

# Documenting Sources: Part 1- Titles

We've already learned how to find and evaluate sources. This week, we'll learn how to document sources. We'll start with titles and then we'll move on to citations and putting together the Works Cited list.

## Titles:

Here are the basic guidelines for styling titles correctly according to MLA guidelines:

- **Capitalization:**

- Always capitalize the first word of a title.
- Capitalize all major parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.). Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, or conjunctions when they fall in the middle of a title.
  - Example: *The Sound and the Fury* (first word and nouns are capitalized, conjunction (and) and article (the) are not)
- If the title has a subtitle, separate the subtitle with a colon and a space.
  - Example "Mind-Blowing: Fostering Self-Regulated Learning in Information Literacy Instruction"

- **Quotation marks and italics:**

- **Italics:** Italicize titles if the source is **self-contained and independent**. Titles of books; plays; films; periodicals such as journals, magazines, and newspapers; databases; websites; plays; musicals; and paintings are italicized.
  - In the example above, *The Sound and the Fury* is italicized because it's a book.
- **Quotation marks:** Place titles in **quotation marks** if the source is **part of a larger work**. Articles, essays, chapters of books, poems, webpages, songs, newspaper and magazine columns, episodes of tv series, and names of speeches should be placed in quotation marks.
  - In the second example above, "Mind-Blowing: Fostering Self-Regulated Learning in Information Literacy Instruction" is in quotation marks because it's the title of an article in a journal.
- **Title within a title:** Sometimes titles will include other titles. For example, a journal article about a novel, short story, play, film, etc. may mention the title of the work the article is about in the article's title. If the title mentioned is usually indicated by italics, use italics for the title within the title. Examples of these titles are films, novels, entire books, journals, and entire websites.

- **Example:** The title of an article in a journal which includes the title of a book:

"Unbearable Weight of Authenticity: Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Theory of Touristic Reading"

\*Note: In the example above, the title of the article is within quotation marks and the title of the book that the article is about is in italics.

- If the title mentioned is usually indicated by double quotation marks, enclose the title in single quotations marks. Examples of these titles are poems, short stories, book chapters, and journal articles.

- **Example:** A journal article title which includes the title of a short story:

"Individualism in O'Connor's 'A Good Man is Hard to Find'"

\*Note: In the example above, the title of the article is in double quotation marks and the title of the short story that the article is about is in single quotation marks.

Please watch these two short videos on how to use italics and quotation marks in titles:

How to use italics and underlines | Punctuation | Khan Aca...



## Using quotation marks in titles | Punctuation | Khan Acade...



The correct use of **italics and quotation marks** is super important because they are **quick and clear visual signs** for the reader that let them know the kind of source (book, article, website, etc) that they're dealing with. For example, if I write

I was reading *The Sound and the Fury* over the weekend.

you know I was reading a book because it's italicized. Whereas, if I write

I was reading "Individualism in O'Connor's 'A Good Man is Hard to Find'" over the weekend.

you know I was reading an article because the title is within quotation marks. You also know that "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is a shorter work because it's within **single quotation marks**. (It's a short story, by the way.)

These indicators are also super important in **citations**. Look at the following examples and notice how italics and quotation marks indicate whether the source is **self contained and independent** (in italics) or if it's **part of a larger work** (in quotation marks).

### Books:

Danticat, Edwidge. *Brother, I'm Dying*. Knopf, 2007.

### Chapter title in a book or anthology:

Howard, Rebecca Moore. "Avoiding Sentence Fragments." *Writing Matters: A Handbook for Writing and Research*, 2nd ed., McGraw Hill, 2014, pp. 600-10.

### Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers:

Houtman, Eveline. "Mind-Blowing: Fostering Self-Regulated Learning in Information Literacy Instruction." *Communications in Information Literacy*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 6-18. [www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=v9i1p6&path%5B%5D=203](http://www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=v9i1p6&path%5B%5D=203).

#### Web page:

Meade, Rita. "It's Not Too Late to Advocate." *Screwy Decimal*, 1 June 2016, [www.screwydecimal.com/2016/06/its-not-too-late-to-advocate.html](http://www.screwydecimal.com/2016/06/its-not-too-late-to-advocate.html).





#### Entire Website:

Meade, Rita. *Screwy Decimal*. 2010-16, [www.screwydecimal.com/](http://www.screwydecimal.com/)  (<http://www.screwydecimal.com/>).




Let's recap:

## Quotation Marks and Italics:

### Place in quotation marks

- **Book chapters**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/book-citation/>)
- **Web pages**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/website-citation/>)
- News articles
- **Journal articles**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/journal-citation/>)
- TV episodes
- Magazine articles
- Songs
- Short stories
- Poems
- **YouTube videos**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/youtube-citation/>)

### Italicize

- **Books**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/book-citation/>)
- **Websites**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/website-citation/>)
- News publications
- Journals
- TV shows
- Magazines
- Albums
- Anthologies
- **Plays**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/how-to-cite-a-play/>)
- Films


## What to capitalize:




### Part of speech

### Example




Nouns


*A Wrinkle in Time*

**Pronouns**  (<https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/pronouns/>) *The Fault in Our Stars*

Part of speech	Example
Verbs	<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i>
<a href="https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/adjectives/">Adjectives</a>  <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/adjectives/">(https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/adjectives/)</a>	<i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>
<a href="https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/adverbials/">Adverbs</a>  <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/adverbials/">(https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/adverbials/)</a>	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i>
<a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/conjunctions/">Subordinating conjunctions</a>  <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/conjunctions/">(https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/conjunctions/)</a>	<i>Black Like Me</i>

## What not to capitalize:

Part of speech	Example
<a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/articles/">Articles</a>  <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/articles/">(https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/articles/)</a> (a, an, the)	<i>On the Road</i>
<a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/prepositions/">Prepositions</a>  <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/prepositions/">(https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/prepositions/)</a> (against, as, between, of, to)	<i>Out of Africa</i>
<a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/conjunctions/">Coordinating conjunctions</a>  <a href="https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/conjunctions/">(https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/conjunctions/)</a> (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet)	<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>
"To" in infinitives	<i>Born to Run</i>

\*For a quick review of capitalization rules, visit [Capitalization Rules](https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/capitalization-rules/)  [\(https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/capitalization-rules/\)](https://www.scribbr.com/language-rules/capitalization-rules/)

\*Now that we understand the value and mechanics of titles, let's move on to **citations**. Please move on to the page.