *AIMS Public Health*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2021, pp. 581–597. DOI: 10.3934/publichealth.2021047

❖ Newspaper Article

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Newspaper and magazine articles are two other types of periodicals. Include volume, issue, and/or page number(s) if available: Last name, First Name. "Article Title."

Newspaper Title, Day Month Year, pages (if print). URL (if digital)

EX: Mitchell, Jessi. "New public health laboratory breaks ground in Harlem." CBS NEW YORK, 06 July 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/harlem-public-health-laboratory/>

❖ YouTube Video

You Tube Video including the author/creator/publisher is optional, you could just go into the title. If you bring up a name in your paper or want to emphasize a participant in the video, it would be a good idea to include it. Last Name, First Name. "Video Title." Streaming Service, uploaded by Username, Day Month Year, URL

EX: Smith, Clint. "Marsha P. Johnson and the Stonewall Rebellion." YouTube, uploaded by CrashCourse, 29 June 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftcvaJCKVjs>

❖ Podcast Episode

Citing a podcast differs from the typical way of citing in MLA in that the title of the episode is listed first, followed by the name of the series in italics. Make sure to include where it was published, who it's hosted by, and that it's the podcast edition of the recording. "Episode Name" Name of series from Publisher, hosted by Host Name, Podcast Number, Day Month Year. URL.

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EX: “The Mysterious Disappearance of Brittane Drexel.” Morbid from Amazon Music, hosted by Alaina Urquhart and Ashleigh Kelley, episode 203, 23 January 2021. music.amazon.com/podcasts/30381209-4d12-4c82-ba16-5bde361156c9/episodes/40756d04-f27a-4723-b036-8a3d3083f508/morbidepisode203themysteriousdisappearanceofbrittaneedrexel

More Information for Works Cited Entries

Multiple authors: With sources that have three or more authors, follow the first author’s name with a comma and the abbreviation ‘et al.’ (“and others”).

Online handles: Supply the author’s handle in square brackets with the name [@handle] if the handle differs from the author’s account name.

Organization or group author: In instances where an organization or group authored the work, spell out the full name of the group but omit initial articles (e.g. a, an, the).

If the author is the publisher, skip the author element and begin the entry with the title.

No author : In a reference entry for a work with no author, move the title of the work to the author position.

No date : If no publication date is available, include the date you accessed the source at the end,

e.g. Boise State University. <https://www.boisestate.edu/writingcenter/>. Accessed 9 Sep. 2022.

Publisher : Publishers’ names are given in full ; however, do not give words indicating business structure, like Ltd. Or LLC. Terms like Press and Books should be included.

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WHAT'S NEW IN MLA 9th EDITION ?

1. Expanded Guidance on Using the Core Elements

The 9th edition continues using the **9 core elements** from the 8th edition but **expands explanations** for different types of sources.

Core Elements:

1. Author.
2. Title of Source.
3. Title of Container,
4. Other Contributors,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication Date,
9. Location.

Example:

Book :

King, Stephen. *The Institute*. Scribner, 2019.

Article in a Journal :

Kwon, Soo Bin. "Language Acquisition in Adults." *Journal of Linguistic Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2021, pp. 44–67.

2. More Examples for Diverse Source Types

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MLA 9 includes **hundreds of new examples** for types of sources previously less covered, including:

- Social media posts
- Podcasts
- Online videos (YouTube, TikTok)
- Video games
- Online comments
- E-books with special formats
- Mobile apps

YouTube Video Example :

CrashCourse. "How to Write a Research Paper." *YouTube*, 20 Mar. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MezjVwA9b4.

Tweet Example:

@GretaThunberg. "School strike week 69. In 1 year..." *Twitter*, 24 Jan. 2020, twitter.com/GretaThunberg/status/1220632219125549056.

3. Expanded Explanation on Containers

Containers are now better explained with **multi-container examples**.

Article from a Database (Two Containers) :

Williams, John. "Modernism in Early 20th Century Fiction." *Literature Today*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2021, pp. 100–112. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2389443.

Containers here:

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- *Literature Today* (Journal – 1st container)
- *JSTOR* (Database – 2nd container)

4. Guidance for Annotated Bibliographies

MLA 9 now provides **specific formatting instructions and examples** for **annotated bibliographies**, including how to structure the annotation.

Example :

Smith, John. *Climate Change and You*. Penguin, 2020.

This book offers a concise introduction to climate change and its impact on global health and economy. It is useful for understanding key concepts in environmental studies.

5. More Inclusive and Flexible Language

The 9th edition encourages **gender-neutral language** and inclusive citation practices. It allows for flexibility in how names are presented (e.g., for anonymous authors or pseudonyms).

Example (Unknown Author) :

A Guide to Wildlife Protection. National Geographic, 2021.

Example (Pseudonym) :

Dr. Seuss. *The Lorax*. Random House, 1971.

6. Clarification on Use of URLs

- URLs **should be included** (unlike in MLA 7).
- MLA 9 clarifies **when to include the full URL vs. a DOI**.

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Example with URL :

“Global Warming Fast Facts.” *CNN*, 6 May 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/05/06/world/global-warming-fast-facts/index.html.

Example with DOI :

Thomas, Angela. “Climate Literacy in Schools.” *Environmental Education*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2021, doi :10.1080/03043783.2021.1728441.

7. Clearer Guidance on In-Text Citations

- MLA 9 clarifies how to cite **multiple works by the same author, authors with the same last name, and indirect sources.**

Same Author, Multiple Works :

(King, *The Institute* 45)

(King, *Doctor Sleep* 88)

Indirect Source :

(qtd. In Smith 25)

8. Better Formatting Tips

MLA 9 includes **visual examples** and **step-by-step formatting** for :

- Student papers
- Tables and figures
- Footnotes and endnotes
- Headings and subheadings

Example of Paper Heading (Top Left) :

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

- Yaml
- CopyEdit
- Jane Doe
- Professor Smith

Sample Title Centred Below Header :

The Role of Technology in Modern Education

First line of paragraph:

- Use a half-inch indent.

COMPARISON CHART : MLA 8 vs. MLA 9

Feature	MLA 8 (2016)	MLA 9 (2021)
Core elements	Introduced	Continued with more examples
Containers	Explained briefly	Expanded explanation (multi-containers)
Annotated bibliography	Not detailed	Detailed guidelines and examples
New media types	Limited coverage	Broader coverage (TikTok, apps, etc.)
Inclusive language	Not emphasized	Encouraged and discussed
Formatting help	Basic guidelines	Visual examples and detailed tips

CONCLUSION

The **MLA 9th edition** keeps the core of MLA 8 but adds clarity, flexibility, and support for modern, digital sources. It's especially useful for citing the vast range of materials students now use, from podcasts to tweets.

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

Practice

PART 1: Works Cited Entries

Convert the following source details into properly formatted MLA 9 **Works Cited** entries.

1. **Author** : Chinua

Achebe **Title** : Things

Fall Apart **Publisher** :

Heinemann **Publication**

Year : 1958

2. **Author** : Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan

Gubar **Title of Article** : The Madwoman in

the Attic **Title of Journal** : Critical Inquiry

Volume : 10

Issue : 2

Year : 1983

Pages : 123–145

Data base : JSTOR

URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343161>

3. **Author** : William Shakespeare

Play : Hamlet

Editor : David Bevington

Publisher : Pearson Longman

Year : 2005

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4. **Author :** Edward Said

Title : Culture and Imperialism

Publisher : Vintage Books

Year : 1994

PART 2: In-Text Citation Practice

Write the correct **in-text citation** for the following cases :

5. You are quoting a sentence from page 45 of *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe.
6. You are paraphrasing an idea from Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, page 101.
7. You mention the authors' argument from Gilbert and Gubar's article in a sentence, but you do not quote it directly.
8. You refer to Hamlet's famous "To be, or not to be" soliloquy in your analysis.

PART3: Short Answer Questions

9. What is a "container" in MLA 9, and how does it apply to a journal article in a database?
10. Why is it important to include access dates or DOIs/URLs in online source citations ?

Answer key& Explanations

PART 1: Works Cited Entries

1. Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Heinemann, 1958.
2. Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. "The Madwoman in the Attic." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1983, pp. 123–145. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343161>.

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3. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Edited by David Bevington, Pearson Longman, 2005.
4. Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books, 1994.

PART 2: In-Text Citation Practice

5. (Achebe 45)
6. (Said 101)
7. (Gilbert and Gubar)
8. (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.1.56–88)

Note: For plays, cite act, scene, and line numbers

PART 3: Short Answer Questions

9. A **container** is the larger source that "contains" the smaller work. In the case of a **journal article**, the article is the source, and the **journal** is the container. If the article is accessed online via a database (e.g., JSTOR), the **database becomes a second container**.

10.

Including DOIs or URLs helps readers locate the exact version of the source you used.

Access dates are optional in MLA 9 but are recommended if the source is likely to change over time, such as a wiki or live webpage.

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

HOW TO CITE A POEM in MLA Style 9 th edition?

A. In-Text Citations for Poems

1. Short quotations (fewer than 4 lines)

- Use **quotation marks**
- Use **slashes (/)** to indicate line breaks
- Cite by **line numbers** (if available), not page numbers

Example:

In Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," the speaker reflects, "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, / And sorry I could not travel both" (lines 1–2).

2. Long quotations (4+ lines)

- Use a **block format**
- Indent the whole quote one inch
- No quotation marks
- Cite line numbers

Example:

In "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley cries:

Make me thy Lyre, even as the forest is:

What if my leaves are falling like its own!

The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone (57–60).

Notes:

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- If **line numbers** are not given, use **page numbers** instead.
- Mention the poet's name in the signal phrase, or include it in the parentheses if needed.

B. Works Cited Entry for Poems

1. Poem from a single-author book

Format:

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year, pp. page range of the poem.

Example:

Dickinson, Emily. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Little, Brown, 1960, pp. 23–24.

2. Poem from an anthology

Format:

Poet's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Poem." *Title of Anthology*, edited by Editor's Name, Edition (if any), Publisher, Year, pp. page range.

Example:

Blake, William. "The Tyger." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 10th ed., vol. 2, Norton, 2018, pp. 49–50.

3. Poem from a website

Format:

Poet's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Poem." *Website Name*, Publisher (if different), Date of Publication, URL.

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Example:

Angelou, Maya. "Still I Rise." *Poetry Foundation*, 28 Jan. 2021,

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise>.

C. Citing Poem Titles in Text

- **Short poems** → Use quotation marks: "Ozymandias"
- **Long poems or book-length works** → Italicize: *Paradise Lost*

Summary Table

Source Type	In-Text Citation	Works Cited Example
Poem in a book	(Frost 3–4)	Frost, Robert. <i>The Road Not Taken</i> . Penguin, 2001, pp. 1–3.
Poem in an anthology	(Blake 1–2)	Blake, William. "The Tyger." <i>The Norton Anthology...</i> , pp. 49–50.
Poem on a website	(Angelou) or (Angelou, line 4)	Angelou, Maya. "Still I Rise." <i>Poetry Foundation</i> , URL.

Writing an Abstract

Introduction

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

Writing an abstract for a Master's dissertation is a critical academic skill, especially for students of **Literature and Civilisation**, as it demonstrates your ability to summarize your work with clarity, precision, and scholarly focus. So, what an abstract is, what it includes, how to write it, and a sample to illustrate the format.

What Is an Abstract?

An **abstract** is a **concise summary** of your entire dissertation. It gives readers a quick overview of your research problem, objectives, methods, major findings, and conclusions all in one paragraph (usually 150–300 words, depending on institutional requirements). It appears at the **very beginning** of the dissertation (after the title page and acknowledgments, but before the table of contents), and is **written last**, after you've completed the full dissertation.

Purpose of the Abstract

- To help readers quickly understand the essence of your research.
- To allow researchers to decide whether your dissertation is relevant to their work.
- To be indexed in databases and library catalogues.

Key Elements of an Abstract

A strong abstract generally includes **five components** :

1. **Background/Context** Briefly introduce the topic and its scholarly relevance.
2. **Research Problem/Question** What gap in knowledge or specific issue are you addressing?
3. **Objectives/Purpose** What is the aim of your study ?

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4. **Methodology** How did you conduct your research? (qualitative, comparative, textual analysis, etc.)
5. **Main Findings and Conclusion** What did you find out? What is the significance of your findings ?

Note: Avoid citations, quotations, or excessive theory in the abstract.

How to Write It Step by Step

Step 1: Write a draft after the dissertation is complete.

- Start by reviewing your introduction, research questions, method section, and conclusion.

Step 2: Combine the key ideas into a coherent paragraph.

- Use formal academic language, but keep it readable and direct.

Step 3: Keep it concise and self-contained.

- Don't assume the reader has read the dissertation.
- Don't refer to tables, chapters, or appendices.

Step 4: Revise for clarity, coherence, and word count.

Sample Abstract (Literature and Civilisation)

Title: Female Identity and Postcolonial Resistance in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's

Americanah and Half of a Yellow Sun*

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This dissertation explores the construction of female identity and resistance within the postcolonial Nigerian context as portrayed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels *Americanah* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The research is grounded in feminist postcolonial theory, drawing upon the works of Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, and Gayatri Spivak. The main objective is to examine how Adichie's female characters negotiate power, memory, and cultural hybridity in both personal and political spheres. The study employs a qualitative textual analysis of key narrative elements including character development, narrative voice, and symbolic imagery. Findings indicate that Adichie challenges both Western and patriarchal constructions of African womanhood by portraying female protagonists who assert agency and resist multiple forms of oppression. The conclusion underscores the significance of storytelling as an act of cultural resistance and self-definition in postcolonial literature. This research contributes to the broader discourse on gender, identity, and resistance in African literary studies.

Checklist before Finalizing Your Abstract

- ☒ Does it summarize the entire dissertation?
- ☒ Does it include research problem, aims, and methods?
- ☒ Are the main findings and conclusion clearly stated?
- ☒ Is it written in one paragraph and within word limits?
- ☒ Is it free from references, citations, or unexplained jargon?

Optional Additions (Depending on Institution)

Some institutions ask for:

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- **Keywords** at the end (e.g., Keywords: post colonialism, feminism, identity, resistance, Adichie)
- A **French or Arabic version** (in Algeria and other multilingual countries)

Types of Abstracts

While the **standard academic abstract** in a Master's dissertation is typically **descriptive and informative**, there are several recognized types of abstracts across academic disciplines.

For **Literature and Civilisation**, the most relevant are:

1. **Descriptive Abstract**

- **Purpose:** Briefly describes the purpose and scope of the study.
- **Length:** About 100 words.
- **Content:** Includes the topic, purpose, and method **but not results or conclusions**.
- **Use:** More common in humanities or essays where analysis, not data, is central.

Example:

This study explores representations of exile and memory in diasporic narratives. It traces the thematic and stylistic elements that construct identity through displacement. The paper draws on selected works of Arab women writers in the diaspora.

2. **Informative Abstract**

- **Purpose:** Summarizes the entire research project.
- **Length:** 150–300 words.
- **Content:** Includes background, aims, methodology, findings, and conclusion.

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- **Use:** Most common in dissertations and research theses especially in postgraduate work.

Example:

This dissertation examines memory and trauma in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* through a postmodern lens. Using psychoanalytic and cultural theory, the study explores how language and narrative structure represent historical violence. The analysis finds that Morrison reclaims suppressed histories by reconfiguring narrative time and voice. The research contributes to trauma studies in contemporary literature.

3. Critical Abstract (Less Common in Dissertations)

- **Purpose:** Summarizes and **evaluates** the work (strengths, limitations, usefulness).
- **Use:** More typical in **book reviews, annotated bibliographies, or critical essays**, not in dissertations.

Where Can You Find Abstracts?

Abstracts are widely available in both **print and digital academic platforms**. Here are the main places to look:

1. Master's and PhD Theses Repositories

- **University Libraries:**

Most universities archive their students' theses (often accessible through the library or faculty page).

Example: Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef repository

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- **National/Regional Databases:**

Some countries have centralized databases for postgraduate research.

Example: DUMAS (France), NDLTD (Global)

2. Online Academic Databases

Here, abstracts are included in the metadata of every article, thesis, or dissertation.

Platform	Use	Notes
Google Scholar	Search for abstracts from books, theses, articles	scholar.google.com
ProQuest		
Dissertations & Theses	Full-text dissertations and abstracts	May require institutional access
JSTOR	Articles in humanities with summaries	Subscription-based
EBSCOhost	Includes literature-related databases (e.g., MLA International Bibliography)	Subscription
CORE	Open access research from universities	core.ac.uk

3. Academic Journals

Most journal articles begin with a well-written abstract. These are useful for students to:

- Learn how abstracts are structured
- Model their own dissertation abstract

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Example Journals:

- *Research in African Literatures*
- *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*
- *Comparative Literature Studies*
- *Callaloo*
- *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*

4. Online Thesis Portals (Examples)

- **Open Access Theses and Dissertations (OATD):** www.oatd.org
- **EThOS (British Library):** ethos.bl.uk
- **HAL Archives (France):** hal.archives-ouvertes.fr

Practice

Task 1: Label the Abstract Components

Objective: Recognize the typical structure of an abstract.

Read the following abstract and identify each part:

1. **Background/Context**
2. **Research Problem**
3. **Objectives**
4. **Methodology**

5. Findings

6. Conclusion

Sample Abstract:

Postcolonial narratives often reflect the complexities of cultural identity in formerly colonized societies. This dissertation investigates how Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Tayeb Salih address the theme of linguistic alienation in their novels *Decolonising the Mind* and *Season of Migration to the North*. The study aims to explore how language is used both as a tool of resistance and a marker of oppression. Using a comparative textual analysis, the research examines metaphors, narrative voice, and code-switching in the two texts. Findings reveal that both authors reframe colonial language to assert indigenous perspectives, offering unique models of cultural reclamation. The study concludes that literary language in postcolonial fiction plays a central role in redefining identity and power.

Answer Key

Background : “Postcolonial narratives often reflect the complexities...”

- **Research Problem:** “...how Ngũgĩ and Salih address...linguistic alienation...”
- **Objectives :** “...explore how language is used...”
- **Methodology :** “...comparative textual analysis...”
- **Findings:** “...both authors reframe colonial language...”
- **Conclusion :** “...literary language in postcolonial fiction plays a central role.

Task 2: Rewrite an Abstract with Clarity

Objective : Practice rewriting for clarity and coherence.

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The following abstract is disorganized and wordy. Rewrite it in a clearer, more academic style (150–200 words).

In this study, I talk about how women are portrayed in novels written by African authors. I chose some books from writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Buchi Emecheta. I looked at how the characters live and what problems they face. I found out that these women are strong and independent even though they face many difficulties. I used feminist theory to analyze their stories and found some interesting things about their roles and social expectations.

Answer

This dissertation explores the representation of female identity in the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Buchi Emecheta. Using feminist literary theory, the study examines the challenges and resilience of female characters within postcolonial African societies. Through textual analysis, the research focuses on themes such as social expectations, autonomy, and resistance. The findings indicate that both authors construct complex female protagonists who challenge patriarchal norms while negotiating cultural heritage. The study contributes to broader discussions on gender and empowerment in African literature.

Task 3: Abstract Gap-Fill Exercise

Objective : Learn academic vocabulary and abstract structure.

Fill in the blanks with suitable academic phrases.

This study the representation of exile and identity in contemporary Palestinian literature. The researchhow authors use memory, displacement, and resistance to construct narrative space. A qualitative content analysisselected works by Ghassan

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Kanafani and Susan Abulhawa. The findings that both writers portray exile not merely as a loss but as a transformative experience. The study a new lens for understanding cultural resilience in diasporic literature.

Answer

- investigates / examines / explores
- focuses on / analyzes
- is applied to / is conducted on
- suggest / demonstrate / reveal
- offers / proposes / contributes to

Task 4: Compare Strong vs. Weak Abstracts

Objective: Develop critical awareness of good abstract writing.

Read the two abstracts below. Which one is better? Why? List at least **3 reasons**.

Abstract	A	(Weak):
-----------------	----------	----------------

This paper is about some themes in African literature. It talks about colonialism and how people reacted. The authors I looked at have different opinions. The topic is interesting and has many aspects.

Abstract	B	(Strong):
-----------------	----------	------------------

This dissertation analyzes representations of colonial trauma in selected African novels, focusing on Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga. It examines how narrative strategies reflect the psychological and cultural impact of colonialism. Using postcolonial theory and trauma studies, the research highlights how literature articulates the silenced histories of colonized subjects.

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Answer

- Abstract B is better because:
 1. It clearly states the **topic and focus**.
 2. It use **academic vocabulary** and **disciplinary language**.
 3. It mentions **theoretical frameworks and authors**.
 4. It avoids vague or personal statements ("I looked at").

Task 5: Write Your Own Abstract

Objective: Apply all knowledge to produce an original abstract.

Write an abstract (150–250 words) based on:

- A literature-based research project or paper you wrote (or imagine a topic).
- Include all components: topic, problem, aim, method, findings, conclusion.

Example Prompt:

You wrote a paper titled *Hybridity and Cultural Identity in Zadie Smith's White Teeth*.

Response:

This dissertation examines the theme of cultural hybridity in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* within the framework of postcolonial identity theory. The study investigates how Smith constructs diasporic identity through generational conflict, migration, and multicultural interactions in contemporary London. Using Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity as a central lens, the research conducts a close reading of character development and narrative structure. The analysis reveals that Smith portrays identity as fluid and contested, resisting essentialist or static definitions. The study concludes that *White Teeth* contributes significantly to

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postcolonial literature by illustrating how hybrid identities challenge national, racial, and cultural boundaries.

Writing a General Introduction

Introduction

Certainly! Writing a **General Introduction** for a Master's dissertation in **Literature and Civilisation** is a key step in setting up your research effectively.

What Is the General Introduction ?

The **General Introduction** is the opening chapter of your dissertation. It:

- Presents the research topic.
- Explains why the study is important.
- States the main research question(s) or hypothesis.
- Introduces the methodology and structure of the dissertation.

It sets the **intellectual context** and **guides the reader** through the academic journey of your work.

Components of the General Introduction

A strong introduction typically includes the following elements, **in this order**:

1. Opening/Background

- Introduce the **broad field** and **research topic**.
- Provide historical, cultural, or theoretical context.
- Define key terms if needed.

Example:

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

Postcolonial literature has emerged as a powerful medium through which formerly colonized societies reclaim their voices and challenge dominant historical narratives. In particular, African literature has contributed significantly to global discussions on identity, power, and language.

2. Statement of the Problem

- Clearly articulate the **research problem or gap**.
- What is not well understood? What issue needs exploration ?

Example:

Despite the growing body of scholarship on African postcolonial narratives, less attention has been paid to the specific role of linguistic hybridity in shaping diasporic identity in contemporary fiction.

3. Aims and Objectives

- What is the study **trying to achieve**?
- You may phrase this section as a general aim and then list 2–3 specific objectives.

Example:

The aim of this dissertation is to explore how language and cultural hybridity function as tools of identity formation in selected African diasporic novels.

Specific objectives include :

- To examine how narrative voice reflects hybrid identity.
- To analyze the use of multilingualism and code-switching.
- To interpret these strategies through the lens of postcolonial theory.

4. Research Questions

- Formulate 1–3 **clear and researchable** questions.

Example:

- How does linguistic hybridity contribute to the construction of postcolonial identity?
- In what ways do selected authors represent cultural displacement and belonging?

5. Hypothesis (if applicable)

- Not always required in literature dissertations, but some supervisors expect it.

Example:

This study hypothesizes that multilingual narrative strategies serve as a form of resistance to colonial linguistic hegemony.

6. Theoretical Framework

- Mention the **main theorists or approaches** that will guide your analysis (e.g., Bhabha's hybridity, Fanon's decolonialism, feminist theory, Marxist criticism, etc.).

Example:

The study draws on Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Stuart Hall's work on cultural identity to analyze literary representation.

7. Methodology Overview

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- Describe your **research approach** (textual analysis, comparative study, discourse analysis, etc.).
- Indicate your **primary texts** and any **secondary materials**.

Example:

The research adopts a qualitative textual analysis approach, focusing on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. Relevant literary criticism and postcolonial theory will serve as secondary sources.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

- Briefly outline what each chapter will cover.

Example:

- **Chapter One** provides a review of relevant literature and theoretical concepts.
- **Chapter Two** offers a textual analysis of *Americanah*.
- **Chapter Three** explores hybridity in *White Teeth*.
- **The final chapter** synthesizes the findings and presents the conclusion.

9. Significance of the Study

- Why does this research matter?
- What does it contribute to your field?

Example:

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

This study contributes to the growing discourse on language and identity in postcolonial literature by highlighting how contemporary African authors challenge monolingual and monocultural assumptions.

Format Guidelines

Element	Recommendation
Length	4–6 pages (1,000–1,500 words)
Font	Times New Roman or Arial, 12 pt
Spacing	Double-spaced
Justification	Fully justified
Section Heading	"General Introduction" (centered, bold or all caps)
Citations	Use in-text citations (MLA, APA, or your university's style)

Practice

Task 1: Identify the Components

Objective: Learn to recognize the standard elements of a general introduction.

Read the excerpt below and label each section using the following list:

- Background

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- Problem Statement
- Aims
- Research Questions
- Theoretical Framework
- Methodology
- Structure
- Significance

Literature emerging from formerly colonised nations often reflects a deep engagement with identity, memory, and language. African literature, in particular, navigates the complex terrain between tradition and modernity. While much research has focused on thematic concerns such as nationalism or gender, relatively less attention has been paid to linguistic hybridity and its role in shaping diasporic identity.

This dissertation aims to explore how African diasporic authors use multilingualism and narrative strategies to construct complex identities in a postcolonial context. The study addresses the following questions :

1. How does linguistic hybridity reflect cultural negotiation in selected novels?
2. In what ways does the use of language challenge colonial power structures?

Drawing on Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Stuart Hall's conception of cultural identity, the study uses postcolonial theory as its guiding framework.

The methodology employed is qualitative textual analysis, focusing on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. The dissertation is structured in four chapters: the first introduces the theoretical background, the second and third offer textual analyses, and the

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fourth presents a synthesis and conclusion.

This study contributes to the broader field of postcolonial literary studies by offering insight into how language functions as a tool of resistance and identity reconstruction.

Answer Key:

- ✓ **Background** : Lines 1–2
- ✓ **Problem Statement**: Line 3
- ✓ **Aims**: Line 4
- ✓ **Research Questions** : Lines 5–7
- ✓ **Theoretical Framework** : Line 8
- ✓ **Methodology** : Line 9
- ✓ **Structure** : Line 10
- ✓ **Significance** : Line 11

Task 2: Fill in the Blanks (Guided Writing)

Objective: Practice writing key sentences from the general introduction.

Complete the following sentences with appropriate academic language.

1. The aim of this dissertation is to explore how _____.
2. This research is guided by the following questions : _____.
3. The study adopts a _____ approach, focusing on _____.
4. The theoretical foundation is based on the work of _____.
5. This research is significant because _____.

Sample Answers:

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1. ...postcolonial women writers articulate resistance through narrative voice.
2. What role does language play in constructing postcolonial identity?
3. qualitative textual analysis; Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*
4. Homi Bhabha, particularly his concept of hybridity.
5. it addresses a gap in scholarship concerning linguistic identity in African diaspora literature.

Task 3: Arrange the Introduction Sections

Objective: Understand logical flow and organization.

Put the following introduction elements in the most logical order:

- ✓ Statement of the problem
- ✓ Background of the study
- ✓ Research questions
- ✓ Aims and objectives
- ✓ Structure of the dissertation
- ✓ Theoretical framework
- ✓ Methodology
- ✓ Significance of the study

Suggested Order:

1. Background of the study
2. Statement of the problem
3. Aims and objectives
4. Research questions

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5. Theoretical framework
6. Methodology
7. Structure of the dissertation
8. Significance of the study

Task 4: Critique the Weak Introduction

Objective : Develop critical thinking about content and quality.

Read the following paragraph and identify **at least 3 weaknesses**:

In this dissertation, I want to talk about how writers write about identity. Some of them are from Africa. I will study their books and talk about how they mix cultures. I think it's important because we live in a global world and people should understand each other. I will read books and talk about them in my chapters.

Answer (Weaknesses):

- ✓ Too informal (“I want to talk about...”).
- ✓ Lacks specific detail (Which writers? Which texts?).
- ✓ No clear research questions or objectives.
- ✓ No reference to theory or method.
- ✓ Language is vague and unscholarly (“talk about,” “I think...”).

Task 5 : Write Your Own Mini-Introduction (200–300 words)

Objective : Apply all components in writing practice.

Choose one of the following sample research titles (or your own), and write a short general introduction including:

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- Topic introduction and background
- Problem statement
- Aim of the study
- Research question
- Theoretical approach
- Method used
- Dissertation structure
- Importance of the study

Sample Topics:

1. *Hybridity and Identity in Postcolonial African Fiction*
2. *Language and Resistance in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Works*
3. *The Representation of the Female Body in Arab Anglophone Literature*

Writing a General Conclusion

Introduction

Writing a strong **General Conclusion** is essential for wrapping up a Master's dissertation in **Literature and Civilisation**. It should reflect the depth of your analysis, revisit your research questions, and highlight the broader implications of your work. Here's a thorough guide that explains **what to include, how to structure it, and how to write it effectively**.

What Is the General Conclusion ?

The **General Conclusion** is the final chapter (or section) of your dissertation. It :

- **Summarizes** your entire research.
- **Revisits** the research problem and questions.
- **Highlights** key findings.
- **Reflects** on the significance of the study.
- **Suggests** areas for further research.

Components of the General Conclusion

1. Restate the Research Topic and Objectives

Briefly remind the reader what the study was about.

Example:

MLA Style Techniques and Practice

This dissertation examined the representation of postcolonial identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, with a focus on cultural hybridity and language use.

2. Summarize the Main Findings

Go back to your research questions or objectives and summarize what you discovered. Avoid repeating everything; instead, **synthesize the insights**. *Example :*

The analysis revealed that both authors use linguistic hybridity as a narrative strategy to illustrate the fluid nature of diasporic identity. The use of code-switching, cultural references, and non-linear narration enables a complex portrayal of belonging and resistance.

3. Discuss the Significance of the Findings

Explain the **academic or social value** of your research. How does it contribute to literary or cultural studies ?

Example :

This study contributes to postcolonial literary scholarship by demonstrating how multilingualism is not merely a stylistic device but a political tool that disrupts colonial linguistic hierarchies.

4. Reflect on the Limitations

It's scholarly and honest to acknowledge any **limits** to your research (e.g., text selection, scope, methodology). *Example:*

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The study was limited to two novels by diasporic writers and did not include perspectives from Francophone or Lusophone African literatures, which could offer comparative insights.

5. Suggest Areas for Further Research

Offer recommendations for **future scholars** based on gaps or extensions of your study.

Example:

Future research could explore how linguistic hybridity functions in the works of second-generation African writers or examine similar themes in postcolonial cinema.

6. Closing Thought (Optional)

End with a strong closing sentence a **broader reflection** on your findings or a **quote** that encapsulates your research. *Example:*

As literature continues to reflect and reshape cultural identities, voices from the postcolonial world remain vital in challenging dominant narratives and envisioning new possibilities for global dialogue.

Format Guidelines

Feature	Recommendation
Length	3–5 pages (around 800–1,200 words)
Title	"General Conclusion" (centered, bold or all caps)
Font & Size	Times New Roman or Arial, 12 pt
Spacing	Double-spaced
Style	Formal, academic tone

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Citations	Minimal or none (don't introduce new sources)
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Suggested Outline for the General Conclusion

1. Restate the research topic and purpose
2. Summarize main findings in relation to each research question
3. Emphasize the significance of your contribution to the field
4. Reflect on the limitations of the study
5. Recommend areas for further research
6. (Optional) End with a broader reflection or closing insight

Example

General Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explore how the concept of cultural hybridity is expressed through language in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. By applying postcolonial theory, particularly Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Hall's ideas of cultural identity, the study examined how characters navigate identity in a transnational context.

The findings demonstrate that both authors use multilingualism, narrative fragmentation, and intertextuality to portray the fluid and often conflicting identities of diasporic subjects. These literary strategies resist binary classifications and highlight the transformative nature of identity in postcolonial spaces.

In contributing to postcolonial literary criticism, this study affirms the importance of linguistic experimentation as a form of cultural resistance. However, the research was limited

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to Anglophone texts; including a broader range of postcolonial voices would enrich the findings.

Further research might consider comparing African diasporic literature with Caribbean or South Asian postcolonial narratives, or examining how these themes translate into visual storytelling in film and media.

Ultimately, the study reaffirms the role of literature as a critical space for negotiating identity, memory, and history in a globalized world.

Practice

Task 1: Match the Section

Objective : Understand the different components of a general conclusion.

Match each paragraph excerpt to the correct section name.

Paragraph	Match To
A. This dissertation has explored the representation of exile and identity in Tayeb Salih's <i>Season of Migration to the North</i> and Edward Said's concept of "contrapuntal reading."	a. Summary of findings
B. Further research could examine other postcolonial authors in the Arab world or compare Anglophone and Francophone literatures on exile.	b. Suggestions for future research
C. The findings suggest that identity is neither fixed nor pure but is shaped	c. Reflection on

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Paragraph	Match To:
through negotiation, ambivalence, and cultural displacement.	significance
D. The study's limitation lies in the selection of texts, which focused only on male-authored narratives. Including female voices may offer different perspectives.	d. Limitations

Answer Key:

- A → a. Summary of findings
- B → b. Suggestions for future research
- C → c. Reflection on significance
- D → d. Limitations

Task 2: Sentence Completion

Objective : Practice academic phrasing in conclusion writing.

Complete the following sentences appropriately.

1. This dissertation aimed to explore _____.
2. The analysis revealed that _____.
3. The study contributes to the field by _____.
4. One limitation of this research is _____.
5. Future research might consider _____.

Sample Answers :

1. ...the construction of identity through language in diasporic literature.

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2. ...language plays a central role in negotiating cultural belonging.
3. ...highlighting underexplored narratives in African women's writing.
4. ...its focus on only two Anglophone texts.
5. ...examining similar themes in postcolonial cinema.

Task 3: Reorder the Paragraphs

Objective: Understand the logical flow of a general conclusion.

The following paragraphs are scrambled. Put them in the correct order (1 to 5):

A. This dissertation focused on the exploration of gender and power in the works of Nawal El Saadawi and Assia Djebar.

B. Future studies could explore these issues in francophone postcolonial literature or expand to include contemporary Arab women writers.

C. However, the research was limited by its linguistic scope and reliance on English translations, which may have affected interpretation.

D. The analysis showed that both authors use narrative voice and historical memory to challenge patriarchal structures and reclaim female subjectivity.

E. This study contributes to feminist postcolonial scholarship by foregrounding the role of female authorship in resisting socio-political oppression.

Suggested Order:

1. A (Topic restated)
2. D (Summary of findings)

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3. E (Contribution/significance)
4. C (Limitations)
5. B (Future research)

Task 4: Critique the Conclusion

Objective : Develop analytical and evaluative skills.

Read the sample paragraph and identify at least 3 weaknesses or areas of improvement.

In this paper, I talked about some books and how they show identity. It was interesting to see how people live in two cultures. I think more research should be done in this area. The study was good, but I couldn't read all the books I wanted to.

Possible Critique:

- Too informal: phrases like “I talked about” or “it was interesting” are not academic.
- Lacks structure: no clear summary of findings or mention of the research questions.
- No theoretical context or contribution to the field is mentioned.
- Weak closing tone; needs a more formal, conclusive voice.

Task 5: Write a Mini General Conclusion

Objective: Apply knowledge in writing practice.

Write a 150–200 word general conclusion based on one of the following research titles :

1. *Postcolonial Memory and Language in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Fiction*
2. *The Politics of Veiling in Arab Women's Anglophone Literature*
3. *Hybridity and Diasporic Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Novels*

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Guidelines :

Include these elements:

- Restate the research focus
- Summarize key findings
- Comment on significance
- Mention limitations
- Suggest future research

Viva Oral Presentation

Introduction

Great question ! The **viva oral presentation** (also called the dissertation defense or thesis defense) is a vital part of a Master's degree. It's your opportunity to **present**, **justify**, and **discuss** your research in front of a panel of examiners.

What Is a Viva Oral Presentation ?

The **viva** is a **formal academic discussion** where you present your research and answer questions from a committee (usually two or more faculty members). It tests :

- Your **understanding** of your topic.
- Your **ability to defend** your methodology and interpretations.
- Your awareness of your **research context** and its **academic contribution**.

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- **Structure of the Viva Presentation**
 - **Duration : 15–25 minutes (Presentation) + Q&A**

session Typical format includes:

Stage	Description
1. Greeting & Introduction	Greet the panel and briefly introduce yourself and your topic.
2. Title & Aim of the Study	State your research title, problem, and objectives.

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3. Justification	Explain why this topic is important, relevant, or original.
4. Literature Review Summary	Briefly summarize key theories or authors that guided your research.
5. Methodology	Explain your method of analysis (e.g., close reading, comparative analysis, theoretical application).
6. Key Findings	Present your major arguments or discoveries. Use examples from texts you analyzed.
7. Limitations & Future Work	Acknowledge limits and suggest future directions.
8. Conclusion	End with a brief summary of your contribution. Thank the panel.

❖ Language and Style Tips

- Use **formal academic English**.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
- Avoid reading the entire time, **use bullet points** or cue cards.
- Engage the audience with **eye contact** and confident posture.

❖ Tools : Slides or Visual Aids (Optional)

If allowed, you can use PowerPoint. Your slides should:

- Be visually clean and minimal.
- Include your title, objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and conclusion.
- Use quotations sparingly and legibly.

❖ Common Questions During the Viva

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Prepare for these types of questions :

Type	Sample Questions
Clarification	“Why did you choose these particular authors/texts?”
Methodology	“Why did you use this theory? Could another approach have worked better?”
Critical Thinking	“What are the limitations of your analysis?”
Contextual	“How does your work relate to the larger field of postcolonial studies?”
Reflection	“If you were to redo the research, what would you change?”

❖ Preparation Tips

1. **Know your dissertation** inside out especially your key chapters and findings.
2. **Practice** your presentation aloud multiple times.
3. **Anticipate questions** and prepare thoughtful responses.
4. If you use slides, **practice with them** and prepare for technical issues.
5. Time yourself: aim for a presentation of 15–20 minutes.

❖ Sample Opening (Literature and Civilisation Focus)

Good morning. My name is [Your Name], and I’m presenting my Master’s dissertation titled *"Cultural Hybridity and the Postcolonial Subject in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Americanah and Tayeb Salih’s Season of Migration to the North."*

The aim of this study is to explore how postcolonial authors represent the complexities of identity formation in a globalized context, focusing on language use, displacement, and

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cultural negotiation. My research is informed by Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Edward Said's postcolonial critique...

❖ Final Tips for Success

- **Be confident** : You're the expert on your topic.
- **Stay calm**: If you don't know an answer, explain how you'd find it.
- **Be respectful and concise** in your answers.
- **Show passion** for your subject this makes a strong impression !

Practice

Objectives of the Practice Session

- Build confidence and fluency in academic speech.
- Anticipate and respond to common jury questions.
- Clarify and justify your research decisions.
- Practice time management and presentation delivery.

Practice Activity 1: Role-Play the Defence

- **Role Distribution** :
 - **Presenter (Student)** : Defends the dissertation.
 - **Jury Members (Peers/Instructors)** : Ask challenging, relevant questions.
- **Instructions** :
 1. One student gives a **7–10 minutes summary** of their dissertation (title, aim, methodology, findings).

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2. Other students or the instructor act as **jury members**, asking the types of questions listed below.
3. Switch roles so each student practices both presenting and asking.

Practice Activity 2: Common Viva Questions & Model Answers

Ask students to practice **answering these aloud**, using their own research topic.

Jury Question	Purpose	Sample Answer
Why did you choose this topic ?	Justification	“I chose this topic because it addresses a gap in postcolonial literary studies, especially the treatment of female identity in North African Fiction.”
How did you select your primary texts?	Methodological basis	“I selected <i>Season of Migration to the North</i> and <i>Americanah</i> because both deal with diasporic identity but from different cultural and gender perspectives.”
What is your theoretical framework? Why this one ?	Conceptual clarity	“I used Bhabha’s theory of hybridity because it explains the in-between space that characters in postcolonial novels occupy.”
What are the limitations of your study ?	Self-awareness	“One limitation is the focus on Anglophone texts. Including Francophone texts could have offered a broader comparative lens.”
What is the main contribution of your research?	Academic value	“It highlights how language use in postcolonial fiction is both a tool of resistance and a marker of identity.”

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If you were to continue this research, what would you focus on?	Future research	“I would extend the study to postcolonial cinema or explore female authorship in Francophone African literature.”
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Practice Activity 3: Speaking Prompts for the Student

Let students respond aloud to these prompts, using their actual dissertation :

1. “The main objective of my study is...”
2. “My methodology consists of...”
3. “In my literature review, I found that...”
4. “A key finding from my analysis is...”
5. “My work contributes to the field of literature and civilisation by...”
6. “One challenge I encountered was...”
7. “An interesting aspect of my study is...”

Encourage them to speak in **complete, fluent academic sentences** using discipline-specific vocabulary.

Practice Activity 4

This exercise sharpens **quick thinking** and **clarity under pressure**.

Instructions :

- Ask each student a **random, unexpected question** from the list.
- Give them 30–60 seconds to answer orally.
- Provide constructive feedback on clarity, tone, and content.

Examples:

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- “Do you think your argument would still hold if the setting of the novel were different?”
- “Can you link your analysis to current socio-political events?”
- “What did you find most surprising during your research?”

Practice Activity 5: Presentation Feedback Checklist

After each student presents:

- Peers use a **checklist** to give feedback on :

Criterion	Yes / No / Comment
Clear explanation of research question	
Logical structure and smooth flow	
Good use of academic language	
Confident delivery and voice control	
Effective response to questions	
Kept within time limit	

Bonus Materials You Can Request

I can also provide:

- PowerPoint template for dissertation defense
- A printable **jury question bank with answer templates**
- A checklist for students to prepare their defense
- Sample short scripts/opening statements for students.

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