

## MLA STYLE 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

### Sample essay in MLA style

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Professor Miller  
African American Studies 202  
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**Name, course info, and date go at the top of the first page, aligned left**

**Center the title of your paper**

Economic Determinism in the *Migration* Series by Jacob Lawrence

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**Your last name and page number go in the header of each page, aligned right**

  

1" margin  
Justified left

The *Migration* series by Jacob Lawrence is a sequence of sixty paintings (with captions) portraying the mass migration of African Americans from the rural South to cities in the North and West during the beginning of the 20th century. Lawrence first did library research so he could understand his subject. He wrote the captions (part of the story), and then he outlined each panel with pencil (Steele 248). His compositions do not often use traditional three-dimensional perspective. The style of the series exhibits what Ellen Harkins Wheat calls "cubist angularity" (62). Lawrence painted the series (Steele 250). He started with black and painted the black through the palette from the darkest to the lightest paints, painting on to the next color. Some see his process as creating a unity among the individual panels. Jutta Lorensen, for example, refers to his palette as the "migration colors," and she explains its effect: "Lawrence's color code is a repetitive mode that accompanies the viewer/reader from the first panel to the last, as the same shades of green, red, yellow, blue, brown, and an incisive use of black are present throughout the entire series" (576).

1" margin

**In-text citation: When you use information or a quote from someone else, generally include the author and page number in parentheses**

**Since you already mentioned the author's name in the sentence, you don't have to put it in parentheses this time.**

#### Additional in-text citation tips:

- If a quote takes up four or more lines in your essay, separate it as a *block quote* with a line break and ½" indent
- If your source doesn't have page numbers (like a website), just reference the author's name: (McDermon)
- If your source doesn't have an author, reference the first few words of the title: ("Migration Series" 32)

Questions about citation style or when to cite? Ask a librarian!

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## Sample Works Cited in MLA style

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Alphabetize entries

Use ½" hanging indent

Start on new page with Works Cited centered at the top

Works Cited

Book (print) with 2 authors

Encyclopedia article from a database

Chapter in an anthology

Chapter in an e-book with 3+ authors

YouTube video

Journal article from a database

News article from the web

Aaronson, James, and Shania Frank. *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration*. U of Chicago P, 1989.

Adams, Luther J. "Great Migration, Causes Of." *Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration*, edited by Steven A. Reich, vol. 1, Greenwood Press, 2006. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=mora54187&v=2.1.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "New Negroes, Migration, and Cultural Exchange." *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, edited by Elizabeth Hutton Turner, Rappahannock Press, 1993, pp. 17-21.

Gilpin, Ron Blakeslee, et al. "Together Under Arms: Jacob Lawrence Paints Black History." *John Brown Still Lives!* U of North Carolina P, 2011. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/stmarysca-ebooks/reader.action?docID=880158&ppg=135.

Humanities Council of Washington, DC. "Jacob Lawrence and the Making of the Migration Series." 1993. *YouTube*, uploaded by HumanitiesDC, 18 Feb. 2011, youku.be/62dlyfIRg5E.

Lorensen, Jutta. "Between Image and Word, Color and Time: Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*." *African American Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 571-86. *JSTOR*, doi:10.1353/ar2006.0021.

McDermon, Daniel. "A Century of Jacob Lawrence." *New York Times*, 1 Sept. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/09/01/arts/design/jacob-lawrence-scad-museum-of-art-savannah.html.

Don't include http:// in the URL

If a journal article has a DOI (digital object identifier), use that instead of a URL

Saint Mary's course reader

Bible

Mandela, Nelson. Excerpt from "I Am Prepared to Die." 1964. *The Global Conversation of the 20th and 21st Centuries*, XanEdu, 2015, pp. 206-210.

Optional: original publication date

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Excerpt from *The Social Contract*. Translated by Maurice Cranston. *Western Tradition II*. XanEdu, 2014, pp. 130-44.

*The Bible*. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

For more guidelines and examples, consult these resources:

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): owl.purdue.edu
- MLA Style Online: style.mla.org
- MLA Handbook, Eighth Edition: REF 808.02 M699
- Writing Handbook for Saint Mary's College, available at Library Service Desk
- Ask a librarian