MLA Citation Guide

The following entries illustrate the citation style according to the *Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook, 7th edition* for sources in the works cited (i.e., reference) list. In MLA style, an alphabetized, double-spaced list of works used in your project—“Works Cited”—appears at the end of your paper that provides full publishing information for each of the sources you have used. Proper citation acknowledges the creators of each source and helps your readers find the original source if they would like more information.

A few general rules for MLA citations:

- Authors’ names are inverted (Last name, First name); for each additional author, use traditional name order.
- Every line after the first must be indented one inch (hit Tab key once).
- All entries must include the medium in which the source was produced, delivered, or published. Capitalize the medium. Ex: Print; Web; PDF.
- About dates: in the United States, we generally write the date Month, Day, Year (June 23, 2012). However, in citations, the day comes first: Day Month Year (23 June 2012).
- Always locate a date of publication or the date of the last update, but if there is not one, use *n.d.* which means “no date.” If there is no publisher, use *N.p.* If there are not page numbers, use *N. pag.* Please note that the “n” is capitalized in both cases.
- Titles of shorter works (e.g., articles, song, poems, short stories) are placed in quotation marks: “Title.” Titles of longer works (e.g., books, journals, albums, movies) are italicized: *Title.*

There are many citation generators available on the Internet, and the University Libraries even has a premium subscription to the bibliography service EasyBib. As useful as citation generators can be, they are not foolproof. You should use citation generators with caution and always be sure that all of the pertinent information is included in the final citation by checking against a style guide such as the print version of the *MLA Handbook, 7th Edition* (available in the Grand Reading Room of Thompson Library); *Bedford-St. Martin’s Research and Documentation Online*; or Purdue OWL.

**ELECTRONIC & MULTIMEDIA SOURCES**

In the 21st century, many reliable resources are available online as well as in print. Please note that the 7th edition of the *MLA Handbook* says to leave out the URL unless the item cannot be found without it. Always ask your instructor whether he or she would prefer for the URLs to be included. We’ve included the URL for some example citations so that you can see what it looks like when it is included.

Special note about electronic sources: technology is continually changing, but citation style guides do not change as quickly. This means it can be difficult to figure out what the approved standard is for citing new media sources. If you ever have any questions, always ask your instructor, visit the CSTW Writing Center, ask a librarian, or visit the University Libraries/CSTW Writing Center research and writing tutoring center in Thompson Library.

**General website homepage**

Use the format below for the homepage of a website.


**Page within website**

Use the format below for pages within a website. If you are using anything other than the homepage of a website, you will use this format. Sometimes there will not be an author, and sometimes there will be a staff or organizational author.

**No author**


**Staff author**


**Individual author**


**Personal/Professional site (individual)**

Use the format below for websites developed by and dedicated to individuals (both personal and professional). If you are using a page within the website, be sure to use the appropriate page name.


**Journal articles accessed through a database**

Most likely, you will access journal articles through large databases such as Academic Search Complete or the MLA International Bibliography that index hundreds (even thousands!) of journals and other periodicals. You can access databases for free from the University Libraries website. Be sure to include the database you used to locate the article. Please note: when a journal article does not have page numbers, use N. pag.

**PDFs of journal articles**

PDFs are the preferred format for electronic copies of print articles because PDFs are exact replicas of the source and include original formatting, such as page numbers and charts or other images.


**HTML-versions of journal articles**

HTML stands for HyperText Markup Language, and it is a reformattting of the original article content. HTML-versions will not have page numbers or any images that are in the original version. If you have the option, use the PDF rather than HTML version of sources.


**Electronic journal**

Electronic journals are periodicals that are digitally produced, published, and maintained. Some journals publish both a print and online version of issues; some have distinct online and print versions that feature different content; and many electronic journals are only online. For online resources, you will not have page numbers because very often the sources are websites, video projects, or other digital media projects that cannot be printed or paginated. You often can access electronic journals through Google and other non-library search engines, but they are also indexed by large databases like ATLA Religion Database and others.


**Government publication**

Nearly all government publications are available online as websites or as downloadable PDFs. If a government publication is only available in hard copy, include all of the pertinent information included below, but instead of *PDF*, you will use *Print*.


**Books accessed electronically**

Many books are available online as ebooks (electronic books) through services such as GoogleBooks and through the OSU library system. If you read a book on a Kindle, Nook, other e-reader, or on a library or home computer, then you are accessing the electronic version and should use the format below.


**Publications accessed online (corporate or organizational author)**

Please note that for any source with a corporate or organizational author, you will use the same format, with the corporation or organization name taking the place of the author.


**Reviews**

Reviews can focus on books, movies, music, software, and more. Many academic journals have a section dedicated to reviews. Below is the format for a review found in an online journal.

Published interviews
"James Cameron on Chinese Filmmakers, Censorship and Potential Co-Productions."
Web. 26 July 2012.

Encyclopedia article (no author & author)
Encyclopedia articles often do not have specific authors listed, but many will have the primary authors listed at the very beginning or end of the entry. Be aware that encyclopedias are for finding general information rather than specialized details. Use the format below to cite any encyclopedia article and to cite something from Wikipedia—but be aware that most instructors will not accept Wikipedia as a valid resource for academic research projects.


Dissertations and theses
Dissertations can be a great research resource. Often, they are not published anywhere other than through dissertation and theses databases.


Blogs
Blogs are no longer just people’s personal diaries online: many blogs are considered to be authoritative and useful resources. Below is how to cite blogs, or what MLA calls “Web log posts.”


Tweets
Tweets–postings from Twitter–are cited in their entirety in the Works Cited. Use the author’s “real” name (if you can locate it) and handle (username). Accounts that are managed by a group of people, such as those for corporations or organizations, will not have a single author. Simply use the handle for the author name.

Athar, Sohaib (ReallyVirtual). "Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1AM (is a rare event)." 1 May 2011, 3:58 p.m. Tweet.


YouTube
A YouTube video is cited like a video blog post. A YouTube video citation requires the information you would
gather for a video or film citation (creator, director, performers, title, date created—even if the creator is SuperCoolGuy32) as well as the information you would gather for a website and database (database/site name, URL, date accessed).


Photographs and images
Although you may access a photo or image through Google Images, this is not where the photo is actually hosted. You must visit the actual website where the photograph is hosted in order to properly cite it. Many times, there will not be a title, date, or photographer, but try to gather as much information as possible. It is likely that any images or photographs you cite will be digital images; that is, you will be accessing the images online rather than film hard copies.


Film (in theater)


Film (DVD, Blu Ray)
The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) is a great resource for locating information about movies and even television shows. Use the format below to cite movies that you view on DVD, videotape, Blu Ray, or streaming.


Television Program (single episode)
Try to find out as much information as possible about the episode: who wrote, directed, and produced it? When and where did you view it? Use this citation format when you are citing episodes watched during the original airing or online. For television episodes viewed on DVDs, use the DVD format plus the title of the episode.


**Recording (whole album)**


**Recording (single song)**


**Live Performance**
Use the format below to cite a live performance such as a play, musical event, dance recital, etc.

*Dance Uptown: DIRT*. The Ohio State University, Plumb Hall Agricultural Arena, Columbus.


**Personal interview and personal communications**
Jones, Ginger. Personal interview. 11 June 2011.

Selfe, Cynthia. Personal communication. 12 July 2012

**BOOKS & PERIODICALS IN PRINT**
Although you are likely to access many of your resources online, not all valid and useful resources are available online. Books are often the easiest citations to complete because the format has not changed much over the years. Below are a variety of book and periodical types that you may have to cite.

**Books**

**Single author**

**Two or three authors**

**Four or more authors**

**Unknown author**

**Book: Edited collection**

Book: Author with an editor (edited book)
Sometimes, books will have both an author and an editor. Use the format below for an edited book by a single author. Use the same format for translated books, but replace “Ed. First LastName” with “Trans. First LastName.”


Book: Author with an editor (chapter in anthology or collection)


Book: Two or more works by the same author


Book: Introduction, Forward, or Preface


Periodical: Article in a journal (volume.issue)
If no issue number is available, only include volume. Volume and issue information can usually be found in a few different places: at the top or bottom of the first page of an article; on one of the first pages of the journal issue; on the spine of the journal. Volume and issue are important for locating journals, especially for journals that have been in publication for many years and for journals that publish more than one issue per year.


Periodical: Article in magazine
*Monthly magazine*

*Weekly magazine*

*No author*

Periodical: Article in a newspaper

Periodical: Review

Periodical: Editorial from newspaper


Periodical: Letter To The Editor

Periodical: Published interview

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

There are two main aspects to citations: the Works Cited or list of references, and the in-text citations. In-text citations are exactly what they sound like: citations of information that are provided in the body of the paper or project. In-text citations are also called parenthetical citations because the information is placed in parenthesis.

The information included in in-text citations depends upon the source medium (e.g., Print, DVD, Web) and the source’s entry in the Work Cited. Whatever signal words you use to identify the source in the body of the project must be the first thing that appears on the left side of the Work Cited page. Typically, MLA citations include the author’s last name and the page number where the cited information can be found.

In-text citations are used any time you directly quote from a source as well as when you paraphrase from a source. Below are the basic formats for in-text citations. Please note: there is no punctuation or abbreviations for page numbers in MLA style citations; periods are placed after the parentheses.

A Note About Print versus Online:
• Unless it is a PDF, online sources generally do not have page numbers, so they cannot be included in in-text citations. Do not provide the page numbers or paragraph numbers that result when you print a source. Instead, use the author’s last name, if available, or if there is no author, use a shortened version of the source title.

Single author (print)
For a single author, simply use the author’s last name and the page number where the cited information can be found. If the author’s name is mentioned in the body of the paragraph, you may include only the page number in the parentheses.

Example
In the citations below, (12) and (Williams 12) tell the audience that the information included in that particular sentence can be found on page 12 of text by Williams listed in the Works Cited.

Williams emphasizes the importance of naming when she says, “once you can name something, you’re conscious of it. You have power over it” (12).

Naming is important because “once you can name something, you’re conscious of it. You have power over it” (Williams 12).

Williams argues that when we name something, we can take control over it (12).
Works Cited entry

**Unknown author (print and online)**
Sometimes, valid sources will not have any author listed. In this case, use a shortened title of the source instead of the author’s last name.

**Examples**
*Insomnia can be a frustrating and although many people assume that insomnia stems from current behaviors and contexts, “sleep habits we learn as children may affect our sleep behavior as adults” (“Insomnia”).*

*Insomnia can be frustrating, and surprisingly, it can have roots in the sleep habits we developed as children (“Insomnia”).*

If the above examples were from a printed source with page numbers, you would include the page number as well: (“Insomnia” 32).

Works Cited entry

**Work by two or three authors**
Include all of the authors’ names in the in-text citation.

**Examples**
*Writing for the digital age means more than being able to write well: “One important skill of good internet writing is the ability to deliver the similar or related content in a variety of different formats. For example, an online news story might use text and graphic content, but also include links to related stories and resources, or even include video or other active content” (Baeher and Schaller 11).*

*Baeher and Schaller argue that writing for the digital age means more than being able to write well: “One important skill of good internet writing is the ability to deliver the similar or related content in a variety of different formats. For example, an online news story might use text and graphic content, but also include links to related stories and resources, or even include video or other active content” (11).*

Works Cited entry

**Work by more than three authors**
In-text citations for sources with more than three authors use the abbreviation *et al.*, which is Latin for “and others.” This lets the audience know that there are several authors for the source. Please note, though, that using *et al.* is a preference and not a requirement. You may list all the authors’ names as they appear on the title page of the source. The example below uses *et al.*

**Examples**
*In their history of the computer in the writing classroom, Hawisher et al. claim, “Multimedia computing has emerged so rapidly, and is now so widespread, that it is easy to forget how recent a development it has been in personal computing” (183).*

*The computer in the classroom is ubiquitous, but “Multimedia computing has emerged so rapidly, and is now so widespread, that it is easy to forget how recent a development it has been in personal computing” (Hawisher, et al. 183).*
Works Cited entry

**Online sources**
For online sources without page numbers, you can eliminate the in-text citation as long as you follow the guidelines below:

- In the text, include the item that appears first in the Works Cited list (e.g., author name, article title, website name, movie name).
- Do not include URLs in the text of your project; only provide partial URLs when the site name includes a domain name, such as OSU.edu or NationalGeographic.com. Do not write out http://www.osu.edu or http://www.nationalgeographic.com.

Examples

On her webpage “Autistry,” Melanie Yergeau argues that “Neurodiversity is analogous to a social model of disability, the idea that exclusionary social systems and structures are far more disabling than individual impairments.”

Because the above example clearly states where the quotation appears originally and there are no page numbers for webpages, there is no need for an in-text citation.

Works Cited entry

**Dealing with long quotations**
Sometimes, you may want to quote a source at length. When quoting four or more lines of prose, you will create something called a block quote. For block quotes, you indent the entire quotation on-inch from the left margin (hitting Tab twice should do the trick). Please note that block quotes should maintain the double-spacing that is required for the entire MLA research project. (The example below is not double-spaced in order to save space). Please note that with block quotes, the punctuation is placed before the in-text citation.

Examples

*Emotions are often positioned as negative; one never wants to be the “emotional” one because being emotional is somehow an insult. However, John Dirkx argues that emotions are central to understanding who we are and our place in the world. He says,*

> Emotions always refer to the self, providing us with a means for developing self-knowledge. They are an integral part of how we interpret and make sense of the day-to-day events in our lives. As we look at and come to understand our sense-making practices in daily life and the ways emotions constitute that practice, we reveal ourselves more fully to ourselves and to others. (Dirkx 64-5)

Works Cited Entry