

MLA: 8th Edition



What is MLA Format?

MLA style is used primarily in the liberal arts and humanities. MLA style provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical documentation and on a Works Cited page. This handout is a brief guide to citing in MLA 8th edition—for a complete guide to MLA style, please reference the *MLA Handbook*, 8th edition, published in April 2016.

Major Changes to the 8th Edition

In previous editions of the *MLA Handbook*, an entry in the works-cited list was based on the source's publication format (e.g. book, film, magazine article, Web publication). The writer first determined the type of publication, and then generated the citation based on the typical model for that type of publication. A consequence of that approach was that works in a new medium could not be documented until the MLA created instructions for it. This edition, by contrast, is not centered on publication formats. It deals instead with facts common to most works—author, title, and so on. The writer examines the source and records its visible features, attending to the work itself and a set of universal guidelines. A work in a new medium thus can be documented without new instructions.

- For specific changes to Works Cited entries, see below.
- For an overview of the new method for generating citations, see page 2 of this handout.

Specific Changes to the Works Cited Page

Abbreviations: common terms in the works-cited list like *editor*, *edited by*, *translator*, and *review of* are no longer abbreviated. The 8th edition provides a shorter list of recommended abbreviations (96-7)

Authors: when a source has 3 or more authors, only the first one shown in the source is normally given. It is followed by *et al* (22).

Books and Other Printed Works:

- page number in the works-cited list (but not in in-text citations) are now preceded by *p.* or *pp.* (46)
- for books, the city of publication is no longer given, except in special situations (51)

Journals:

- issues of scholarly journals are now identified with, for instance, “vol. 64, no. 1” rather than “64.1” (39-40)
- if an issue of a scholarly journal is dated with a month or season, the month or season is now always cited along with the year

Online Works:

- the URL (without <http://> or <https://>) is now normally given for a Web source. Angle brackets are not used around it

Online Works (continued):

- The citing of DOIs (digital object identifiers) is encouraged (110)
- Citing the date when an online work was consulted is now optional (53)
- Placeholders for unknown information like *n.d.* (“no date”) are no longer used

Publishers:

- Publishers’ names are now given in full, except the business words like *Company (Co.)* are dropped and, for academic presses, the abbreviations *U*, *P*, and *UP* are still used (97)
- A forward slash (/) now separates the names of copublishers (108)
- When an organization is both author and publisher of a work, the organization’s name is now given only once, usually as the publisher (25). No author is stated.

Miscellaneous: the medium of publication is no longer stated, except when it is needed for clarity (52)

Assembling Publication Information Into Citations

The new version of MLA is driven by a single template for generating all citations. The common feature of sources are called *elements* (represented in the illustration below as the individual lines such as “Author” and “Title of Source”). The elements are separated by the punctuation indicated at the end of that element.

In addition to the core elements, writers must also be aware that a source may have multiple containers. For example, a chapter included in a larger anthology housed in a database has two containers—the anthology and the database. Consequently, some sources may need to include the information for additional elements associated with the second container.

Creating Your Documentation

In the new version of MLA, citations are created by consulting MLA’s list of core elements—publication information common to most sources—that are assembled in a specific order. The list of core elements and the punctuation used to separate them are included below. To help illustrate the new approach to citation, we’ve included a list of common types of sources and sample citations. We’ve also included MLA’s Practice Template for generating works cited entries at the back of this document.

- 1 Author.
- 2 Title of source.
- 3 Title of container,
- 4 Other contributors,
- 5 Version,
- 6 Number,
- 7 Publisher,
- 8 Publication date,
- 9 Location.

MLA Practice Template

1. Author.

2. Title of source.

Container 1

3. Title of Container,

4. Other contributors,

5. Version,

6. Number,

7. Publisher,

8. Publication date,

9. Location.

Container 2

3. Title of container,

4. Other contributors,

5. Version,

6. Number,

7. Publisher,

8. Publication date,

9. Location.

Common Types of Sources

The 8th edition of MLA does not require that writers distinguish between the source's type of publication. However, because citations were generated in this way in past editions of MLA, many will still find it helpful to have sample citations based on the type of publication to use as models. Pairing the sample citation with MLA's new template will provide writers with a model of what their end citation is likely to look like.

Citing Book Sources

Book with One Author

Author's last name, first name. *Book Title*. Publisher, publication year.

Tan, Amy. *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. Putnam, 2001.

Book by a Corporate Author

A corporate author may be a commission, a committee, or any group whose individual members are not identified on the title page.

American Allergy Association. *Allergies in Children*. Random, 1998.

Book with More than One Author

The first author's name is written last name first; subsequent author names are written first name, last name.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Allyn, 2000.

Book with No Author

List and alphabetize by the title of the book.

Encyclopedia of Indiana. Somerset, 1993.

A Translated Book

Cite as you would any other book, and add "translated by" followed by the translator's/translators' name(s):

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, translated by Richard Howard. Vintage-Random House, 1988.

Anthology or Edited Collection

List by editor or editors, followed by a comma and "editor" or, for multiple editors, "editors."

Books (continued)

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.

Quintillian. *Institutio Oratoria*. H.E. Butler, translator. Vol. 2. Loeb-Harvard UP, 1980.

When citing more than one volume of a multivolume work, cite the total number of volumes in the work.

Quintillian. *Institutio Oratoria*. H.E. Butler, translator. 4 vols. Loeb-Harvard UP, 1980.

When citing multivolume works in your text, always include the volume number followed by a colon, then the page number(s):

...as Quintillian wrote in *Institutio Oratoria* (1:14-17).

Citing Periodicals

MLA style is slightly different for popular periodicals such as newspapers and scholarly journals, as you'll learn below. Make sure to italicize newspaper, journal and magazine titles and to use quotation marks for article titles.

An Article in a Newspaper or Magazine

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, volume #, number #, year, pages.

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.).

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time* 20 Nov. 2000, pp. 70-71.

An Article in a Scholarly Journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, volume #, number #, Month/Season Year, pp. #.

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's Basahi Tuduh." *Tulsa Studies in Literature* vol. 15, no. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 41-50.

Citing Electronic Sources

Citations of electronic sources share some traits with those of print publications, but often require additional information. The citation of a URL is recommended.

Note: If a website title appears in a nonstandard format, standardize the overall site form in your citation.

(Ex): medievalfragments would appear as *Medieval Fragments*

A Nonperiodical Web Publication

Most works on the Web are nonperiodical—not released on a regular schedule. Websites sponsored by newspapers and magazines are generally nonperiodical. Such an entry contains most of the following components:

- Name of the author, compiler, director, editor, narrator, performer or translator of the work.
- Title of the work
- Title of the overall website
- Version or edition used
- Publisher or sponsor of the site
- Date of publication (day, month, and year, as available)
- URL

Note: For different author situations (corporate author, more than one author, no author, etc.) follow the same rules as they are outlined in the print (book sources) section. For example, if you have a website with a corporate author you would follow the same rules as for a print source with a corporate author.

Committee on Scholarly Editions. “Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions.” *Modern Language Association*. 25 Sept. 2007, www.mla.org/Resources/Research/Surveys-Reports-and-Other-Documents/Publishing-and-Scholarship/Reports-from-the-MLA-Committee-on-Scholarly-Editions/Guidelines-for-Editors-of-Scholarly-Editions.

Eaves, Morris, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, editors. *The William Blake Archive*. Library of Congress, 8 May 2008, www.blakearchive.org/blake/.

“The Scientists Speak.” Editorial. *New York Times*. 20 Nov. 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/11/20opinion/20tue1.html?_r=0.

Citing Electronic Sources (Cont'd)

A Work on the Web Cited with Print Publication Data

A book that was scanned for access in a database typically has original publication information. Thus, you might want to include that information in your citation. Cite as you would a print document, then include the following information:

1. Title of the database or Web site (*italicized*)
2. Digital object identifier (DOI) or URL

Note: A DOI remains attached to a source even if the URL changes. DOIs, when available, can be found in most databases underneath a text's publishing information and abstract. When possible, citing a DOI is preferable to citing a URL. However, some sources before 2003 may not contain a DOI. In this case, use a URL if it is available.

Whittier, John. G. "A Prayer." *The Freedman's Book*. L. Maria Child, editor, 1866, pp. 178. *Google Book Search*.
books.google.com/books?id=OopkyEpx1U4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+freedmen%
27s+book&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjozqncvZvNAhXGaD4KHaZwCuoQ6AEIITAA#v=onepage&q=a%
20prayer&f=false

A Scholarly Journal on the Web

Begin the entry by following the format of print scholarly journals. Add DOI or URL if available.

Rickford, Russell. "Black Lives Matter." *New Labor Forum* vol. 25, no. 1, Winter 2016, pp. 34-42. DOI:
10.1177/1095796015620171

Ouellette, Marc. "Theories, Memories, Bodies, and Artists." Editorial. *Reconstruction* vol. 7, no. 4, 2007. *academ-
ia.edu/4414504/7.4_Theories_memories_bodies_and_artists*

A Periodical Publication in an Online Database

Oftentimes periodicals are accessible to researchers via online databases. Begin the entry by citing as you would a print periodical. Conclude the entry with the following items:

1. Title of database.
2. DOI or URL if available

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture* vol. 10, no. 3, May 2000. *Project Muse*. DOI:
10.1353/pmc.2000.0021.

Additional Sources

An Interview

Begin with the name of the person interviewed. If the interview was part of a publication, recording, or program, enclose the title, if any, in quotation marks; if the interview was published independently, italicize the title. If the interview is untitled, use the descriptive label "Interview," neither italicized or in quotation marks.

Blanchett, Cate. "In Character with: Cate Blanchett." *Notes on a Scandal*, directed by Richard Eyre. Fox Searchlight, 2006.

Gordimer, Nadine. Interview. *New York Times* 10 Oct. 1991, late edition: C25.

To cite *an interview you conducted*, give the name of the person interviewed, the kind of interview (personal, telephone) and the date.

Pei, I. M. Personal interview. 22 July 1993.

Parenthetical Citations

- In MLA style, you are required to acknowledge your sources with brief parenthetical citations.

These citations include the **author's last name** and the **page number**. No comma is necessary to separate these two elements. For example:

Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras, who lived in the sixth century BC (Marcuse 197).

This tells us that the information came from page 197 in a work by an author named Marcuse. If a reader wanted more information about the source, a complete bibliographical entry would be found in the Works Cited.

- A citation in MLA style contains only enough information to enable readers to find the source in the Works Cited list.

If the author's name is included in the text, only the page number appears in the citation: (197). If more than one work by the author is in the list of Works Cited, give a shortened version of the title: (Marcuse, *Survey* 197). If no page numbers are given (as in some electronic sources, number by paragraph: (Marcuse par. 2).

- Citations should appear at the end of a sentence and at the end of a quote, if used. The final quotation mark and first parentheses should have one space between them. Finally, the sentence period should appear after the citation:

According to Marcuse, "Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras" (197).

General Guidelines

- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font like Times New Roman or Ariel.
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides. Indent the first line of a paragraph one half-inch from the left margin (press tab once).
- Use italics throughout your essay for titles of longer works.

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 and center the title. Don't underline your title or put it in quotation marks.
- 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.). (Note: Your instructor or other readers may ask that you omit last name/page number header on your first page. Always follow their guidelines.)

Formatting Your Works Cited Page

- Begin your Works Cited list on a separate page from the text of the essay. Like your essay, the Works Cited page(s) should be paginated. For example, if your essay ends on page 10, the Works Cited list will begin on page 11.
- Center the words Works Cited at the top of the page. Do not underline, italicize, or enclose in quotation marks.
- Double space all entries and do not skip spaces between entries.
- Use a hanging indent for all entries:
Wysocki, Anne Francis, et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Utah State UP, 2004.
- Your list should be alphabetized by the author's last name. If the author's name is unknown, alphabetize by title. If you cite multiple works by the same author, cite the name once and begin following citations with three hyphens and period (—.).