MLA Citation Style for Academic Writing

Center for Writing Excellence
What is MLA Style?

MLA provides guidelines for—

➢ Overall manuscript format
➢ Page numbers
➢ In-text citations
➢ Works cited
MLA General Format

• Double-spaced throughout
• 1” Margins
• Paragraphs indented ½”
• Only one space after punctuation
• No title page
Sample First Page

Your name
Instructor’s Name
Your class
28 August 2019

Title

First paragraph xxxx xxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxxxx
xxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxx

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There is no great writing, only great rewriting. - Justice Brandeis
Writing is 1% inspiration and 99% elimination. - Louise Brooks
In-Text Citations

In MLA style, all direct quotes/passages, paraphrases, class notes, class discussions, theories, and ideas not your own must be documented. Citations are done using an author-page parenthetical style.
Adding and Omitting Words

Adding words Use [brackets] around the words you want to add
Original: “This is how you do it.”
Revised: “This is how [she does] it.”

Omitting Words Use . . . for words you want to omit
Original: “She loved the Earth, plants, and animals, but she didn’t recycle.”
Revised: “She loved the Earth. . . but she didn’t recycle.”
Direct Quotation:
Walker said, “When I was a young girl, our church was not only a place of worship, but the main location for neighbors’ gatherings as well, and I have integrated many of those situations into my novels” (26).

Paraphrase:
Walker said that her childhood was a combination of religious and social influences (26).

OR
Religious and social influences affected how she interpreted the world (Walker 26).
In-Text Citations

Two Authors

Examples:

Lewis and Johnson argue that “language change cannot be halted” (88).

After several studies, it has been determined that “language change cannot be halted” (Lewis and Johnson 88).
In-Text Citations

Three or More Authors

List only the first author’s last name, and use et al. for the remaining ones.

Examples:
According to Curran et al., “global warming needs to be taken seriously by individuals who believe there is no scientific evidence to support it” (65).

“Global warming needs to be taken seriously by individuals who believe there is no scientific evidence to support it (Curran et al. 65).
In-Text Citations

Multiple Works by the Same Author

When citing multiple works by the same author, include author’s name and identify each work either by italics (books), or by quotation marks (articles or titles of short stories).

Example:

Gilman’s narrator in “The Yellow Wallpaper” lives in a patriarchal society, whereas in “Her Story,” the main characters live in a matriarchal society.
In-Text Citations

Unknown Author

Use the first few words of the title in place of an author’s name

Example:

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”).

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Corporate Authors

If the government agency is the author, list the name of the government first, followed by a comma, and then the name of the agency.

“Employment in the private sector declined in the second quarter” (United States, Dept. of Labor, 272).
In the play *Titus Andronicus*, the Goth queen Tamora pleads for her son’s life:

TITUS. I give him you, the noblest that survives,  
The eldest son of this distressed queen.

TAMORA. Stay, Roman brethren, gracious conqueror,  
victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,  
A mother’s tears in passion for her son;  
And if thy sons were dear to three,  
O, think my son to be as dear to me! (1. 1. 119-25)
In Alcott’s “A Whisper in the Dark”, Sybil is a representation of that strong feminine identity without having to be masculine as symbolized by her hair. In various sections at the beginning of the short story, Sybil narrates her appearance in lengthy paragraphs:

I surveyed myself in the long mirror as I had never done before, and saw there a little figure, slender, yet stately, in a dress of foreign fashion, ornamented with lace and carnation ribbons . . . while blond hair wavy and golden, was gathered into an antique knot of curls behind, with a carnation fillet, and below a blooming dark-eyed face, just then radiant with girlish vanity and eagerness and hope. (Alcott 173)
Reflecting on the incident in Baltimore, Cullen concludes, “Of all the things that happened here / That’s all that I remember” (11-12).

*Place quotation marks around a line or verse. Use forward slash (/) to separate line breaks and put a space before and after the slash. Use two forward slashes (//) for stanza breaks*
In-text Citations

*Indirect Quotations*

When a quotation contains cited material from a secondary source, the original source must be acknowledged.

When possible, MLA recommends going to the original source to quote from it directly.
In-text Citations

Indirect Quotations

Original Source: In this original source, Alison Morgan quotes Joseph Flynn. Flynn explains how Yeats made connections in a field where he had few contacts: “Yeats was attempting to create a national identity for Ireland through poetry, literature, and theater, and relied on his friend and mentor Lady Augusta Gregory to make introductions for him” (123).

In-text citation:
Flynn contends that, “Yeats was attempting to create a national identity for Ireland through poetry, literature, and theater, and relied on his friend and mentor Lady Augusta Gregory to make introductions for him” (qtd. in Morgan 123).

Works Cited: (in addition to your book by Alison Morgan)
Works Cited

**Basic Format**

- Use Works Cited in the top center of a new page. Do not underline, bold, or italicize.

- Maintain double-spacing throughout, including between citation entries.

- Indent second and subsequent lines after the first line (hanging indent).
Works Cited

Core Elements

Author. “Title of Source.” Title of Container 1, Other Contributors Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location. Title of Container 2, Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.

A container is the “larger whole” that holds the source. A book is the container that holds a specific source such as a poem, an essay, or a narrative.

Not all sources have Container 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Author.</th>
<th>Goldman, Anne.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Title of source.</td>
<td>“Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Title of container,</td>
<td><em>The Georgia Review,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Version,</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number,</td>
<td>vol. 64, no. 1,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Publisher,</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Publication date,</td>
<td>2015,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Title of 2nd container,</td>
<td>JSTOR,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Location. (Using 2nd container)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/41403188">www.jstor.org/stable/41403188</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Works Cited

Types of Containers

Container 1
• Periodical that contains articles
• Television series that consists of several episodes
• Website that posts articles
• Book with several chapters

Container 2
• Publishers such as Google Books
• Academic databases such as JSTOR
• Streaming services such as Netflix
Works Cited

Capitalizing Titles

Parts of speech that are not capitalized when they are in the middle of a title include:

• Articles (a, an, the)
• Prepositions (against, as, between, in, of, to): The Merchant of Venice
• Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet)
• “to” infinitives (How to Write a Resume)
Works Cited

Formatting the Text Title for Non-Print Sources

**Italics (whole works):**

- The title of a television series
- Website
- Record album

**Quotation Marks (smaller, specific works):**

- The episode of the television series
- The posting or article on the Website
- The song on the album
- A tweet
Works Cited

Italic for larger texts, such as a novel or book, and for volume of collected works:


Quotation marks for titles of shorter works, such as essays, short stories, and poems:

Quotation marks for title of article, and italics for title of periodicals (journal, magazine, newspaper):
Works Cited

Books and Periodicals

Book

Magazine
If the focus is on the translation of a source, treat the translators as the authors:

Performance of an individual:


A film or television series:
Works Cited

Authors

One author:

Two authors:

Three or more authors, use et al.:
Works Cited

Editors

One editor:

Two or more editors:

An essay in a collection:
Works Cited

Corporate Author

Institution, organization, or government agency reports:

When the organization is also the author, start with title, do not include an author, and list the organization as publisher:
Works Cited

Citing Online Sources

• Follow the order for citations in general.
• If no author is found, use the title of the article or webpage.
• Use the first few words from the title.
• Only use accession date if content is likely to change.
Works Cited

Online Sources

Scholarly Article:

Magazine Article:
Works Cited

Online Sources

Follow the same rules as though citing a print source, but include the website URL

With an Author:
Accession date is included because blogs can change.

Without an Author:
With publisher information:

Without publisher information:
Ellis, Lindsay. "Death, Personified." Youtube, uploaded by PBS Digital Studios, 24 Jan 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vQjHILQ0OQ.
MLA Resources

CWE Digital Dashboard
https://www.montclair.edu/center-for-writing-excellence/cwe-digital-dashboard/resources-for-writers/citing-sources/#MLA

MLA Website
https://www.mla.org/

Online-Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/
Q&A and Discussion

• There is no great writing, only great rewriting.
  --Justice Brandeis

• Writing is 1 percent inspiration, and 99 percent elimination.
  --Louise Brooks