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All information from outside sources used in a research paper must be cited. The *MLA Handbook*, 8th edition by the Modern Language Association (MLA), gives instructions on citing different types of resources. All examples and page numbers listed in this handout are adapted from this edition of the handbook, unless otherwise noted. Directions on formatting the research paper can be located on MLA’s website at: https://style.mla.org/formatting-papers/. **IMPORTANT:** Always verify this format with your writer’s handbook and/or with your instructor.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the act of using another person’s ideas, information or words and passing them off as your own. This is not only intellectual theft but can also be construed as fraud if you plagiarize with the intent of getting a better grade (pp. 6-7). According to the *MLA Handbook*, students often plagiarize unintentionally as a result of poor note-taking. To guard against this, always take careful notes that distinguish between your own thoughts and ideas, those that you have paraphrased from other sources, and those that you have directly quoted. Remember that borrowing ideas or exact words without both a citation on the Works Cited list and an in-text reference is plagiarism (pp. 7-8).

**Formatting the Paper**

Below are the basic rules for formatting an MLA paper. Refer to https://style.mla.org/formatting-papers/ for more detailed information

- **Margins** should be one inch on all sides, with the exception of the header
- Use an easily readable *font* (like Times New Roman) and set it to a standard *size* (e.g. 12 points). **Double space** the entire paper.
- The **header** should be in the upper right-hand corner, half an inch from the top, and flush with the right margin.
- The **header text** consists of your last name, followed by a space, and the page number.
- MLA style does not require a cover page. The **heading** for your paper should begin one inch from the top of the first page at the left margin.
- The **heading text** consists of your full name, the instructor’s name, the course number, and the date on separate double spaced lines.
- The **title of the paper** is centered on the line directly after the last line of the heading. Follow MLA capitalization rules which can be found on page 4 of this handout.
- **Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page.**

**Works Cited Page**

All works that are used in the paper and identified by a parenthetical reference require a listing in the works cited page. The purpose of the works cited page is to permit the reader to return to the original source. More information is located at https://style.mla.org/formatting-papers/.

Here is the basic format for the works cited page:

- Number the page consecutively, and use the same font style and size as for the rest of the paper.
- Center **Works Cited** one inch from the top of the page and double space between the title and the first entry.
- If the list includes only one source use the title **Work Cited**.
- **Double space** the entire list.
- **Arrange entries alphabetically.**
- Do not number the individual citations.
- **Use hanging indents** beginning each entry flush with the left margin and indenting the following lines five spaces.
Citations

MLA 8th edition uses the container method to site sources regardless of type. Use the list of core elements in the form below to create your citation. The core elements include information that MLA requires in each works cited entry. Elements 3-9 can be repeated various times. **Skip any elements that do not pertain to your source.**

| 1. Author. | Garrard, Greg. |
| 2. Title of Source. | “Solar: Apocalypse Not.” |

**Container 1**

| 3. Title of container, | Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives, |
| 4. other contributors, | edited by Sebastian Groes, |
| 5. version, | 2nd ed. |
| 6. number, | |
| 7. publisher, | Bloomsbury Academic, |
| 8. publication date, | 2013, |

**Container 2**

| 3. Title of container, | EBSCO eBook Collection, |
| 4. Other contributors, | |
| 5. Version, | |
| 6. Number, | |
| 7. Publisher, | |
| 8. Publication date, | |


Once the correct spaces are filled in, create the citation in proper MLA format. Use the punctuation shown in the table above to correctly punctuate your citation. The last element you include in your citation should have a period.

For a source inside another source (like an anthology, an article, or an episode of a TV show) use the container options, shown in figure B. This example further shows a source from a database.


**Please note:** In MLA 8th edition inclusion of the URL, permalink, or DOI is recommended but can be left up to the instructor’s preference. Ask your instructor what he or she prefers.
MLA Core Elements:

Author
Include all the authors or editors in the format listed below (pp.21-25).

- 1 Author – Smith, Jane.
- 2 Authors – Smith, Jane and John Doe.
- 3 or more authors – Smith, Jane, et al.
- Editors as authors – list the authors as above and add “editor” or “editors” preceded by a comma –
  - 1 editor - Smith, Jane, editor.
  - 2 editors - Smith, Jane and John Doe, editors.
  - 3 or more editors – Smith, Jane, et al., editors.
- Translators can also be authors.
  - 1 translator - Smith, Jane, translator.
  - 2 translators - Smith, Jane and John Doe, translators.
  - 3 or more translators – Smith, Jane, et al., translators.
- Organizations and associations can be authors as well – American Heart Association

If you’re citing the contribution of a director, performer, screenwriter, creator of a work you can put these in the place of the author and use the appropriate label. If you’re citing a film or television series without focusing on an individual’s contribution start with the title. You can always list the names of directors, performers, etc. under “other contributors.”

Examples:


Title of Source
Is given in full exactly as they are found in the source, with standard MLA capitalization rules. Formatting of the title changes depending on whether the source is a large work (like a book or an anthology or magazine) or a small part of a larger whole like a poem, story, or essay in a collection or an article in a magazine (see pp. 25-29 for complete rules).

Titles appear in *italics* or “in quotes” according to the following rules:

- A book is a whole unto itself, therefore the title should be italicized. If you’re citing a chapter of a book the chapter should be in quotes (see the Bamberger example below).
- Also italicize the titles of magazines, newspapers, journals, movies, television shows, and other large works.
- Articles in periodicals (magazine, newspaper, or journal) should be in quotes (see the Bamberger example below).
- Titles of small works inside larger works should be in quotes (e.g., articles in magazines, short stories and poems inside of larger collections, episodes of television shows, other smaller sources within larger ones
- A website title is always italicized, a page inside a website is always in quotes.
Use standard capitalization:
Capitalize the first word of the title and subtitle and other major words. Do not capitalize:

- articles (a, an, the);
- prepositions (e.g., against, as, between, in, of, to, etc.);
- coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS—for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so); and
- the to in infinitives (i.e. How to Play Chess).

Examples:


**Title of Container**

When the source you’re citing is part of a larger whole, the larger whole can be considered a container that holds the source. Use the same capitalization rules for the container. The container is usually italicized and followed by a comma since the information that comes next describes the container. Containers can include the following:

- an anthology (a book that is a collection of essays, stories, poems, or other works)
- a periodical (magazine, newspaper, or journal)
- television series made up of episodes
- a website made up of postings, articles, or any other small works
- a database (i.e. *Academic Search Complete* or *JSTOR* can also include sites like YouTube, Netflix, or Hulu)

See pp. 30-36 for complete rules.

Examples:


**Other Contributors**

In addition to the authors, sometimes works include other contributors whose participation is either important to the research or essential for helping to identify the source. Include these contributors’ names preceded by their titles. These can include the following:

- adapted by
- created by
- directed by
- edited by
- illustrated by
- introduction by
- narrated by
- performance by
- translated by

Use the same rules as above for one, two, or 3 or more contributors. See pp. 37-38 for complete rules.
Examples:


Version

If the source indicates that it is a version of a work released in more than one form, identify the version. Versions for books can include editions or other descriptions (such as the King James Version of the Bible). Movies, recordings, and other audio visual media may include notations such as director’s cut, unabridged version, or numbers indicating a release date. See pp. 38-39 for complete rules.

Examples:


Number

Some books (like encyclopedias) are released in sets and therefore include volume numbers. Periodicals like magazines, journals, and newspapers have both volume and issue numbers for each published issue. See pp. 39-40 for complete rules.

Examples:


Publisher

The publisher is the organization primarily responsible for producing the source. The publisher of a book is usually located on the title page or the copyright page. For a film or television series use the organization that had primary overall responsibility over the production. For web sites you can usually locate the name of the publisher with the copyright notice at the bottom of the home page.

Omit the name of the publisher in the following cases:

- when citing a periodical (magazine, newspaper, journal)
- when a work is published by its author or editor
- when citing a website whose title is the same as its publisher
- when citing a website not involved in producing the works it makes available like a user content service (WordPress.com or YouTube) or a database (JSTOR or Academic Search Complete). When the services function as a database for materials like videos or articles like YouTube, JSTOR, or Academic Search Complete the site is usually named as a container.

For more specific information see pp. 40-42.

Note: Sometimes books are published in different countries and may include different spellings for words. If you use the British version of a book for example, add the city of publication in front of the publisher. (See p. 51 for more information).
Examples:


**Publication date**

Many sources, especially online sources, may be associated with more than one publication date. Use the date that is most relevant to your use of the source. For example, if you are using the online version of a source that’s also published in print, use the date for the online version. If only a year is given (usually on the title or copyright page of a book) use that. Follow the formats below for other date combinations.

- Day Month Year format (10 Apr. 2007)
- Month Year format (Apr. 2007)
- Month-Month Year format (Nov.- Dec. 2007)
- Season Year format (Winter 2007)

If citing web page comments that include dates and times, include both separated by a comma.

Months are abbreviated as follows: Jan.; Feb.; Mar.; Apr.; Aug.; Sept.; Oct.; Nov.; and Dec. Only May, June, and July are spelled out. See pp. 42-46 for complete rules.

Examples:

Toth, Emily. *Unveiling Kate Chopin*. UP of Mississippi, **1999**.


**Location**

The location in a book or periodical is usually a page number (preceded by p.) or a range of pages (preceded by pp.). For websites or databases locations can also include URLs, permalinks, or DOIs. On a DVD set the location may be disc number. See pp. 46-50 for complete rules. **In MLA 8th edition inclusion of the URL, permalink, or DOI is recommended but can be left up to the instructor’s preference. Ask your instructor what he or she prefers.**

Examples:


Optional Elements
Other Facts about the Source

You may want to include other information that may help the reader locate the source. This includes: the number of volumes in a multivolume publication; the name of a series (see below); a notation about an unexpected type of work like a transcript, image, chart, etc.; or information about prior publication (see below).

Examples:


Access Date
Although access dates for electronic sources are optional in the MLA Handbook (p. 53), the access date can be important because online resources can change often. Include the access date at the end of the citation for any online work.

Examples:


Examples

Books


Articles


Chapters from Anthologies


**Book Reviews**

Examples for citing reviews are in the *Little Seagull Handbook*, third edition, page 143.


**Websites**


**YouTube**


**Television**

Contributors can be omitted or added depending on the contribution that the writer wishes to emphasize.


**Movies**
Cite the film alone, or cite the contribution of a specific people. If the film is online cite the streaming service or the site where you viewed it.


**Movie Reviews**
Examples for citing reviews are in the *Little Seagull Handbook*, third edition, page 143.


**Interviews**


Images
According to *Little Seagull Handbook*, 3rd edition, insert illustrations close to the text where they are mentioned. You must cite the original source of the image (*Google Images* doesn’t count). For tables, provide a number (Table 1) and a title on separate lines above the table. Below the table give a caption and information about the source. For graphs, photos, and other figures, provide a figure number (Fig. 1.), caption, and source information below the figure. See example below.

As the chart below shows, violent crime in Florida has been decreasing since 1993.

![Florida violent crime rate 1993-2015](image)

**Fig. 1.** This table shows the decline in the violent crime rate since 1993 (Graves).

This means that laws passed recently have had an impact on the state’s crime rate. Experts say that these numbers will continue to show a steady decline and should continue to ….

In the works cited page, use the citation from the source where the image was located:


If you only give brief source information in the caption or if the source is cited somewhere else in the paper, include it in your works cited list.
In-text Citations

An in-text citation, also known as a parenthetical reference, briefly identifies the source in the body of the paper without repeating the information from the works cited page. See the MLA Handbook, (pp.54-58) for a more detailed explanation.

Sample citation for a work with no author:

Works Cited


In the text, use the first word of the title (not including a, an, or the) and the page number. If the title is italicized, underline it in your reference or if the title is in quotes place it in quotes. Follow the example below:

In Text

According to “Opening Shots,” Anna Kendrick starred in a Broadway musical when she was 12 (6).

When she was 12, Anna Kendrick starred in a Broadway musical (“Opening” 6).

Sample citation for a work with one author:

Works Cited


In your paper cite the author’s name and the page number in parentheses after the text or in the text. If the author is mentioned in the text, only the page number is needed in parentheses.

In Text

The actress felt like she was conning people into thinking she was more than human (Kendrick 180).

Anna Kendrick felt like she was conning people into thinking she was more than human (180).

If you have more than one book or article by the same author, use the last name of the author, a comma, a shortened version of the article or book title (in quotes or italicized) and the page number.

In Text

The actress felt like she was conning the public (Kendrick, Scrappy 180).

Sometimes you have two authors with the same last name. In those cases differentiate between authors by adding a first initial.

In Text

The actress felt like she was conning the public (A. Kendrick 180).

Sample citation for a work with two or more authors:

When a work has two or more authors, include up to three authors in the in text citation. Let the works cited entry guide the parenthetical reference.

Works Cited


In Text

The public opposes competition between schools due to a concern over equity (Osborne and Gaebler 101).
Sample citation for two works by the same author in one paper:

When you have two works by the same author on one works cited page do not repeat the name of the author a second time. Instead use three hyphens to indicate that the author is the same (see the second example). When using two or more works by the same author, cite the author and a few words from the title in the parenthetical reference.

```
Works Cited
```

```
In Text
3 authors
The survey showed that teachers “approach their work with a strong sense of duty” (Kilpatrick et al. 67).
```

```
Sample citation for two works by the same author in one paper:

When you have two works by the same author on one works cited page do not repeat the name of the author a second time. Instead use three hyphens to indicate that the author is the same (see the second example). When using two or more works by the same author, cite the author and a few words from the title in the parenthetical reference.

```
Works Cited
```

```
In Text
The government tells “selective truths” in order “to shape events to fit policy” (Wise, The Politics 62).
The political views and personal lives of citizens are interesting to the government because it gives the state power over the individual (Wise, The American 102).
```

Additional tips:

When referencing an entire work in your text, mention the author and title of the work in the text rather than in parentheses.

```
In Text
In Bloody Sundays, Freeman exposes football’s secrets.
```

When citing a direct quote used by the author of your source, use the abbreviation qtd. in in your parenthetical reference.

```
In Text
Bill Lyon said, “Favre is a fierce and fiery competitor” (qtd. in Freeman 117).
```

Tips for web documents:

- If a web page includes fixed page numbers, include them as you would for a print source. [e.g. (Smith 28)].
- If a web page has other fixed numbers, use them with the appropriate labels: line(s), par(s). for paragraph(s), sec(s). for sections, ch(s). for chapters, etc. [e.g. (“Knight’s Tale”, lines 50-75); (Moulthrop, pars. 19-20)].
- If there are no fixed numbers in a web document, omit them. Never cite a page or line number from a printout; these may vary depending on text size, paper size or printer.