

MLA Citation and Documentation: Drama

The humanities program at Lesley requires students to use Modern Language Association (MLA) citation format in their written work. Even an essay that does not consult secondary sources requires MLA citation and documentation of the literary work(s) under discussion. The guidelines below have been adapted from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th ed.); students should consult the handbook for issues not covered here. CITATION refers to in-text reference, in parentheses, to the literary work you have quoted or referenced. Citation format is slightly different depending on the genre of the literary work; the citation format of dramatic literature depends on whether the text is poetry or prose.

Drama written in prose is cited by author's last name (unless the author's name is already in your sentence) and by page number. Refer to the LC humanities handout for details about citation of prose quotation. The important distinction when quoting drama is that the speaker must be indicated, either in your regular text (for a short quotation) or in capital letters followed by a period (in an indented quotation).

Torvald's paternalistic attitude is apparent when he tells Nora that "the little lark's wings mustn't droop" (Ibsen 1259). He also calls her a squirrel and a mouse.

Torvald's infantilization of his wife is apparent in this exchange from the beginning of the play (he is called by his last name in the text):

HELMER. Is that my little lark twittering in there?

NORA. Yes, it is.

HELMER. Is that my squirrel rummaging around?

NORA. Yes!

HELMER. When did my squirrel get in?

NORA. Just now . . Do come in, Torvald, and see what I've bought. (1258)

He repeatedly refers to her as a cute animal rather than as a human being; he also chastises her later in the scene for spending too much money and eating too many sweets.

Drama written in poetry is cited by author's last name (unless the author's name is already in your sentence) and by line number. Refer to the LC humanities handout for details about citation of poetry quotation. As above, the important distinction when quoting drama is that the speaker must be indicated. Note as well the convention of capital Roman numbers, lower case Roman numerals, and Arabic numerals to indicate act, scene, and line number in a play that is written in poetry and includes those divisions (the most obvious example is Shakespeare).

Shakespeare presents the lovers' melodramatic declarations of passion to begin *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

HERMIA. My good Lysander!

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,

By his best arrow with the golden head,

By the simplicity of Venus' doves,

By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves . . . (I.i.169-173).

Hermia continues to list the items by which she swears for four more lines before she gets to her actual oath to meet Lysander as promised.

DOCUMENTATION refers to the list of works cited at the end of your paper (note that the Works Cited list should be on a separate page but is here on page 3 to save space and paper). In a paper with no

secondary sources, the only item(s) on the works cited list are the literary text(s) under discussion. The documentation of the Ibsen and Shakespeare plays is formatted as a "work in an anthology," since they both are in textbooks. For complete formatting information of a variety of types of documentation (web documents, stand-alone literary texts, etc.) students should consult the MLA handbook as well as the MLA Citation tab at the Sherrill Library research portal for students of language and literature:
<http://research.lesley.edu/English>

Works Cited

- Ibsen, Henrik. "A Doll House." Trans. Rolf Fjelde. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*. 8th ed. Ed. Michael Meyer. New York: Bedford/St Martin's, 2009. 1257-1305. Print.
- Modern Language Association. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. "A Midsummer Night's Dream." *The Necessary Shakespeare*. 3rd ed. Ed. David Bevington. New York: Pearson, 2009. 42-73. Print.