MLA Checklist and Shakespeare

Italicize the titles of the plays – *Macbeth* (for the play), Macbeth (for the character)

In-text citations

— You can abbreviate the title of the play in the parenthetical citation

  o Hamlet – *Ham*.
  o Macbeth – *Mac*.

— Do not use page numbers in parenthetical citation – always include (act.scene.lines)

  o Usually use Arabic numbers (1.5.4-5) or (2.1.110-13)
  o Some teachers still prefer Roman numerals (II.iv.4-6)

— Always mention the author’s name – either in the text or in the parenthetical citation.

  o If author’s name mentioned in the text, only put the page number in parentheses, otherwise (author’s last name #).
  o If there are no different sources between quotes – can use (#)

— In-text citations:

1. Direct quote (short) – Quotes longer than three lines should begin on a new line.

   • if one line, put it in quotation marks within your text:

   One Shakespearean protagonist seems resolute at first when he asserts, “Haste me to know’t, that I, with wings as swift” (*Hamlet* 1.5.35).
• If two or three lines, include the quote within your text but use the forward slash to indicate the separate verses:

One Shakespearean protagonist seems resolute at first when he asserts, “Haste me to know’t, that I, with wings as swift / As meditation ... / May sweep to my revenge” (Hamlet 1.5.35-37).

2. Direct quotes (long quotes or dialogue) – Quotations four lines or more or dialogue are formatted with as a block quote. Set the quotation off from your text. Indent one inch (2.54 cm.) for left margin. Capitalize the character’s name, followed by a period. Indent all subsequent lines an addition ¼ inch (.64 cm):

   POLONIUS. Well be with you, gentlemen!

   HAMLET. Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too! At each ear a hearer. That great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts. (Ham. 2.2.383-386)

3. Paraphrasing

Hamlet looks forward almost with glee to countermining the King’s designs in sending him away (3.4.209).

With Shakespeare, you will likely also use literary criticism which is often found in an anthology or a journal. Remember to cite the author and title of the article NOT the title of the book or journal.

Quoting a source found in another source – MLA strongly encourages you to go to the original source. If you do not, remember to cite both the original author and the source you used:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as “social service centers, and they don’t do that well” (qtd. in Weisman 259).