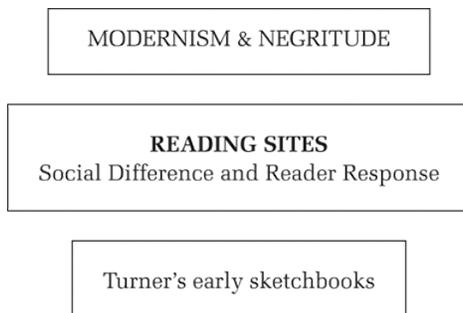


Excerpted from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed.

3.6. TITLES OF WORKS IN THE RESEARCH PAPER

3.6.1. Capitalization and Punctuation

Whenever you cite the title of a published work in your research paper, take the title from the title page, not, for example, from the cover or from a running head at the top of a page. Do not reproduce any unusual typographic characteristics, such as special capitalization or lowercasing of all letters. A title page may present a title designed like one of the following examples:



These titles should appear in a research paper as follows:

Modernism and Negritude
Reading Sites: Social Difference and Reader Response
Turner's Early Sketchbooks

The rules for capitalizing titles are strict. In a title or a subtitle, capitalize the first word, the last word, and all principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms. Therefore, capitalize the following parts of speech:

- Nouns (e.g., *flowers*, as in *The Flowers of Europe*)
- Pronouns (e.g., *our*, as in *Save Our Children*; *that*, as in *The Mouse That Roared*)
- Verbs (e.g., *watches*, as in *America Watches Television*; *is*, as in *What Is Literature?*)
- Adjectives (e.g., *ugly*, as in *The Ugly Duckling*; *that*, as in *Who Said That Phrase?*)
- Adverbs (e.g., *slightly*, as in *Only Slightly Corrupt*; *down*, as in *Go Down, Moses*)
- Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *after*, *although*, *as if*, *as soon as*, *because*, *before*, *if*, *that*, *unless*, *until*, *when*, *where*, *while*, as in *One If by Land and Anywhere That Chance Leads*)

Do not capitalize the following parts of speech when they fall in the middle of a title:

- Articles (*a*, *an*, *the*, as in *Under the Bamboo Tree*)
- Prepositions (e.g., *against*, *as*, *between*, *in*, *of*, *to*, as in *The Merchant of Venice* and "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body")
- Coordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, *yet*, as in *Romeo and Juliet*)
- The *to* in infinitives (as in *How to Play Chess*)

Use a colon and a space to separate a title from a subtitle, unless the title ends in a question mark or an exclamation point. Include other punctuation only if it is part of the title or subtitle.

The following examples illustrate how to capitalize and punctuate a variety of titles. For a discussion of which titles to italicize and which to place in quotation marks, see 3.6.2–3.

The Teaching of Spanish in English-Speaking Countries
Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images from Film and Literature
Life As I Find It
The Artist as Critic
Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Language
 “Italian Literature before Dante”
 “What Americans Stand For”
 “Why Fortinbras?”
 “Marcel Proust: Archetypal Music—an Exercise in Transcendence”
Death of a Salesman
What Are You Doing in My Universe?
Where Did You Go? Out. What Did You Do? Nothing.
 “Ode to a Nightingale”

When the first line of a poem serves as the title of the poem, reproduce the line exactly as it appears in the text.

Dickinson’s poem “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—” contrasts the everyday and the momentous.

For rules concerning capitalization of titles in languages other than English, see 3.8. See 3.6.4 for titles and quotations within titles.

3.6.2. Italicized Titles

Italicize the names of books, plays, poems published as books, pamphlets, periodicals (newspapers, magazines, and journals), Web sites, online databases, films, television and radio broadcasts, compact discs, audiocassettes, record albums, dance performances, operas and other long musical compositions (except those identified simply by form, number, and key; see 3.6.5), works of visual art, ships, aircraft, and spacecraft.

The Awakening (book)
The Importance of Being Earnest (play)
The Waste Land (poem published as a book)
New Jersey Driver Manual (pamphlet)
Wall Street Journal (newspaper)
Time (magazine)
PMLA (journal)
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Web site)
LexisNexis Academic (online database)
It’s a Wonderful Life (film)
Star Trek (television broadcast)
What’s the Word? (radio broadcast)
Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (compact disc, audiocassette, record album)
The Nutcracker (dance performance)
Rigoletto (opera)
 Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* (long musical composition identified by name)
 Chagall’s *I and My Village* (painting)
 French’s *The Minute Man* (sculpture)
USS Arizona (ship)

Spirit of St. Louis (aircraft)
Challenger (spacecraft)

3.6.3. Titles in Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks for the titles of articles, essays, stories and poems published within larger works, chapters of books, pages in Web sites, individual episodes of television and radio broadcasts, and short musical compositions (e.g., songs). Also use quotation marks for unpublished works, such as lectures and speeches.

“Literary History and Sociology” (journal article)
 “Sources of Energy in the Next Decade” (magazine article)
 “Etruscan” (encyclopedia article)
 “The Fiction of Langston Hughes” (essay in a book)
 “The Lottery” (story)
 “Kubla Khan” (poem)
 “The American Economy before the Civil War” (chapter in a book)
 “Philosophy of Economics” (page in a Web site)
 “The Trouble with Tribbles” (episode of the television broadcast *Star Trek*)
 “Mood Indigo” (song)
 “Preparing for a Successful Interview” (lecture)

3.6.4. Titles and Quotations within Titles

Italicize a title normally indicated by italics when it appears within a title enclosed in quotation marks.

“*Romeo and Juliet* and Renaissance Politics” (an article about a play)
 “Language and Childbirth in *The Awakening*” (an article about a novel)

Enclose in single quotation marks a title normally indicated by quotation marks when it appears within another title requiring quotation marks.

“Lines after Reading ‘Sailing to Byzantium’” (a poem about a poem)
 “The Uncanny Theology of ‘A Good Man Is Hard to Find’” (an article about a story)

Also place single quotation marks around a quotation that appears within a title requiring quotation marks.

“Emerson’s Strategies against ‘Foolish Consistency’” (an article with a quotation in its title)

Use quotation marks around a title normally indicated by quotation marks when it appears within an italicized title.

“*The Lottery*” and *Other Stories* (a book of stories)
New Perspectives on “The Eve of St. Agnes” (a book about a poem)

If a period is required after an italicized title that ends with a quotation mark, place the period before the quotation mark.

The study appears in *New Perspectives on “The Eve of St. Agnes.”*

There are two common methods for identifying a normally italicized title when it appears within an italicized title. In one practice, the title within is neither italicized nor enclosed in quotation marks. This method is preferred in publications of the Modern Language Association.

Approaches to Teaching Murasaki Shikibu’s The Tale of Genji (a book about a novel)
From The Lodger to The Lady Vanishes: Hitchcock’s Classic British Thrillers (a book about films)

In the other method, all titles within italicized titles are placed in quotation marks and italicized.

Approaches to Teaching Murasaki Shikibu's "The Tale of Genji"
From "The Lodger" to "The Lady Vanishes": Hitchcock's Classic British Thrillers

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. In the first method, the titles of works published independently and the material containing them are always given opposite treatments. This practice has the advantage of consistency, but it can lead to ambiguity: it is sometimes hard to tell where a title like *Approaches to Teaching Murasaki Shikibu's The Tale of Genji* ends and where the adjacent text begins.

The second method prevents confusion between titles and the adjacent text. However, it treats titles of works published independently two ways: they receive quotation marks in italicized titles but nowhere else. In addition, within italicized titles this method abandons the distinction between works that are published independently and those that are not.

Whichever practice you choose or your instructor requires, follow it consistently throughout your paper.

3.6.5. Exceptions

The convention of using italics and quotation marks to indicate titles does not generally apply to the names of scriptural writings (including all books and versions of the Bible); of laws, acts, and similar political documents; of musical compositions identified by form, number, and key; of series, societies, buildings, and monuments; and of conferences, seminars, workshops, and courses. These terms all appear without italics or quotation marks.

SCRIPTURE

Bible
 Old Testament
 Genesis
 Gospels
 Talmud
 Koran
 Upanishads

But italicize titles of individual published editions of scriptural writings (*The Interlinear Bible*, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*, *The Upanishads: A Selection for the Modern Reader*) and treat the editions in the works-cited list like any other published book.

LAWS, ACTS, AND SIMILAR POLITICAL DOCUMENTS

Magna Carta
 Declaration of Independence
 Bill of Rights
 Treaty of Trianon

MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS IDENTIFIED BY FORM, NUMBER, AND KEY

Beethoven's Symphony no. 7 in A, op. 92
 Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Trumpets and Strings in C, RV539

SERIES

University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature
 Bollingen Series

SOCIETIES

American Medical Association
Renaissance Society of America

BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS

Sears Tower
Arch of Constantine
Moscone Center

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

Strengthening the Cooperative Effort in Biomedical Research: A National Conference for Universities and Industry
Introduction to Calculus
Anthropology 102
Geographic Information Analysis Workshop
MLA Annual Convention

Words designating the divisions of a work are also not italicized or put within quotation marks, nor are they capitalized when used in the text (“The author says in her preface . . .,” “In canto 32 Ariosto writes . . .”).

preface
introduction
list of works cited
appendix
scene 7
stanza 20
chapter 2
[-] Hide extra examples
bibliography
canto 32
act 4
index

3.6.6. Shortened Titles

If you cite a title often in the text of your paper, you may, after stating the title in full at least once, use a shortened form, preferably a familiar or obvious one (e.g., “Nightingale” for “Ode to a Nightingale”), or an abbreviation (for standard abbreviated titles of common literature, see 7.7).