MLA 2009 Formatting and Style Guide

Summary: MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities. This resource, updated to reflect the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th ed.) and the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (3rd ed.), offers examples for the general format of MLA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the Works Cited page. Please use the example at the bottom of this page to cite the Purdue OWL in MLA. If you are using the older version of MLA (6th ed.) as a citation style, please reference these pages.

1. MLA 2009 Formatting and Style Guide

General Format

MLA style specifies guidelines for formatting manuscripts and using the English language in writing. MLA style also provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical citation in their essays and Works Cited pages.

Writers who properly use MLA also build their credibility by demonstrating accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the purposeful or accidental uncredited use of source material by other writers.

If you are asked to use MLA format, be sure to consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition). Publishing scholars and graduate students should also consult the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (3rd edition). The MLA Handbook is available in most writing centers and reference libraries; it is also widely available in bookstores, libraries, and at the MLA web site. See the
Additional Resources section of this handout for a list of helpful books and sites about using MLA style. For an overview of the 2009 guideline changes, please visit the OWL's [MLA Update 2009](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/printable/747/) resource.

**Paper Format**

The preparation of papers and manuscripts in MLA style is covered in chapter four of the MLA Handbook, and chapter four of the *MLA Style Manual*. Below are some basic guidelines for formatting a paper in *MLA style*.

**General Guidelines**

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font (e.g. Times New Roman). Whatever font you choose, MLA recommends that the regular and italics type styles contrast enough that they are recognizable one from another. The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise instructed by your instructor).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin. MLA recommends that you use the Tab key as opposed to pushing the Space Bar five times.
- Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines.)
- Use italics throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis.
- If you have any endnotes, include them on a separate page before your Works Cited page. Entitle the section Notes (centered, unformatted).

**Formatting the First Page of Your Paper**

Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.

- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
• Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text: Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas as Morality Play; Human Weariness in "After Apple Picking"
• Double space between the title and the first line of the text.
• Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor or other readers may ask that you omit last name/page number header on your first page. Always follow instructor guidelines.)

Here is a sample of the top half of a first page in MLA style:

Smith 1

Pete Smith
Dr. B. Boilermaker
English 106
12 October 2008

Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand
Ross-Ade Stadium

During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten Conference Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years, and played every game in front of a sold-out crowd. Looking ahead . . .
Section Headings

Writers sometimes use Section Headings to improve a document’s readability. These sections may include individual chapters or other named parts of a book or essay.

Essays

MLA recommends that when you divide an essay into sections that you number those sections with an arabic number and a period followed by a space and the section name.

1. Early Writings

2. The London Years

3. Traveling the Continent

4. Final Years

Books

MLA does not have a prescribed system of headings for books. If you are only using one level of headings, meaning that all of the sections are distinct and parallel and have no additional sections that fit within them, MLA recommends that these sections resemble one another grammatically. For instance, if your headings are typically short phrases, make all of the headings short phrases (and not, for example, full sentences). Otherwise, the formatting is up to you. It should, however, be consistent throughout the document.

If you employ multiple levels of headings (some of your sections have sections within sections), you may want to provide a key of your chosen level headings and their formatting to your instructor or editor.

Sample Section Headings

The following sample headings are meant to be used only as a reference. You may employ whatever system of formatting that works best for you so long as it remains consistent throughout the document.

Numbered:

1. Soil Conservation

1.1 Erosion
1.2 Terracing

2. Water Conservation

3. Energy Conservation

Formatted, unnumbered:

**Level 1 Heading:** bold, flush left

*Level 2 Heading:* italics, flush left

**Level 3 Heading:** centered, bold

*Level 4 Heading:* centered, italics

**Level 5 Heading:** underlined, flush left

**How to Cite the Purdue OWL in MLA:**

**Entire Website**


**Individual Resources**


2. **MLA 2009 In-Text Citations: The Basics**

Guidelines for referring to the works of others in your text using MLA style is covered in chapter six of the *MLA Handbook* and in chapter seven of the *MLA Style Manual*. Both books provide extensive examples, so it's a good idea to consult them if you want to become even more familiar with MLA guidelines or if you have a particular reference question.

**Basic In-Text Citation Rules**

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as parenthetical citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.
General Guidelines

- The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends (1.) upon the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and (2.) upon the source’s entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.
- Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text, must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.

In-Text Citations: Author-Page Style

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence. For example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263). Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263). Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

The both citations in the examples above, (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tell readers that the information in the sentence can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the Works Cited page, where, under the name of Wordsworth, they would find the following information:


In-text Citations for Print Sources with Known Author

For Print sources like books, magazines, scholarly journal articles, and newspapers, provide a signal word or phrase (usually the author’s last name) and a page number. If you provide the signal word/phrase in the sentence, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical citation.
Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3). Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

These examples must correspond to an entry that begins with Burke, which will be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of an entry in the Works Cited:


**In-text Citations for Print Sources with No Known Author**

When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work (e.g. articles) or italicize it if it's a longer work (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire websites) and provide a page number.

> We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has “more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . .” (“Impact of Global Warming” 6).

In this example, since the reader does not know the author of the article, an abbreviated title of the article appears in the parenthetical citation which corresponds to the full name of the article which appears first at the left-hand margin of its respective entry in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes the title in quotation marks as the signal phrase in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader directly to the source on the Works Cited page. The Works Cited entry appears as follows:


We'll learn how to make a Works Cited page in a bit, but right now it's important to know that parenthetical citations and Works Cited pages allow readers to know which sources you consulted in writing your essay, so that they can either verify your interpretation of the sources or use them in their own scholarly work.
Author-Page Citation for Classic and Literary Works with Multiple Editions

Page numbers are always required, but additional citation information can help literary scholars, who may have a different edition of a classic work like Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto*. In such cases, give the page number of your edition (making sure the edition is listed in your Works Cited page, of course) followed by a semicolon, and then the appropriate abbreviations for volume (vol.), book (bk.), part (pt.), chapter (ch.), section (sec.), or paragraph (par.). For example:

Marx and Engels described human history as marked by class struggles (79; ch. 1).

Citing Authors with Same Last Names

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even the authors' full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. For example:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

Citing a Work by Multiple Authors

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

For a source with more than three authors, use the work's bibliographic information as a guide for your citation. Provide the first author's last name followed by et al. or list all the last names.
Jones et al. counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (4).

Or

Legal experts counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (Jones et al. 4).

Or

Jones, Driscoll, Ackerson, and Bell counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (4).

Citing Multiple Works by the Same Author

If you cite more than one work by a particular author, include a shortened title for the particular work from which you are quoting to distinguish it from the others.

Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children ("Too Soon" 38), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child's second and third year ("Hand-Eye Development" 17).

Additionally, if the author's name is not mentioned in the sentence, you would format your citation with the author's name followed by a comma, followed by a shortened title of the work, followed, when appropriate, by page numbers:

Visual studies, because it is such a new discipline, may be "too easy" (Elkins, "Visual Studies" 63).

Citing Multivolume Works

If you cite from different volumes of a multivolume work, always include the volume number followed by a colon. Put a space after the colon, then provide the page number(s). (If you only cite from one volume, provide only the page number in parentheses.)
Citing the Bible

In your first parenthetical citation, you want to make clear which Bible you're using (and underline or italicize the title), as each version varies in its translation, followed by book (do not italicize or underline), chapter and verse. For example:

Ezekiel saw "what seemed to be four living creatures," each with faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (New Jerusalem Bible, Ezek. 1:5-10).

If future references employ the same edition of the Bible you’re using, list only the book, chapter, and verse in the parenthetical citation.

Citing Indirect Sources

Sometimes you may have to use an indirect source. An indirect source is a source cited in another source. For such indirect quotations, use "qtd. in" to indicate the source you actually consulted. For example:

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

Note that, in most cases, a responsible researcher will attempt to find the original source, rather than citing an indirect source.

Citing Non-Print or Sources from the Internet

With more and more scholarly work being posted on the Internet, you may have to cite research you have completed in virtual environments. While many sources on the Internet should not be used for scholarly work (reference the OWL's Evaluating Sources of Information resource), some Web sources are perfectly acceptable for research. When creating in-text citations for electronic, film, or Internet sources, remember that your citation must reference the source in your Works Cited.

Sometimes writers are confused with how to craft parenthetical citations for electronic sources because of the absence of page numbers, but often, these sorts of entries do not require any sort of parenthetical citation at all. For electronic and Internet sources, follow the following guidelines:
• Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry that corresponds to the citation (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).
• You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser’s print preview function.
• Unless you must list the website name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, do not include URLs in-text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like CNN.com or Forbes.com as opposed to writing out http://www.cnn.com or http://www.forbes.com.

Miscellaneous Non-Print Sources

Werner Herzog’s Fitzcarraldo stars Herzog’s long-time film partner, Klaus Kinski. During the shooting of Fitzcarraldo, Herzog and Kinski were often at odds, but their explosive relationship fostered a memorable and influential film.

During the presentation, Jane Yates stated that invention and pre-writing are areas of rhetoric that need more attention.

In the two examples above “Herzog” from the first entry and “Yates” from the second lead the reader to the first item each citation’s respective entry on the Works Cited page:


Electronic Sources

One online film critic stated that Fitzcarraldo is "...a beautiful and terrifying critique of obsession and colonialism" (Garcia, “Herzog: a Life”).
In the first example, the writer has chosen not to include the author name in-text; however, two entries from the same author appear in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes both the author’s last name and the article title in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader to the appropriate entry on the Works Cited page (see below). In the second example, “Stolley et al.” in the parenthetical citation gives the reader an author name followed by the abbreviation “et al.,” meaning, “and others,” for the article “MLA Formatting and Style Guide.” Both corresponding Works Cited entries are as follows:


Multiple Citations

To cite multiple sources in the same parenthetical reference, separate the citations by a semi-colon:

... as has been discussed elsewhere (Burke 3; Dewey 21).

When a Citation Is Not Needed

Common sense and ethics should determine your need for documenting sources. You do not need to give sources for familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge. Remember, this is a rhetorical choice, based on audience. If you're writing for an expert audience of a scholarly journal, for example, they'll have different expectations of what constitutes common knowledge.

3. MLA 2009 Formatting Quotations

When you directly quote the works of others in your paper, you will format quotations differently depending on their length. Below are some basic guidelines for incorporating quotations into your paper. Please note that all pages in MLA should be double-spaced.
Short Quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference on the Works Cited page. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text. For example:

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

Mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash, /, at the end of each line of verse: (a space should precede and follow the slash)

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

For quotations that are four or more lines of verse or prose: place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented one inch from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by a half inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.) For example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of
the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

When citing long sections of poetry, keep formatting as close to the original as possible:

In her poem "Sources," Adrienne Rich explores the roles of women in shaping their world:

The faithful drudging child the child at the oak desk whose penmanship, hard work, style will win her prizes becomes the woman with a mission, not to win prizes but to change the laws of history. (23)

Adding or Omitting Words In Quotations

If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or words by using ellipsis marks, which are three periods ( . . . ) preceded and followed by a space. For example:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale . . . and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

Please note that brackets are not needed around ellipses unless adding brackets would clarify your use of ellipses.
When omitting words from poetry quotations, use a standard three-period ellipses; however, when omitting one or more full lines of poetry, space several periods to about the length of a complete line in the poem:

These beauteous forms, Through a long absence, have not been to me As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

.................

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; And passing even into my purer mind, With tranquil restoration. . . (22-24, 28-30)

4. MLA 2009 Footnotes and Endnotes

Because long explanatory notes can be distracting to readers, most academic style guidelines (including MLA and APA) recommend limited use of footnotes/endnotes; however, certain publishers encourage or require note references in lieu of parenthetical references.

MLA discourages extensive use of explanatory or digressive notes. MLA style does, however, allow you to use endnotes or footnotes for bibliographic notes, which refer to other publications your readers may consult:

1. See Blackmur, especially chapters three and four, for an insightful analysis of this trend.

2. On the problems related to repressed memory recovery, see Wollens 120-35; for a contrasting view, see Pyle 43; Johnson, Hull, Snyder 21-35; Krieg 78-91.

3. Several other studies point to this same conclusion. See Johnson and Hull 45-79, Kather 23-31, Krieg 50-57.

Or, you can also use footnotes/endnotes for occasional explanatory notes (also known as content notes), which refers to brief additional information that might be too digressive for the main text:

4. In a 1998 interview, she reiterated this point even more strongly: "I am an artist, not a politician!" (Weller 124).
Numbering Endnotes and Footnotes in the Document Body

Endnotes and footnotes in MLA format are indicated in-text by superscript Arabic numbers after the punctuation of the phrase or clause to which the note refers:

Some have argued that such an investigation would be fruitless.\(^6\)

Scholars have argued for years that this claim has no basis,\(^7\) so we would do well to ignore it.

Note that when a long dash appears in the text, the footnote/endnote number appears before the dash:

For years, scholars have failed to address this point\(^8\)—a fact that suggests their cowardice more than their carelessness.

Do not use asterisks (*), angle brackets (>). or other symbols for note references. The list of endnotes and footnotes (either of which, for papers submitted for publication, should be listed on a separate page, as indicated below) should correspond to the note references in the text.

Formatting Endnotes and Footnotes

Endnotes Page

MLA recommends that all notes be listed on a separate page entitled Notes (centered, no formatting). (Use Note if there is only one note.) The Notes page should appear before the Works Cited page. This is especially important for papers being submitted for publication.

The notes themselves should be listed by consecutive arabic numbers that correspond to the notation in the text. Notes are double-spaced with a hanging indent. (Each endnote is indented five spaces; subsequent lines are flush with the left margin.) Place a period and a space after each endnote number. Provide the appropriate note after the space.

Footnotes (below the text body)

In the case that you need to format footnotes on the same page as the main text, begin footnotes four lines (two double-spaced lines) below the main text. Footnotes are single-space with a hanging indent. (Each footnote is indented five spaces; subsequent
lines are flush with the left margin.) Place a period and a space after each footnote number. Provide the appropriate note after the space.


5. MLA 2009 Works Cited Page: Basic Format

According to MLA style, you must have a Works Cited page at the end of your research paper. All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text.

Basic Rules

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper. It should have the same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
- Label the page Works Cited (do not italicize the words Works Cited or put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations five spaces so that you create a hanging indent.
- List page numbers of sources efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50.

Additional Basic Rules New to MLA 2009

- For every entry, you must determine the Medium of Publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities may include Film, CD-ROM, or DVD.
- Writers are no longer required to provide URLs for Web entries. However, if your instructor or publisher insists on them, include them in angle brackets after the entry and end with a period. For long URLs, break lines only at slashes.
- If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics. You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.
Capitalization and Punctuation

- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc., but do not capitalize articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Art of War*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.

- **New to MLA 2009**: Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles)

Listing Author Names

Entries are listed by author name (or, for entire edited collections, editor names). Author names are written last name first; middle names or middle initials follow the first name:

Burke, Kenneth

Levy, David M.

Wallace, David Foster

*Do not* list titles (Dr., Sir, Saint, etc.) or degrees (PhD, MA, DDS, etc.) with names. A book listing an author named "John Bigbrain, PhD" appears simply as "Bigbrain, John"; do, however, include suffixes like "Jr." or "II." Putting it all together, a work by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be cited as "King, Martin Luther, Jr.," with the suffix following the first or middle name and a comma.

More than One Work by an Author

If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order the entries alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first:

Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. [...]

---. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. [...]

When an author or collection editor appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first:

Work with No Known Author

Alphabetize works with no known author by their title; use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citations in your paper. In this case, Boring Postcards USA has no known author:

Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulations. [...] Boring Postcards USA. [...] Burke, Kenneth. A Rhetoric of Motives. [...]  


When you are gathering book sources, be sure to make note of the following bibliographic items: author name(s), book title, publication date, publisher, place of publication. The medium of publication for all “hard copy” books is Print.

For more information, consult “Citing Nonperiodical Print Publications” in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th edition (sec. 5.5, 148-81), or the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing, 3rd edition (sec. 6.6, 185-211).

Basic Format

The first-give author’s name or a book with a single author's name appears in last name, first name format. The basic form for a book citation is:

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

Book with One Author


Book with More Than One Author

The first given name appears in last name, first name format; subsequent author names appear in first name last name format.


If there are more than three authors, you may choose to list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (Latin for "and others") in place of the subsequent authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page. (Note that there is a period after “al” in “et al.” Also note that there is never a period after the “et” in “et al.”).


or


Two or More Books by the Same Author

List works alphabetically by title. (Remember to ignore articles like A, An, and The.) Provide the author’s name in last name, first name format for the first entry only. For each subsequent entry by the same author, use three hyphens and a period.


Book by a Corporate Author or Organization

A corporate author may include a commission, a committee, or a group that does not identify individual members on the title page. List the names of corporate authors in the place where an author’s name typically appears at the beginning of the entry.

Book with No Author

List by title of the book. Incorporate these entries alphabetically just as you would with works that include an author name. For example, the following entry might appear between entries of works written by Dean, Shaun and Forsythe, Jonathan.


Remember that for an in-text (parenthetical) citation of a book with no author, provide the name of the work in the signal phrase and the page number in parentheses. You may also use a shortened version of the title of the book accompanied by the page number. For more information see In-text Citations for Print Sources with No Known Author section of In-text Citations: The Basics, which you can link to at the bottom of this page.

A Translated Book

Cite as you would any other book. Add "Trans."—the abbreviation for translated by—and follow with the name(s) of the translator(s).


Republished Book

Books may be republished due to popularity without becoming a new edition. New editions are typically revisions of the original work. For books that originally appeared at an earlier date and that have been republished at a later one, insert the original publication date before the publication information. For books that are new editions (i.e. different from the first or other editions of the book), see An Edition of a Book below.


An Edition of a Book

There are two types of editions in book publishing: a book that has been published more than once in different editions and a book that is prepared by someone other than the author (typically an editor).

A Subsequent Edition

Cite the book as you normally would, but add the number of the edition after the title.


A Work Prepared by an Editor

Cite the book as you normally would, but add the editor after the title.


Anthology or Collection (e.g. Collection of Essays)

To cite the entire anthology or collection, list by editor(s) followed by a comma and "ed." or, for multiple editors, "eds" (for edited by). This sort of entry is somewhat rare. If you are citing a particular piece within an anthology or collection (more common), see A Work in an Anthology, Reference, or Collection below.


A Work in an Anthology, Reference, or Collection

Works may include an essay in an edited collection or anthology, or a chapter of a book. The basic form for this sort of citation is as follows:


Some examples:


Note on Cross-referencing Several Items from One Anthology: If you cite more than one essay from the same edited collection, MLA indicates you may cross-reference within your works cited list in order to avoid writing out the publishing information for each separate essay. You should consider this option if you have several references from a single text. To do so, include a separate entry for the entire collection listed by the editor's name as below:


Then, for each individual essay from the collection, list the author's name in last name, first name format, the title of the essay, the editor's last name, and the page range:


Peeples, Tim. "'Seeing' the WPA With/Through Postmodern Mapping." Rose and Weiser 153-167.

Poem or Short Story Examples:


If the specific literary work is part of the an author's own collection (all of the works have the same author), then there will be no editor to reference:


**Article in a Reference Book (e.g. Encyclopedias, Dictionaries)**

For entries in encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other reference works, cite the piece as you would any other work in a collection but do not include the publisher information. Also, if the reference book is organized alphabetically, as most are, do not list the volume or the page number of the article or item.


**A Multivolume Work**

When citing only one volume of a multivolume work, include the volume number after the work's title, or after the work's editor or translator.


When citing more than one volume of a multivolume work, cite the total number of volumes in the work. Also, be sure in your in-text citation to provide both the volume number and page number(s). (See Citing Multivolume Works on the In-Text Citations – The Basics page, which you can access by following the appropriate link at the bottom of this page.)


If the volume you are using has its own title, cite the book without referring to the other volumes as if it were an independent publication.

An Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterword

When citing an introduction, a preface, a forward, or an afterword, write the name of the author(s) of the piece you are citing. Then give the name of the part being cited, which should not be italicized or enclosed in quotation marks.


*If the writer of the piece is different from the author of the complete work,* then write the full name of the principal work's author after the word "By." For example, if you were to cite Hugh Dalziel Duncan's introduction of Kenneth Burke's book *Permanence and Change,* you would write the entry as follows:


Other Print/Book Sources

Certain book sources are handled in a special way by MLA style.

The Bible

Give the name of the specific edition you are using, any editor(s) associated with it, followed by the publication information. Remember that your in-text (parenthetical citation) should include the name of the specific edition of the Bible, followed by an abbreviation of the book, the chapter and verse(s). (See Citing the Bible on the In-Text Citations – The Basics page, which you can access by following the appropriate link at the bottom of this page.)


A Government Publication

Cite the author of the publication if the author is identified. Otherwise, start with the name of the national government, followed by the agency (including any subdivisions or agencies) that serves as the organizational author. For congressional documents, be sure to include the number of the Congress and the session when the hearing was held or resolution passed. US government documents are typically published by the Government Printing Office, which MLA abbreviates as GPO.
A Pamphlet

Cite the title and publication information for the pamphlet just as you would a book without an author. Pamphlets and promotional materials commonly feature corporate authors (commissions, committees, or other groups that does not provide individual group member names). If the pamphlet you are citing has no author, cite as directed below. If your pamphlet has an author or a corporate author, put the name of the author (last name, first name format) or corporate author in the place where the author name typically appears at the beginning of the entry. (See also Books by a Corporate Author or Organization above.)


Dissertations and Master's Theses

Dissertations and master's theses may be used as sources whether published or not. Cite the work as you would a book, but include the designation Diss. (or MA/MS thesis) followed by the degree-granting school and the year the degree was awarded.

If the dissertation is published, italicize the title and include the publication date. You may also include the University Microfilms International (UMI) order number if you choose:


If the work is not published, put the title in quotation marks and end with the date the degree was awarded:


7. MLA 2009 Works Cited: Periodicals

Periodicals (e.g. magazines, newspapers, and scholarly journals) that appear in print require the same medium of publication designator—Print—as books, but the MLA Style method for citing these materials and the items required for these entries are quite different from MLA book citations.


**Article in a Magazine**

Cite by listing the article's author, putting the title of the article in quotations marks, and italicizing the periodical title. Follow with the date of publication. Remember to abbreviate the month. The basic format is as follows:

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Periodical Day Month Year: pages. Medium of publication.


**Article in a Newspaper**

Cite a newspaper article as you would a magazine article, but note the different pagination in a newspaper. If there is more than one edition available for that date (as
in an early and late edition of a newspaper), identify the edition following the date (e.g., 17 May 1987, late ed.).


If the newspaper is a less well-known or local publication, include the city name and state in brackets after the title of the newspaper.


A Review

To cite a review, include the title of the review (if available), then the abbreviation "Rev. of" for Review of and provide the title of the work (in italics for books, plays, and films; in quotation marks for articles, poems, and short stories). Finally, provide performance and/or publication information.

Review Author. "Title of Review (if there is one)." Rev. of Performance Title, by Author/Director/Artist. Title of Periodical day month year: page. Medium of publication.


An Editorial & Letter to the Editor

Cite as you would any article in a periodical, but include the designators "Editorial" or "Letter" to identify the type of work it is.


**Anonymous Articles**

Cite the article title first, and finish the citation as you would any other for that kind of periodical.


**An Article in a Scholarly Journal**

In previous years, MLA required that researchers determine whether or not a scholarly journal employed continuous pagination (page numbers began at page one in the first issue of the years and page numbers took up where they left off in subsequent ones) or non-continuous pagination (page numbers begin at page one in every subsequent issue) in order to determine whether or not to include issue numbers in bibliographic entries. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 7th edition (2009) eliminates this step. Always provide issue numbers, when available.


8. MLA 2009 Works Cited: Electronic Sources (Web Publications)

MLA lists electronic sources as Web Publications. Thus, when including the medium of publication for electronic sources, list the medium as Web.

It is always a good idea to maintain personal copies of electronic information, when possible. It is good practice to print or save Web pages or, better, using a program like Adobe Acrobat, to keep your own copies for future reference. Most Web browsers will include URL/electronic address information when you print, which makes later reference easy. Also, you might use the Bookmark function in your Web browser in order to return to documents more easily.

Important Note on the Use of URLs in MLA

MLA no longer requires the use of URLs in MLA citations. Because Web addresses are not static (i.e. they change often) and because documents sometimes appear in multiple places on the Web (e.g. on multiple databases), MLA explains that most readers can find electronic sources via title or author searches in Internet Search Engines.

For instructors or editors that still wish to require the use of URLs, MLA suggests that the URL appear in angle brackets after the date of access. Break URLs only after slashes.


Abbreviations Commonly Used with Electronic Sources

If publishing information is unavailable for entries that require publication information such as publisher (or sponsor) names and publishing dates, MLA requires the use of special abbreviations to indicate that this information is not available. Use n.p. to indicate that neither a publisher nor a sponsor name has been provided. Use n.d. when the Web page does not provide a publication date.

When an entry requires that you provide a page but no pages are provided in the source (as in the case of an online-only scholarly journal or a work that appears in an online-only anthology), use the abbreviation n. pag.
**Basic Style for Citations of Electronic Sources (Including Online Databases)**

Here are some common features you should try and find before citing electronic sources in MLA style. Not every Web page will provide all of the following information. However, collect as much of the following information as possible both for your citations and for your research notes:

- Author and/or editor names (if available)
- Article name in quotation marks (if applicable)
- Title of the Website, project, or book in italics. (Remember that some Print publications have Web publications with slightly different names. They may, for example, include the additional information or otherwise modified information, like domain names [e.g. .com or .net].)
- Any version numbers available, including revisions, posting dates, volumes, or issue numbers.
- Publisher information, including the publisher name and publishing date.
- Take note of any page numbers (if available).
- Date you accessed the material.
- URL (if required, or for your own personal reference).

**Citing an Entire Web Site**

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site.

Remember to use *n.p.* if no publisher name is available and *n.d.* if not publishing date is given.

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher). Medium of publication. Date of access.


**Course or Department Websites**
Give the instructor name. Then list the title of the course (or the school catalog designation for the course) in italics. Give appropriate department and school names as well, following the course title. Remember to use n.d. if not publishing date is given.


A Page on a Web Site

For an individual page on a Web site, list the author or alias if known, followed by the information covered above for entire Web sites. Remember to use n.p. if no publisher name is available and n.d. if not publishing date is given.


An Image (Including a Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph)

Provide the artist's name, the work of art italicized, the date of creation, the institution and city where the work is housed. Follow this initial entry with the name of the Website in italics, the medium of publication, and the date of access.


An Article in a Web Magazine

Provide the author name, article name in quotation marks, title of the Web magazine in italics, publisher name, publication date, medium of publication, and the date of access. Remember to use n.p. if no publisher name is available and n.d. if not publishing date is given.

An Article in an Online Scholarly Journal

For all online scholarly journals, provide the author(s) name(s), the name of the article in quotation marks, the title of the publication in italics, all volume and issue numbers, and the year of publication.

Article in an Online-only Scholarly Journal

MLA requires a page range for articles that appear in Scholarly Journals. If the journal you are citing appears exclusively in an online format (i.e. there is no corresponding print publication) that does not make use of page numbers, use the abbreviation n. pag. to denote that there is no pagination for the publication.


Article in an Online Scholarly Journal That Also Appears in Print

Cite articles in online scholarly journals that also appear in print as you would a scholarly journal in print, including the page range of the article. Provide the medium of publication that you used (in this case, Web) and the date of access.


An Article from an Online Database (or Other Electronic Subscription Service)

Cite articles from online databases (e.g. LexisNexis, ProQuest, JSTOR, ScienceDirect) and other subscription services just as you would print sources. Since these articles usually come from periodicals, be sure to consult the appropriate sections of the Works Cited: Periodicals page, which you can access via its link at the bottom of this page. In addition to this information, provide the title of the database italicized, the medium of publication, and the date of access.

Note: Previous editions of the MLA Style Manual required information about the subscribing institution (name and location). This information is no longer required by MLA.


E-mail (including E-mail Interviews)

Give the author of the message, followed by the subject line in quotation marks. State to whom to message was sent, the date the message was sent, and the medium of publication.


A Listserve, Discussion Group, or Blog Posting

Cite Web postings as you would a standard Web entry. Provide the author of the work, the title of the posting in quotation marks, the Web site name in italics, the publisher, and the posting date. Follow with the medium of publication and the date of access. Include screen names as author names when author name is not known. If both names are known, place the author’s name in brackets. Remember if the publisher of the site is unknown, use the abbreviation n.p.

Editor, screen name, author, or compiler name (if available). "Posting Title." Name of Site. Version number (if available). Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher). Medium of publication. Date of access.


9. MLA 2009 Works Cited: Other Common Sources

Several sources have multiple means for citation, especially those that appear in varied formats: films, DVDs, videocassettes; published and unpublished interviews, interviews over email; published and unpublished conference proceedings. The following section groups these sorts of citations as well as others not covered in the print, periodical, and electronic sources sections.
An Interview

Interviews typically fall into two categories: print or broadcast published and unpublished (personal) interviews, although interviews may also appear in other, similar formats such as in email format or as a Web document.

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews refer to those interviews that you conduct yourself. List the interview by the name of the interviewee. Include the descriptor Personal interview and the date of the interview.


Published Interviews (Print or Broadcast)

List the interview by the name of the interviewee. If the name of the interview is part of a larger work like a book, a television program, or a film series, place the title of the interview in quotation marks. Place the title of the larger work in italics. If the interview appears as an independent title, italicize it. Determine the medium of publication (e.g. print, Web, DVD) and fill in the rest of the entry with the information required by that medium. For books, include the author or editor name after the book title.

Note: If the interview from which you quote does not feature a title, add the descriptor Interview (unformatted) after the interviewee’s name. You may also use the descriptor Interview by to add the name of the interview to the entry if it is relevant to your paper.


Online-only Published Interviews

List the interview by the name of the interviewee. If the interview has a title, place it in quotation marks. Cite the remainder of the entry as you would other exclusive Web content. Place the name of the Website in italics, give the publisher name (or sponsor), the publication date, the medium of publication (Web), and the date of access. Remember that if no publisher name is give, insert the abbreviation n.p.
Note: If the interview from which you quote does not feature a title, add the descriptor *Interview* (unformatted) after the interviewee’s name. You may also use the descriptor Interview by to add the name of the interview to the entry if it is relevant to your paper.


**Speeches, Lectures, or Other Oral Presentations (including Conference Presentations)**

Provide the speaker’s name. Then, give the title of the speech (if any) in quotation marks. Follow with the name of the meeting and organization, the location of the occasion, and the date. Use the descriptor that appropriately expresses the type of presentation (e.g. Address, Lecture, Reading, Keynote speech, Guest Lecture). Remember to use the abbreviation *n.p.* if the publisher is not known; use *n.d.* if the date is not known.


**Published Conference Proceedings**

Cite published conference proceedings like a book. If the date and location of the conference are not part of the published title, add this information after the published proceedings title. The medium of publication is *Print*. Remember to use the abbreviation *n.p.* if the publisher is not known; use *n.d.* if the date is not known.

LastName, FirstName, ed. *Conference Title that Includes Conference Date and Location*. Place of publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

LastName, FirstName, ed. *Conference Title that Does Not Include Conference Date and Location*. Conference Date, Conference Location. Place of publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Print.

To cite a presentation from a published conference proceedings, begin with the presenter’s name. Place the name of the presentation in quotation marks. Follow with publication information for the conference proceedings.
A Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph

Include the artist's name. Give the title of the artwork in italics. Provide the date of composition. If the date of composition is unknown, place the abbreviation n.d. in place of the date. Finally, provide the name of the institution that houses the artwork followed by the location of the institution.


For photographic reproductions of artwork (e.g. images of artwork in a book), cite the bibliographic information as above followed by the information for the source in which the photograph appears, including page or reference numbers (plate, figure, etc.).


For artwork in an online format, consult “An Image (Including a Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph)” by following the link Works Cited: Electronic Sources at the bottom of this page.

Films or Movies

List films (in theaters or not yet on DVD or video) by their title. Include the name of the director, the film studio or distributor, and the release year. If relevant, list performer names after the director’s name. Use the abbreviation perf. to head the list. List film as the medium of publication. To cite a DVD or other video recording, see “Recorded Films and Movies” below.


To emphasize specific performers (perf.) or directors (dir.), begin the citation with the name of the desired performer or director, followed by the appropriate abbreviation.

**Recorded Films or Movies**

List films (in theaters or not yet on DVD or video) by their title. Include the name of the director, the distributor, and the release year. If relevant, list performer names after the director’s name. Use the abbreviation *perf.* to head the list. End the entry with the appropriate medium of publication (e.g. DVD, VHS, Laser disc).


**Broadcast Television or Radio Program**

Begin with the title of the episode in quotation marks. Provide the name of the series or program in italics. Also include the network name, call letters of the station followed by the city, and the date of broadcast. End with the publication medium (e.g. *Television*, *Radio*). For television episodes on Videocassette or DVD refer to the “Recorded Television Episodes” section below.


**Recorded Television Episodes (e.g. DVD, Videocassette)**

Cite recorded television episodes like films (see above). Begin with the episode name in quotation marks. Follow with the series name in italics. When the title of the collection of recordings is different than the original series (e.g., the show *Friends* is in DVD release under the title *Friends: The Complete Sixth Season*), list the title that would be help researchers locate the recording. Give the distributor name followed by the date of distribution. End with the medium of publication (e.g. *DVD*, *Videocassette*, *Laser disc*).

Note: The writer may choose to include information about directors, writers, performers, producers between the title and the distributor name. Use appropriate abbreviations for these contributors (e.g. *dir.*, *writ.*, *perf.*, *prod.*).

Sound Recordings

List sound recordings in such a way that they can easily be found by readers. Generally, citations begin with the artist name. They might also be listed by composers (comp.) or performers (perf.). Otherwise, list composer and performer information after the album title.

Use the appropriate abbreviation after the person’s name and a comma, when needed. Put individual song titles in quotation marks. Album names are italicized. Provide the name of the recording manufacturer followed by the publication date (or n.d., if date is unknown). List the appropriate medium at the end of the entry (e.g. CD, LP, Audiocassette). For MP3 recordings, see the “Digital Files” section below.

Note: If you know and desire to list the recording date, include this information before the manufacturer name. Use the abbreviation for “recorded” (Rec.) and list the recording date (dd mm year format) before the manufacturer name.

Foo Fighters. In Your Honor. RCA, 2005. CD.


Spoken-Word Albums

Treat spoken-word albums the same as musical albums.


Digital Files (PDFs, MP3s, JPEGs)

Determine the type of work to cite (e.g. article, image, sound recording) and cite appropriately. End the entry with the name of the digital format (e.g. PDF, JPEG file, Microsoft Word file, MP3). If the work does not follow traditional parameters for citation, give the author’s name, the name of the work, the date of creation, and the medium of publication. Use Digital file when the medium cannot be determined.


10. MLA 2009 Additional Resources

It's always best to consult the current *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for any MLA question. If you are using MLA style for a class assignment, it's also a good idea to consult your professor, advisor, TA, or other campus resources for help. They're the ones who can tell you how the style should apply in your particular case.

For extraordinary questions that aren't covered clearly in the style manual or haven't been answered by your teacher or advisor, contact the Writing Lab for help at (765) 494-3723 or email us at this form.

Print Resources from the Modern Language Association


11. MLA 2009 Abbreviations

There are a few common trends in abbreviating that you should follow when using MLA, though there are always exceptions to these rules. For a complete list of common abbreviations used in academic writing, see Chapter 7 of the *MLA Handbooks for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition, and Chapter 8 of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 3rd edition.

This guide provides only a very small portion of the abbreviations suggested by MLA. Each section cross-references the appropriate sections and page numbers of the *MLA Handbooks for Writers of Research Papers* and the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*.

Uppercase Letter Abbreviations

Do not use periods or spaces in abbreviations composed solely of capital letters, except in the case of proper names:
Lowercase Letter Abbreviations

Use a period if the abbreviation ends in a lower case letter, unless referring to an internet suffix, where the period should come before the abbreviation:

assn., conf., Eng., esp.

.com, .edu, .gov (URL suffixes)

Note: Degree names are a notable exception to the lowercase abbreviation rule.

PhD, EdD, PsyD

Use periods between letters without spacing if each letter represents a word in common lower case abbreviations:

a.m., e.g., i.e.

Other notable exceptions:

mph, os, rpm, ns


Abbreviations in Citations

Condense citations as much as possible using abbreviations.

Time Designations

Remember to follow common trends in abbreviating time and location within citations. Month names longer than four letters used in journal and magazine citations:

Jan., Sept., Nov.

**Geographic Names**

Geographic names of states and countries in book citations when the publisher's city is not well known or could be confused with another city. Abbreviate country, province, and state names.

Logan, UT; Manchester, Eng.; Sherbrooke, QC


**Scholarly Abbreviations**

List common scholarly abbreviations as they appear below:

- Anon. for anonymous
- C. or ca. for circa
- Comp. for compiler
- Fwd. for foreword
- Jour. for journal
- Lib. for library
- Sec. or sect. for section
- Ser. for series
- Var. for variant
- Writ. for written by or writer


**Publisher Names**

Shorten publisher's names as much as possible in book citations. You only need to provide your readers with enough information for them to identify the publisher. Many publishers can be identified by only acronyms or a shortened version of their names.
MLA suggests a few rules for you to follow when abbreviating publishers:

- Omit articles, business abbreviations (like Corp. or Inc.), and descriptive words (e.g. Press, Publishers, House)
- Cite only the last name of a publisher with the name of one person (e.g. Norton for W. W. Norton) and only the last name of the first listed for a publisher with multiple names (e.g. McGraw for McGraw-Hill)
- Use standard abbreviations when possible (e.g. Assn. or Soc.)
- Use the acronym of the publisher if the company is commonly known by that abbreviation (e.g. MLA, ERIC, GPO)
- Use only U and P when referring to university presses (e.g. Cambridge UP or U of Chicago P)

Here is a short list of publisher abbreviations that you might use. Consult Chapter 7 of the MLA Handbook for a more complete list.

- Acad. for Educ. Dev. (Academy for Educational Development, Inc.)
- Gale (Gale Research, Inc.)
- Little (Little, Brown and Company, Inc.)
- MIT P (The MIT Press)
- NCTE (The National Council of Teachers of English)
- SIRS (Social Issues Resources Series)
- UMI (University Microfilms International)


12. MLA 2009 Sample Works Cited Page

This handout provides an example of a Works Cited page in MLA 2009 format.

Works Cited


13. MLA 2009 Sample Papers

This resource contains two sample MLA papers that adhere to the 2009 updates. The first sample paper uses footnotes, and the second sample uses endnotes. To download these sample MLA papers, select the MLA 2009 Sample Papers PDF file in the Media box above.

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