MLA Style   8th Edition

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

Basics of MLA Style

The Modern Language Association (MLA) Style is used for citing references in papers; it is used most often in Humanities courses. Documentation includes both **In-Text Citations** and a **Works Cited** page. In-text citations are used to connect the information in the body of the work to the sources listed in the works cited page. The Works Cited page uses nine core elements to provide a listing of sources used.

Citing the sources one uses is important because: 1) it helps you avoid plagiarism, 2) it gives credit to the original author, 3) it helps the reader locate your sources, and 4) it shows your research is credible.

The 8th edition of the MLA Handbook (2016) focuses more on these reasons for documentation and less on rigid rules for documentation. This change in focus will allow for adaptation as new source formats arise by allowing the writer to use the nine core elements, as they are available, to document that source.

The nine core elements of MLA Style 8th edition are listed in the table to the right. The punctuation shown after the element name is the punctuation to use in the citation.

Citation Element	Variations
Author.	Author, editor, translator, etc.
Title of source.	Book, chapter, journal article, online article, etc.
Title of container,	Book if source is chapter, collection, journal, website, etc.
Other contributors,	Editor, translator, illustrator, adapter, narrator, etc.
Version,	Edition, version, volume.
Number,	Volume, issue, episode, season.
Publisher,	Publisher, producer, institution, network, organization.
Publication date,	Year, Month/Year, Day/Month/Year, or Day/Month/Year, time.
Location.	Page number(s), URL, DOI, Place/Venue/City.

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In-text Citations (See pages 54-58 and 116-126 in the handbook) Examples below are in gray highlighting.

- "The goal of in-text citation is to provide enough information to lead your reader directly to the source you used while disrupting the flow of your argument as little as possible" (MLA 58).
- In-text citation is used to identify the source of facts, quotations, and paraphrases of the ideas of others. One does not need to cite material that is common knowledge. Place the parenthetical citation as close as possible to the paraphrased material or fact without disrupting the flow of the sentence.
- 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.
- "A typical in-text citation is composed of the element that comes first in the entry in the works-cited list (usually the author's name) and a page number" (MLA 54).
- The first element may appear in the text itself or be included in the parentheses with the page number. No punctuation is used after the first element, except as noted below.
    - 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).
- If a source has no page numbers but does have paragraph, section, or chapter numbers, place a comma after the author's name and use the appropriate label.
    - "The debut of Julius Caesar, "according to Sohmer, "proclaimed Shakespeare's Globe a theater of courage and ideas" (par. 44).
    - "The debut of Julius Caesar proclaimed Shakespeare's Glove a theater of courage and ideas" (Sohmer, par. 44).

Works Cited (See pages 20-53 and pages 102-116) An example list appears on page 4.
On a separate page, use the heading with no italics, bolding, or underlining – Works Cited.
Continue the page numbers from the rest of the text and number all pages of the listing.
Start each entry on the left margin and if an entry requires more than one line, use the "hanging indent" in the Paragraph menu of Microsoft Word or manually indent 5 spaces (or ½ inch).
Double space the entire list, both between and within entries. (For the sake of space, this will not be done in this handout.)
Alphabetize the list by the first element, usually the author. See p. 112 for further alphabetization rules.

Author: Examples are given under each type. Additional examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4.

Single author: The last name is listed first, followed by a comma, and the rest of the name.

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.
Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction.* Oxford UP, 2011.
Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." *Callaloo*, vol. 24, no. 3, Spring 2001, pp. 620-26.

Two authors: The first author is listed as above; place a comma after the first author's name. Follow the comma with the word "and" and the second author's name in normal order.

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Dorris, Michael, and Lousie Erdrich. *The Crown of Columbus.* HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.

Holland, Merlin, and Rupert Hart-Davis, editors. *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde.* Henry Holt, 2000.

Three or more authors: List the first author as above, follow it with a comma and the Latin phrase *et al.* meaning "and others").

Baron, Sabrina Alcorn, et al., editors. *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein.* U of Massachusetts P/Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007.

Marquart, James W., et al. *The Rope, the Chair, and the Needle: Capital Punishment in Texas, 1923-1990.* U of Texas P, 1994

Corporate author, not publisher: List the full name of the institution, association, government agency, or other kind of organization.

American Medical Association. *The American Medical Association Encyclopedia of Medicine.* Random, 1989

United Nations. *Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries.* Taylor and Francis, 1991.

Corporate author same as publisher: Omit the author element and begin the entry with the title. Use the organization name only for the publisher element.

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America. National Endowment for the Arts, June 2004.

Pseudonyms are used the same as a regular name. Omit titles and honorifics. If a source is Anonymous, omit the author element and begin with the title of the source, the second element.

Title of the source: Examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4 in italics or quotation marks.
- Give the title in full exactly as it is found in the source. Place a colon after the main title and include the subtitle after. Standardize the capitalization and punctuation.
- Italicize the title if the source is self-contained like a book or a collection of essays, stories, or poems.
- Place the title in quotation marks if the source is part of a larger work such as a specific essay, story, or poem within a larger collection.

Title of the container: Examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4 with blue highlighting.
- A container is the larger whole which contains a source. This may be a collection, a periodical, a television series, a Web site, or an issue of a comic book.
- One container may be nested inside another and all the containers that enclose the source should be cited. Add the core elements 3-9 for each container.

Other contributors: Examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4 with yellow highlighting.

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Version: Identify the version if a source has been released in more than one version. Examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4 with a box around them.

Number: Use when source is one volume in a numbered multi-volume set, when journal has both volume and issue numbers, and to refer to season and episodes of television series. Examples are circled in the Works Cited listing on page 4 but do not circle in the actual Works Cited listing.

Publisher: Examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4 with green highlighting.
Cite the organization with the primary responsibility for producing the source or making it available to the public. If two or more organizations are equally responsible, cite each and separate the names with a forward slash.

Omit the publisher's name for periodicals, self-published works, Web sites whose title and publisher are the same, and Web sites not involved in publishing the works they make available, for example, *ProQuest* or *JSTOR*.

Publication Date: Cite the most relevant date if more than one date is associated with the source.

Location: Specify page number by p. or a range of page numbers by pp. Do not include the http or https for online sources with URLs and use the DOI instead of the URL when available because the DOI is stable. Omit URL or DOI per your instructor's preference. Examples are in the Works Cited listing on page 4 with gray highlighting.

Works Cited

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA,* vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

Baron, Sabrina Alcorn, et al., editors. *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein.* U of Massachusetts P/Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007.

Bazin, Patrick. "Toward Metareading." *The Future of the Book,* edited by Geoffrey Nunberg, U of California P, 1996, pp. 153-68.

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

Dewar, James A., and Peng Hwa Ang. "The Cultural Consequences of Printing and the Internet." *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisentstein,* edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron et al., U of Massachusetts P/Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007, pp. 365-77.

Hollmichel, Stefanie. "The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print." *So Many Books,* 25 Apr. 2013, somanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print/.

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer,* created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." *Callaloo,* vol. 24, no. 3, Spring 2001, pp. 620-26.

Marquart, James W., et al. *The Rope, the Chair, and the Needle: Capital Punishment in Texas, 1923-1990.* U of Texas P, 1994.

Newcomb, Horace, editor. *Television: The Critical View.* 7th ed., Oxford UP, 2007.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Masque of the Red Death." *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe,* edited by James A. Harrison, vol. 4, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1902, pp. 250-58. *HathiTrust Digital Library,* babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id+coo.31924079574368;view+1up:seq+266.

Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes.* 2nd ed., vol. 2, Oxford UP, 2002.

Scott, Ridley, director. *Blade Runner.* 1982. Performance by Harrison Ford, director's cut, Warner Bros., 1992.

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