MLA Style
8th Edition

This handout provides a quick reference guide to the basic citation rules of MLA Style.

Information for this guide came from:

More resources:
MLA Style Center: https://style.mla.org/
OWL (Purdue Online Writing Lab): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
Pellissippi College Style Guide: http://lib.pstcc.edu/citation/mla
Sample MLA paper: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090701095636_747.pdf

Citing Sources in your paper (See pages 117-128 in the handbook)

- The goal of the in text citation is to guide the reader to the corresponding entry in the works cited list usually with the author and page number. One or both of these elements may be in parentheses. If citing an entire work, the handbook suggests that the name of the author appear in the text, rather than in a parenthetical reference.
- If an electronic source has no page numbers but does have paragraph numbers, give the relevant number along with the abbreviation “par.” or “pars.” If an electronic source has no page or paragraph numbers, cite the work in its entirety.
- In all cases, whenever you cite something in-text, you must include the full citation in the list of works cited at the end of the paper.
- There is no punctuation after the author’s name in parentheses, and any punctuation that the sentence requires goes outside the parentheses. Here are a few examples from the handbook:
  - This point has already been argued (Tannen 178-85).
  - Others, like Jakobson and Waugh (210-15), hold the opposite point of view.
  - It may be true that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance…” (Robertson 136).
  - “The debut of Julius Caesar,” according to Sohmer, “proclaimed Shakespeare’s Globe a theater of courage and ideas” (par. 44).
  - Fukuyama’s Our Posthuman Future includes many examples of this trend.
- For citing poems, use the line number instead of page number in-text: (lines 5-8), subsequently (10-11).
- If citing audio or video, include time range ex: (“Buffy” 00:03:24-45)

Works Cited Page

- All citations, regardless of format follow the same template:
  Author. Title of Source. Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.
  Elements 3-9 (the “Container” and following) may be repeated. See the last page of this handout.
- In titles, capitalize the first, last, and all principal words. Italicize the title of a book/magazine/newspaper/etc., but not the period following the title. Titles of articles or any other items contained within a larger work are enclosed in quotation marks.
- The heading (centered, no italics/bold/underline) on the separate page of sources should be Works Cited.
- Each page should be numbered, continuing the page numbers of the text.
- Each entry starts at the left margin. If there is more than one line, each subsequent line should be indented one half inch (“hanging indent” in the Paragraph menu of Microsoft Word) or 5 spaces.
- Double space the entire list, both between and within entries (this will not be done on this handout).
- The list should be alphabetized by author’s last name. If there is no author, start with the title.
Books

- **Single author**

- **Two authors** – When a source has two authors, include them in order in which they appear.

- **Three or more authors** – When a source has three or more authors, list the first author followed by a comma and *et al.* (Latin for *and others*)

- **Corporate author**

- **Book with translator, editor, or other contributors** – Other common contributors: Directed by, Adapted by, Edited by, Introduction by, Performance by, etc.

- **Work in an anthology**

- **Entire anthology or compilation** – when an editor is responsible for creating the entire work, follow their name with their role.
  *Note: use only UP when referring to university presses (e.g. Cambridge UP or U of Chicago P)*

- **Entire online book** – Include sponsor of site or database (a second container) and retrieval information if needed. Include the URL or Doi.

- **Part of an online book** – include the page number(s) after the date of publication using p. or pp.

- **Book with no author or editor** – When no author is given, omit this element and start the citation with the title.

- **Book with more than one edition**

- **Multivolume work** – if you consult one volume, include the volume number.

Periodicals

- **Journal, magazine, or newspaper article**
  


  Dates should be given as fully as they appear in your source (ex. Spring 2008).


  *If a work in a periodical is not printed in consecutive pages, include only the first page with a +.*

- **Article in a newspaper, journal, or magazine, from a subscription database** – a database is considered a 2nd container. Include the name of the database and the URL. When possible, use the doi (digital object identifier).

  


- **Article on a website** – Include the URL but leave off the http://


- **A review published in a journal** – When citing a book review, include that in the description. If there is a title of the review, include that as well.

  Armstrong, Grace. Review of *Fortune’s Faces: The Roman de la Rose and the Poetics of Contingency*, by Daniel Heller-Roazen. *Bryn Mawr Review of Comparative Literature*, vol. 6 no. 1, Winter 2007,
  

Other Sources

MLA 8th Edition recommends that you include the item’s URL but if your instructor prefers that you not use them, follow his or her directions. Omit http://.
An access date is optional, but can be an important element especially for online sources that have no date specifying when it was produced or published.

- **Web page with an author**

- **Web page with no author**

- **Website (Whole site)**

- **Web page with no date**

- **Video or audio file**


- **YouTube video**
  If use a source that was posted on a website, include the date it was posted and the person who posted it.

- **Television Episode**
  If you discuss a television show, film, or other collaborative work in a general way without focusing on an individual’s contribution, do not cite the author, director, etc. Include season and episode much like volume and issue of a periodical.
  The production company is considered the publisher.

  Accessed from an online source:

  If you are writing about a key character or contributor, include them in your citation

  Accessed from a DVD:
The Core Elements

The new MLA Handbook provides a “universal set of guidelines” for citing sources across all format types. Follow this template to construct your citation.

All MLA citations regardless of format follow this template. Identify the **core elements** (facts that are common in most works) in each source and assemble them in this order with the punctuation shown here. The last element of your citation should end in a period.

Use this template to build your citation by filling out the elements of your source and assembling it in this order.

A **container** is the element where the source is found. There may be instances where a source has two containers. For example, a chapter is contained in a book, an article is contained in a journal which could be contained in a database.