

TREATMENT OF TITLES IN MLA

Regardless of what you write—a post, an essay, or a research paper—when you mention a title of anything—painting, short story, website, etc.—the title must be set apart from the rest of the words. You can set apart a title two different ways in MLA: (1) italics and (2) quotation marks. (*By the way, we use the same notation of titles in MLA citations!*)

1. **Italics:** Generally speaking, MLA (and APA as well) requires that we italicize titles of so called “long works.” Here are some examples of what kind of titles you would italicize.

- a. Books (*Literature for Composition: Essays, Stories, Poems, and Plays*)
- b. Plays (*Romeo and Juliet*)
- c. Poems published as books (normally very long poems) (*The Waste Land*)
- d. Pamphlets (*Georgia Driver Manual*)
- e. Newspapers (*The Wall Street Journal*)
- f. Magazines (*Time*)
- g. Journals, as in academic journals, not personal journals (*TETYC—Teaching English in the Two-Year College*)
- h. Web sites (*The Victorian Web*)
- i. Online databases (*ProQuest Academic*)
- j. Films (*The King’s Speech*)
- k. Television broadcast (*The Real Housewives of New York*)
- l. Radio broadcast (*All Things Considered*)
- m. CDs, cassettes, and record albums (*The Best of Scorpion*)
- n. Dance performance (*The Nutcracker*)
- o. Operas (*Rigoletto*)

- p. Long musical compositions identified by name (Belioz's *Symphonie fantastique*)
 - q. Paintings (Rembrandt's *Nightwatch*)
 - r. Sculpture (Rodin's *The Kiss*)
 - s. Ships (*USS Arizona*)
 - t. Aircraft (*Air Force One*)
 - u. Spacecraft (*Challenger*)
2. **Quotation marks:** Generally speaking, we use quotation marks for titles of short works (everything that does not qualify as "long works"). Here are the examples:
- a. Academic journal articles: "Literary History and Sociology"
 - b. Magazine articles: "Sources of Energy in the Next Decade"
 - c. Encyclopedia/dictionary articles: "Romanticism"
 - d. Essays in books: "The Fiction of Langston Hughes"
 - e. Short stories: "The Lottery"
 - f. Poems: "Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori"
 - g. Chapters in books: "The American Economy before the Civil War"
 - h. Pages in Web sites: "Philosophy of Economics"
 - i. Episode of a TV or radio broadcast: "The Trouble with Tribbles"
 - j. Songs: "Mood Indigo"
 - k. Lectures: "Preparing for a Successful Interview"
3. You can see that important words in all these titles are capitalized. Important words are considered to be:
- a. Nouns

- b. Adjectives
 - c. Verbs
 - d. Pronouns
 - e. Adverbs
4. The following parts of speech are NOT capitalized:
- a. Articles (a, an, the)
 - b. Prepositions (above, to, in, of, etc.)
 - c. Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
 - d. The infinitive “to” as in “to sleep: (*How to Play Chess*)

Work Cited

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.