MLA Citation Style

ON THIS PAGE

• MLA Citation Style
• Citing Sources in the Text
• Works Cited list
• Other documentation styles

MLA citation style

The Modern Language Association (MLA) establishes values for acknowledging sources used in a research paper. MLA citation style uses a simple two-part parenthetical documentation system for citing sources: Citations in the text of a paper point to the alphabetical Works Cited list that appears at the end of the paper. Together, these references identify and credit the sources used in the paper and allow others to access and retrieve this material.

Note: A parenthetical reference to a familiar historical document -- i.e., the United States Constitution -- no longer requires a corresponding entry in the Works Cited list.

Citing Sources in the Text

In MLA style, writers place references to sources in the paper to briefly identify them and enable readers to find them in the Works Cited list. These parenthetical references should be kept as brief and as clear as possible.

• Give only the information needed to identify a source. Usually the author's last name and a page reference suffice.

• Place the parenthetical reference as close as possible to its source. Insert the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur, preferably at the end of a sentence.

• Information in the parenthesis should complement, not repeat, information given in the text. If you include an author's name in a sentence, you do not need to repeat it in your parenthetical statement.
- The parenthetical reference should precede the punctuation mark that concludes the sentence, clause, or phrase that contains the cited material.

- Electronic and online sources are cited just like print resources in parenthetical references. If an online source lacks page numbers, omit numbers from the parenthetical references. If an online source includes fixed page numbers or section numbering, such as numbering of paragraphs, cite the relevant numbers.

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author's name in text</th>
<th>Dover has expressed this concern (118-21).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author's name in reference</td>
<td>This concern has been expressed (Dover 118-21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple authors of a work</td>
<td>This hypothesis (Bradley and Rogers 7) suggested this theory (Sumner, Reichl, and Waugh 23).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two locations</td>
<td>Williams alludes to this premise (136-39, 145).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two works cited</td>
<td>(Burns 54; Thomas 327)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivolume works</td>
<td>(Wilson 2:1-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to volumes and pages</td>
<td>(Henderson, vol. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to an entire volume</td>
<td>In volume 3, Henderson suggests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In text reference to an entire volume</td>
<td>(United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa 51-63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate authors</td>
<td>as stated by the presidential commission (Report 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works with no author</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a work has no author, use the work's title or a shortened version of the title when citing it in text. (If abbreviating a title, omit initial articles and begin with the word by which it is alphabetized in the Works Cited list):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online source with numbered paragraphs</td>
<td>(Fox, pars. 4-5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more detailed information about citing references in the text, please refer to the MLA resources listed below.

Works Cited List

References cited in the text of a research paper must appear at the end of the paper in a Works Cited list or bibliography. This list provides the information necessary to identify and retrieve each source that specifically supports your research.

- Arrange entries in alphabetical order by authors' last names (surnames), or by title for sources without authors.
- Capitalize the first word and all other principal words of the titles and subtitles of cited works listed. (Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, or the "to" in infinitives.)
- Shorten the publisher's name; for example, omit articles, business abbreviations (Co., Inc.), and descriptive words (Press, Publisher).
- When multiple publishers are listed, include all of them, placing a semicolon between each.
- When more than one city is listed for the same publisher, use only the first city.
- Use the conjunction "and," not an ampersand [&], when listing multiple authors of a single work.
- **Pagination:** Do not use the abbreviations p. or pp. to designate page numbers.
- **Indentation:** Align the first line of the entry flush with the left margin, and indent all subsequent lines (5 to 7 spaces) to form a "hanging indent."
- **Italics:** Choose a font in which the italic style contrasts clearly with the regular style.

**Examples**

**Books:**

References to an entire book should include the following elements:

- author(s) or editor(s)
- the complete title
- edition, if indicated
- place of publication
• the shortened name of the publisher
• date of publication
• medium of publication

Basic Format

Lastname, Firstname. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of Publication.

One author:


Another work, same author:


Two authors:


Three authors:


More than three authors:


Corporate author:


Multivolume work:

No author or editor:


Editor (anthology or collection of essays):


Essay or Chapter in Edited Books or Anthologies: References to an essay or chapter in an edited book or compilation must include the following elements:

- essay or chapter author(s)
- essay or chapter title
- book title
- book editor(s) or compilers
- place of publication
- the shortened name of the publisher
- date of publication
- inclusive page numbers of the cited piece
- medium of publication

Article in a book:


Reprinted article:

https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/mla

Articles or entries from reference books:

If the article or entry is signed, place the author's name first; if it is unsigned, give the title first. For well-known reference works, it is not necessary to include full publication information. Include only the title of the reference source, edition, and date of publication.

Dictionary entry:


Encyclopedia entry:


Article from a less familiar reference book:

For articles from less familiar reference sources, include the full publication information.


Article in Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers:

References to periodical articles must include the following elements:

• author(s)

• article title

• publication title (journal, magazine, etc.)

• volume number

• publication date (abbreviate months, if used)

• the inclusive page numbers

• medium of publication

https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/mla
Issue numbers should be stated as decimals to a given volume number. In the example below, the number
25.4 reads as Volume 25, issue 4. When citing newspapers, it is important to specify the edition used (e.g. late ed.) because different editions of a newspaper may contain different material.

**Journal article, one author:**


**Journal article, two authors:**


**Magazine article:**


**Newspaper article, no author:**


**Newspaper article, one author, discontinuous pages:**


**Government Documents:**

References to government documents vary in their required elements. In general, if you do not know the writer of the document, cite the government agency that issued the document as author.

**State document:**

Federal document:


International document:


Audio Visual

Film or video recording:


Sound recording:

Counting Crows. August and Everything After. DGC, 1993. CD.

Sound recording, specific song:

Counting Crows. "Mr. Jones." August and Everything After. DGC, 1993. CD.

CD-ROM

Citations should include the medium of the electronic publication (CD-ROM), the name of the vendor that made the material available on CD-ROM, and publications dates for the version used, if relevant.

Citing Materials from Online Sources

Online Sources:
Citations for online sources, like those for print sources, should provide information that both identifies a source and allows that source to be located and retrieved again. All citations should include the medium of publication (Web) and the date the content was accessed. If the source is difficult to locate or your instructor requires a URL, list the complete address within angle brackets after the date. In many cases, it is also necessary to identify the Web site or database that has made the material available online.

Because there are currently few standards that govern the organization and presentation of online publications, the information that is available to fulfill these objectives can vary widely from resource to resource. In general, references to online works require more information than references to print sources.

See sections 5.6.1-4 in the MLA Handbook for more complete information on creating citations for online sources.

Web page:

This example includes the optional URL. All other examples below use the shorter citation format.


Personal Web site:

If a work is untitled, you may use a genre label such as Home page, Introduction, etc.


Entry in an online encyclopedia:


Article from a less familiar online reference book:

https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/mla

**Article in an online periodical:**

If pagination is unavailable or is not continuous, use n. pag. in place of the page numbers.


**Article in a full-text journal accessed from a database:**


**Online book with print information:**


For more detailed information about Works Cited references, please refer to the MLA resources listed below.

The examples of MLA style and format listed on this page include many of the most common types of sources used in academic research. For additional examples and more detailed information about MLA citation style, refer to the following resources:


This book is designed for high school and undergraduate students. You can find it at the following locations:


ILR Library Reference LB2369 .G53 2009


This book is designed for graduate students and professional writers. You can find this publication at the following locations:
Olin Library Reference PN147 .G444 2008
Uris Library Reference PN147 .G444 2008
Law Library Reserve PN147 .G444x 2008
Music Library Reference PN147 .G444 2008

"Frequently Asked Questions about the MLA Style Manual"

Other documentation styles

- Chicago Manual of Style (http://encompass.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/checkIP.cgi?access=gateway_standard%
  26url=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/contents.html)
- APA Citation Style (https://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa)