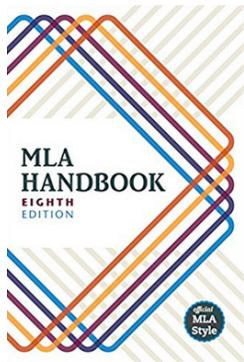


MLA Reference Guide



What is MLA format?



The Modern Language Association of America (MLA) has established formatting and style rules for scholarly papers and citations, with the intention of making papers easier to read and to help writers give credit to their sources clearly and consistently.

This handout will guide you through citing information according to the

MLA Handbook's 8th edition, which was published in 2016. On the next two pages, we'll walk you through creating citations for reference lists and share many examples of citations for different kinds of sources. On the last page, you'll find examples of in-text citations.

The Core Elements

The diagram to the right lists the "core elements" of a citation, the order you'll write them in, and the punctuation you'll use between each element. It doesn't matter what you're citing— a book, a video, or even a Tweet— you'll use the same format. *The Handbook* gives more examples of this diagram in action on pages 32-36.

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.

From *MLA Handbook* (8th ed.), published by the Modern Language Association (style.mla.org).



How do I get help?

If you have any questions about formatting your paper or writing citations, check with your instructor first. He or she is the final authority on what your paper should look like, especially if the assignment's requirements differ from the guidelines outlined in the MLA manual.

The Writing Center

Writing Center consultants can help you develop your topic, organize your ideas, and proofread your paper.

WritingCenter@nu.edu
<http://www.nu.edu/OurPrograms/StudentServices/WritingCenter.html>


The Library

Your librarians can help you find good resources for your assignment.

refdesk@nu.edu
(866) 682-2237 x7900
<http://library.nu.edu>

CORE ELEMENTS

Author (.)

 MLA Handbook
pages 21-24

For one author:

Gaiman, Neil. *Norse Mythology*. W. W. Norton, 2017.


For two authors:

Fink, Joseph, and Jeffrey Cranor. *Welcome to Night Vale*. Harper Perennial, 2015.
(Note: Only the first author's name is inverted.)

For three or more authors, list only the first, and then "et al."

Shea, Sarah E., et al. "Pathology in the Hundred Acre Wood: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective on A.A. Milne." *CMAJ*, vol. 163, no. 12, 12 Dec. 2000, www.cmaj.ca/content/163/12/1557.

Title of source (.)

 MLA Handbook
pages 25-29


If your source isn't part of a larger work, italicize the title. Use a colon before a subtitle.

Essinger, James. *Ada's Algorithm: How Lord Byron's Daughter Ada Lovelace Launched the Digital Age*. Melville House, 2014.

If your source is part of a larger work (e.g., an article in a journal, a chapter in a book, an episode in a TV series), the title will be placed in quotes.

"Blackwater." *Game of Thrones*, created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss, season 2, episode 9, HBO, 2012.

Title of container (,)

 MLA Handbook
pages 30-36


If your source is part of a larger work (e.g., an article in a journal, a chapter in a book, an episode in a TV series), then you'll also include the larger work's title. Italicize the title of the larger work.

Principe, Gabrielle F. and Eric Smith. "The Tooth, the Whole Tooth and Nothing but the Tooth: How Belief in the Tooth Fairy Can Engender False Memories." *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, vol. 22, no. 5, July 2008, 10.1002/acp.1402

Dove, Rita. "Grape Sherbet." *Collected Poems: 1974 - 2004*. W. W. Norton, 2016.

"The Weirdo on Maple Street." *Stranger Things*, created by Matt Duffer and Ross Duffer, season 1, episode 2, Netflix, 2016.

Other contributors (,)


 MLA Handbook
pages 37-38

Aside from the authors, your source might list other people who contributed, such as editors, illustrators, or translators. You should normally include them in your citation and note their role:

Barnes, Derrick. Crown: *An Ode to the Fresh Cut*. Illustrated by Gordon C. James, Bolden, 2017.

Larsson, Stieg. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Translated by Reg Keeland, Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

Version (,)

 MLA Handbook
pages 38-39

If there's more than one version or edition of your source, you'll need to state which one you're using.

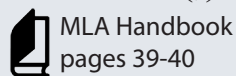
Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd ed., W. W. Norton, 2014.

Wood, Ed, and Jean Wood. *Classic Sourdoughs, Revised: A Home Baker's Handbook*. Revised ed., Ten Speed Press, 2011.

CORE ELEMENTS

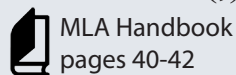
(cont.)

Number (,)



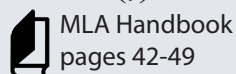
MLA Handbook
pages 39-40

Publisher (,)



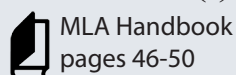
MLA Handbook
pages 40-42

Publication Date (,)



MLA Handbook
pages 42-49

Location (.)



MLA Handbook
pages 46-50

Missing a core element?

If information about one of the core elements is missing (for example, there is no publication date), you can try to find this information using reliable external resources, and fill it in using square brackets. If you can't find any reliable information, you can omit the core element from your citation.

If your source is part of a numbered series, include the series number. Journals will normally have a volume number and issue number.

Patton, Declan, and Andrew McIntosh. "Head and Neck Injury Risks in Heavy Metal: Head Bangers Stuck Between Rock and a Hard Bass." *The BMJ*, vol. 337, no. 7684, 18 December 2008. 10.1136/bmj.a2825

Atwood, Margaret, et al. *Angel Catbird*. vol. 1, Dark Horse, 2016.

The publisher is the organization primarily responsible for producing or publishing the material. You don't need to provide a publisher for periodicals or for websites (if the website title and publisher name are the same).

Tyson, Neil deGrasse. *The Pluto Files: The Rise and Fall of America's Favorite Planet*. W. W. Norton, 2009.

Edwards, Gareth, director. *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. Lucasfilm, 2016.

Where available, state the day, month, and year of publication, in that order. Month names longer than four letters will be abbreviated (Jan., Feb., Mar., etc.).

Bell, Diane. "Surf Dog to Make Big Screen Splash as Superdog." *The San Diego Union Tribune*, 17 Oct. 2016, www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/columnists/sd-me-sd-bell-1018-story.html

In some cases—mainly books—only a publication year will be available.

McBride, James. *Kill 'Em and Leave: Searching for James Brown and the American Soul*. Spiegel & Grau, 2016.

If no date is available, you can omit this element from your citation.

For print works, use page numbers (preceded by a "p.") or ranges of page numbers (preceded by a "pp.").

Carlson, E. N., et al. "You Probably Think This Paper's About You: Narcissists' Perceptions of Their Personality and Reputation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 101, no. 1, July 2011, pp. 185–201.

For ebooks, use the name of the database that hosts the book.

Dickey, Colin. *Ghostland: An American History in Haunted Places*. Viking, 2016. *EBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*.

For other online works, use page numbers (if applicable) and the URL or DOI, and omit the period at the end of citation.

Gabriel, S., and A. F. Young. "Becoming a Vampire Without Being Bitten: The Narrative Collective-Assimilation Hypothesis." *Psychological Science*, vol. 22, no. 8, pp. 990-994. 10.1177/0956797611415541

Newitz, Annalee. "Monkeys are Banging Rocks Together, and the Results are Intriguing." *Ars Technica*, 19 Oct. 2016, arstechnica.com/science/2016/10/monkeys-create-sharp-stone-flakes-that-look-like-early-hominin-tools/

How do I write in-text citations?

Whether you're paraphrasing your source or quoting it directly, you need to tell your readers exactly where you got your information. If you don't, you may be accused of plagiarizing your source.

When you're writing a paper in MLA style, you'll use parenthetical in-text citations to ensure that you've given credit to all of your sources. Parenthetical citations usually state the last name of the author (or authors), and the page number where the original quote or idea can be found.

Here's how you can incorporate citations into your writing:

Paraphrasing with author's name in text:

According to **Smith**, students become more confident using MLA style with practice (4-5).

Paraphrasing with author's name in reference:

Students become more confident using MLA style with practice (**Smith 112-13**).

Quoting with author's name in the reference:

It is true that "students may encounter difficulties when they attempt to learn MLA for the first time" (**Smith 112-13**).

Citing a work with multiple authors:

Lee and Perez note that well-written citations help readers find earlier research (112-13).

Well-written citations help readers find earlier research (**Lee and Perez 112-13**).

Readers can use citations to locate earlier research (**Park et al. 10**).

Citing multiple works in the same sentence:

MLA style is used across several disciplines, including cultural studies and English (**Smith 112; Lee 146**).

MLA style is used frequently in cultural studies (**Smith 112**) and English (**Lee 146**).

Citing a work that's been quoted in your source (a secondary citation):

A study by **Smith** finds that "students learn MLA faster than some other styles" (qtd. in **Fowler: 53**).

What if you are missing information?

If your source has no author, use the first word of the title in double quote marks.

It is important to use MLA correctly so that others can verify your research ("**Student**").

If your source has no page numbers, use the author's name alone.

It is important to use MLA correctly so that others can verify your research (**Smith**).

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refdesk@nu.edu
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<http://nu.mywconline.com>
To schedule an online consultation