biblatex-mla

MLA Style Using `biblatex`

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Contents

1 Introduction

The `biblatex-mla` files provide support to `biblatex`, `bibtex`, and `latex` for citations and Works Cited lists in the style established by the Modern Language Association (MLA). The style defaults to inline parenthetical citations, but it also offers support for MLA-style footnotes. For more on the commands and options for changing package defaults, see § 2.1 and § 2.2, respectively, below.

The MLA style, a common standard for writers in the humanities, is outlined in the *MLA Style Manual*, in its 3rd edition, and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, now in its 7th edition. By default, these files follow definitions for these latest editions, though they also offer the option of support for the previous style. `Biblatex-mla` also follows the logic of the MLA when citing similar material repeatedly, borrowing the function—but not the form—of *ibid* and *idem*. `Biblatex-mla` is compatible with `biblatex`'s support for `hyperref` and `tex2ht`, and the main word in each citation (either the author's name, the title, or the page number) serves as a link to the particular entry in the Works Cited. For anything not covered by this manual, please also see the `biblatex` documentation or contact me by email.

1.1 License

`Biblatex-mla` is copyrighted © 2007–2011, by James Clawson. Permission is granted to copy, distribute, and modify this software under the terms of the LaTeX Project Public License, version 1.3: <http://www.ctan.org/tex-archive/macros/latex/base/lppl.txt>.

1.2 Feedback

If you have any questions, requests, or other feedback please email me. My email address is at the top of this document. If you end up improving the code to be more accurate to the MLA standard, please be kind to the rest of us and share; I'm very happy to incorporate improvements! If anything works differently than you feel it ought to work, please let me know. Apart from time and my willingness to write documentation, I'm limited only by the problems of which I'm unaware.

2 Use

To ensure American-style quotation marks (if that's your thing),[1] you need to call the `babel` and `csquotes` packages in the preamble of your Latex document:

```
\usepackage[american]{babel}
\usepackage{csquotes}
\usepackage[style=mla]{biblatex}
\bibliography{<bibfile>}
```

Replace "`<bibfile>`" with the name of your .bib bibliography file. The style supports footnote citations with the **autocite=footnote** package option. Other options supported by `biblatex-mla` include **firstlonghand**, **mladraft**, **annotation**, **noremoteinfo**, **nofullfootnote**, **publimedium**, and **guessmedium**, all discussed below in § 2.2.

2.1 Commands

The standard commands for `biblatex-mla` generally follow those defined by `biblatex`. Included below are the most typical commands. For more commands and options, reference the `biblatex` manual.

\autocite Insert a citation. For best results, use the command before punctuation like this `\autocite{x}`. Biblatex-mla defaults to parenthetical citations for `\autocite`, but a package option—**autocite=footnote**, explained below in § 2.2—changes this default behavior. In this example, x represents the bibkey of the particular bibliographic entry being cited. Insert page numbers and citational prenotes using square braces:

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[1]Other localization files, `mla-spanish.lbx`, `mla-portuguese.lbx`, and `mla-italian.lbx`, are also available to use `biblatex-mla` in languages other than English. These and other localization files are included in `biblatex-mla` releases, but they will not always be the latest versions available. Updated and new localization files will be uploaded to <`http://konx.net/biblatex-mla/lbx`> once they are ready. There is also support for proper punctuation in non-American dialects of English. Try `british`, `canadian`, or other Babel identifiers, such as `spanish`.

```
\autocite[z][y]{x}
```

Here, y is the page number, and z is the prenote (such as "qtd. in"). If indicating a prenote but no page number, you must include an empty set for the page number:

```
\autocite[z][]{x}
```

When citing a page number without any prenote, only one set of square brackets are needed:

```
\autocite[y]{x}
```

\autocite*   Suppress the author's name in a citation. Use this starred variant of the above command when indicating the author's name in the sentence calling the citation.

\autocites   Insert a citation for multiple sources at once. The respective citations will be separated by semicolons.

```
\autocites[z1][y1]{x1}[z2][y2]{x1}[z3][y3]{x3}
```

The curled braces always indicate the bibkey, and the squared braces respectively belong to the curly braces that follow them.

\printbibliography   Insert the list of Works Cited.

2.2 Package Options

`Biblatex-mla` defaults to the recommendations established by the MLA, but there may be times when you need to change some of these options for publication or other uses. As such, a number of package options have been defined to change the functionality of `biblatex-mla` within reason.

autocite=footnote   Using **\autocite** with biblatex-mla defaults to MLA-preferred inline, parenthetical citations. To style citations as footnotes, set the **autocite=footnote** option in your preamble:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,autocite=footnote]{biblatex}
```

firstlonghand   The first citation of a source with a shorthand defined will always print a citation with author's name and, potentially, the shorttitle field. (See section XXX, below.) Add **firstlonghand=false** to your preamble to disable this option and print only the shorthand even on the first citation:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,firstlonghand=false]{biblatex}
```

nofullfootnote   When using biblatex-mla for footnotes, the style file will provide full bibliographic detail for the first citation of every source. To turn off this option, add **nofullfootnote=true** to your preamble:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,nofullfootnote=true]{biblatex}
```

annotation It is possible to print annotations to entries in the Works Cited if the `annotation` field is defined in an entry. To turn on this option, add **`annotation=true`** to your preamble:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,annotation=true]{biblatex}
```

mladraft When using MLA parenthetical citations, it is best practice to cite as seldom as is necessary to avoid ambiguity. `Biblatex-mla` can flag consecutive citations to the same page range, allowing you to defer citations to the end. In draft mode, `biblatex-mla` will place a clover (♣) in the margin, along with a single footnote explanation. To use the tool outside of draft mode, set the **`mladraft`** option in your preamble to true; similarly, to avoid seeing these clovers and the footnote in draft mode, set the option to false:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,mladraft=true]{biblatex}
```

noremoteinfo Modeled after the implementation in biblatex-apa to suppress remote information in the `.bib` file from being printed in the bibliography, this option affects `isbn`, `issn`, `isrn`, `doi`, and `eprint` fields. It's included here mostly as a proof of concept for future expansion.

```
\usepackage[style=mla,noremoteinfo=true]{biblatex}
```

showmedium `Biblatex-mla` version 0.9 introduced support for the latest MLA style, defined in the 3rd edition of the *Style Manual*, requiring the publication medium of each entry to be printed in the list of Works Cited. By default, `biblatex-mla` will do the same, using the `howpublished` field. Turn off this option—and the other new changes from the 3rd edition—by setting the **`showmedium`** option to false:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,showmedium=false]{biblatex}
```

guessmedium An entry with no defined `howpublished` field will default either to a "Web" publication (if there's a defined `url` field or `eprint` field) or a "Print" publication (if there's not). To avoid `biblatex-mla` guessing the publication medium, thereby printing nothing when the field is undefined, deactivate the **`guessmedium`** option:

```
\usepackage[style=mla,guessmedium=false]{biblatex}
```

3 Database Guide

I lost my original documentation files, including original style files I created to maintain them, so I'm transitioning everything to Philipp Lehman's `ltxdockit`. This part of the user guide, explaining how to create `bibtex` entries for use with `biblatex-mla`, will be updated shortly. Until then, please see § 4 (pages 7–20) of the previous version: <http://konx.net/biblatex-mla/biblatex-mla.pdf>.

Biblatex (and, thus, `biblatex-mla`) uses bibtex databases to manage the citations and list of works cited. While these databases are just flat text files, there are many good programs available to help you manage them. Zotero, for example, can export as `bibtex`, as can Endnote and other commercial programs; each of these will nevertheless export with varying degrees of success. Standalone `bibtex` managers such as JabRef and (on the Mac) BibDesk use `.bib` files as their native filetype and are much more reliable for managing your list of sources.

Whether exporting from Zotero or another program, whether managing your .bib files in a standalone editor or manipulating them in a text editor, you will at some point have to know the fields available to `biblatex-mla`—especially as some of these are unique to `biblatex`, and as I've had to repurpose some of the fields to suit `biblatex-mla`. Below are the different @types and the fields available to them. Keep in mind that some of the fields in the @book and @article types (for example, `nameaddon`, `origyear`, and others) are also available in others where it makes sense; I don't repeat them here to save room.

3.1 Unusual Fields

`Biblatex` supports the following fields, usually concerned more with presentation than bibliographic merit, in all entrytypes. Define these in your `.bib` files:

crossref
the `key` of a parent source in which a shorter source is found. The `crossref` field is handy to avoid spending time re-inputting similar data, but it is also useful for including MLA-style cross-references in the list of Works Cited. Keep in mind the problems inherent in using the `crossref` field, outlined in section 2.4.1 of the `biblatex` manual. In the future, `biblatex-mla` may provide further support for the `biblatex` `xref` field, making `crossref` secondary in importance.

shorttitle
the shortened title to be printed in citations to disambiguate among multiple titles by one author

shorthand
when defined, a unique label to be printed in citations instead of the author and shorttitle. By default, `biblatex-mla` will only use the `shorthand` label after a first citation with author (and title, if necessary). See the `firstlonghand` option in section XXXXXXX to disable this feature.

options
separate the following options with a comma:

`useauthor=false` allows the label of the entry to default to something other than the author, when the author field is defined. If the editor is defined, the label will default to that. The `useauthor` option defaults to true.

`useeditor=false` allows the label of the entry default to something other than the editor in the case of the author field being undefined or the `useauthor` option set to false. The `useeditor` option defaults to true.

usetranslator=true   allows the label of the entry to inherit the name of the translator when the author and editor fields are undefined or the `useauthor` and `useeditor` options are set to false. The `usetranslator` option defaults to false.

totalnames=true   allows the label to include all the names in its list, rather than maxing out at three.

uniquetranslator=true   indicates that the translator of an `@incollection` entry is unique to the particular work, rather than the collection at large.

noremoteinfo=false   indicates that the "remote" information of an entry is to be printed, including the fields `isbn`, `issn`, `isrn`, `doi`, and `eprint`. These fields are usually omitted. See also the global option also called `noremote-info`, on page XXXX above, for defining this option on a per-document basis.

3.2 Standalone Sources

The following entrytypes are for long sources not part of any other publication except, potentially, multivolume sets or publishers' series.

@book

A book, usually with one author. MLA-style book entries are straightforward, and the `biblatex-mla` files style all the potential fields for a typical book

author   the author of the book

title   book title; when using `crossref`, also define `booktitle` and be sure to define `title` of the child entry

subtitle   book subtitle; when using `crossref`, also define `booksubtitle` and be sure to define `subtitle` of the child

location   entryplace of publication

publisher   publishing house

year   year of publication

　　　Other fields might come in handy for further granularity:

origyear   original publication year, for reprints

edition   edition number

volume   volume number of book

volumes   total number of volumes

maintitle	title of multi-volume collection of which this book is one volume
mainsubtitle	subtitle of the above `maintitle`
series	name of a publication series
number	number of the above `series` represented by this book

Additionally, the style files support more name types for situations needing them:

editor	editor of a book
editortype	to indicate if the named `editor` is actually an **editor** ("ed."), a **compiler** ("comp.") or a **compilerandeditor** ("comp. and ed."). Default value is **editor**.
translator	translator of a work
introduction	author of a book's introduction
foreword	author of a book's foreword
afterword	author of a book's afterword
redactor	name of redactor
commentator	name of commentator
annotator	name of annotator

Finally, the style files also define the following note fields for further clarification:

nameaddon	pseudonym, misattribution, or other note (printed in brackets after `author`)
booktitleaddon	note after the `booktitle`
maintitleaddon	note after the `maintitle`
note	miscellaneous data printed before `publisher`
addendum	miscellaneous data printed at the end of the entry

Fields not yet supported in biblatex-mla (but which should be supported in future versions) include the following:

howpublished	to be used in support of the MLA-style revisions in the third edition of the *MLA Style Manual* and the (upcoming) 7th edition of the *MLA Handbook*; will default to "Print" when undefined

origlocation	original place of publication (for reprints)
origpublisher	original publisher (for reprints)
origtitle	original title (for reprints)
origlanguage	the original language of a translated, reprinted work. Biblatex-mla will not print information in this field, but if the field has information in it, it will use the phrase "Trans. of" before the original title, instead of "Rept. of".

@booklet

Small pamphlet, often without an author listed. In `biblatex-mla`, `@booklet` is an alias for `@book` (see above), and is styled similarly.

@collection

A book that is a collection of self-contained essays, stories, or poems, usually with multiple unique authors and collectively edited by a single editorial body. In `biblatex-mla`, `@collection` is an an alias for `@book` (see above), and is styled similarly. To accurately support `@incollection` entries using `crossref`, be sure to define the following fields instead of `title` and `subtitle` in the parent `@collection` entry:

booktitle	the title of a book or collection
booksubtitle	the subtitle of a book or collection

@periodical

An entire issue of a journal, usually cited by editor. `Biblatex-mla` accepts the following fields:

editor	the editor or editors of an issue
issuetitle	title of a special issue
issuesubtitle	subtitle of a special issue
title	title of a journal
subtitle	subtitle of a journal
volume	volume number of a journal
number	issue number of a journal
issue	season, when used in place of month (as in the "spring" issue of a journal)