MLA Citation Style for Academic Writing

9th Edition
What is MLA Style?

**MLA** provides guidelines for—

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

- Double-spaced throughout
- 1” margins
- Paragraphs indented ½”
- Only one space after punctuation
- No title page
Language Usage

- Write in a clear and direct manner.
- Use formal, academic style.
- Use inclusive language.
- Do not use contractions: don’t, can’t, etc.
Inclusive Language

- Be respectful while describing individuals and groups.
- Avoid bias that could make people feel excluded.
- Strive for language that recognizes that your audience includes people from different backgrounds.
Inclusive Language

● Make reference to identity relevant.
  ○ **Avoid** phrases like *African American congresswoman, female conductor, transgender actor* because they can imply being outside the norm.

● Be precise and specific. Broad language can ignore diversity.
  ○ For example, instead of “Native American” languages, give the name of the language, such as Navajo or Cherokee.

● Avoid stereotyping.
  ○ Chair or chair person, not chairman
Inclusive Language

Examples

- Use people-first language, avoiding definition by a single experience.
  - Avoid: a blind person, a depressed person.
  - Use: a person who is blind, a person with depression.

- Use thoughtful capitalization. In doubt? Check the dictionary.
  - Use Egyptian, Mormon, bisexual, retiree.
  - Black is now preferred by many to black.
In-Text Citations

How to Avoid Plagiarism

● In MLA style, all direct quotes/passages, paraphrases, class notes, class discussions, theories, and ideas not your own must be documented.

● Citations use an author-page parenthetical style.
In-Text Citations

How to Avoid Plagiarism

• A paraphrase should convey only the important details of the original material into your own words and sentence structure.

• Maintaining the sentence structure of the original and plugging in synonyms is insufficient.

• Careful note taking, recording the original source along with its page number, and identifying when you copy the source word for word will also help you avoid plagiarism.
Adding and Omitting Words

Adding words
Use [brackets] around the words you want to add.

Original: “We are taking the only measures that we have to bring inflation down.”

Revised: “We [the Fed] are taking the only measures that we have to bring inflation down.”

Omitting Words
Use . . . for words you want to omit.

Original: “The process of getting inflation back down to 2 percent has a long way to go and is likely to be bumpy.”

Revised: “The process of getting inflation back down to 2 percent . . . is likely to be bumpy.”
Adding and Omitting Words

When Using Word

When using Microsoft Word, the autocorrect function will delete the spaces in between ellipses.

To prevent that you can:
- Change the autocorrect function by going into Settings
- Use the Find and Replace tool:
In MLA, the **full name** of a source is used on first mention. Then, you just need the **surname** of the author.

In Md Sarfaraj Nawab and Asrin Khatun’s “Exploring the Surveillance Culture: A Study of the Social Media Syndrome of the Present Day with Special Reference to George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four,*” they say, "[T]he purpose of the novel is actually to exude this superficiality because in this Orwellian society ‘individualism’ is a criminal offense and ‘privacy,’ a non-existent thing" (110).

In the same article, Nawab and Khatun draw a connection to *Nineteen Eighty Four*’s surveillance society with today’s social media consumption, arguing that the lines of our reality are blurred because of smartphones, causing people to act in specific and unhealthy ways to acquire the virtual approval of others (111).
American Exceptionalism as our founders conceived it was defined by what America was, at home. Foreign policy existed to defend, not define, what America was.

Paraphrase (unacceptable): American exceptionalism as the founding fathers envisioned the concept was given meaning by America as a homeland. Programs focused on other countries were there to protect America, not delineate it.

Paraphrase (acceptable): As conceived, American Exceptionalism was based on the country’s domestic identity, which foreign policy did not shape but merely guarded. OR, As Walter A. McDougall argues, for the founding fathers American Exceptionalism was based on the country’s domestic identity, which foreign policy did not shape but merely guarded (37).
Direct Quotation:
Peetz stated, “If there was one area where technology has failed miserably to live up to its promise, it is in that area of transport” (55).

Paraphrase:
Peetz said that technology has not been successful in reaching its potential concerning the area of transportation (55).

OR

Regarding transport, technology has been unsuccessful in rising to its potential (Peetz 55).
In-Text Citations

**Two Authors**

Examples:

Others, like Jay Lemery and Paul Auerbach, note that doctors have not yet adequately explained the effects climate change will have on human health (4-5). Lemery and Auerbach’s book focuses on the human, not the environmental, risks.

OR

Others note that doctors have not yet adequately explained the effects climate change will have on human health (Lemery and Auerbach 4-5).
In-Text Citations

Three or More Authors

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

Examples:
Raymond Nickerson and colleagues argue that the truth value of statements—their premises and conclusions—is one factor that affects how people are persuaded by arguments (135).

OR

The authors argue that the truth value of statements—their premises and conclusions—is one factor that affects how people are persuaded by arguments (Nickerson et al. 135).
In-Text Citations

Multiple Works by the Same Author

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

Example:
Chincholi describes how technology can be helpful with visualizing complex ideas in educational settings (“Using Technology in Education”). However, he mentions that we must also address issues with energy consumption in order to use AI technology sustainably (“How to Unleash the Potential of AI”).

Corresponding Works Cited Entries:


In-Text Citations

Unknown Author

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

Example:
“With courses available in almost every subject, and flexible timetables to suit almost every lifestyle, students are increasingly turning to online learning as a viable alternative to on-campus study” (“Online Learning in 2023”).

Corresponding Works Cited Entry:
In-Text Citations

Corporate or Organization Authors

Corporate or organization authors can be shortened to the shortest noun phrase when it is a parenthetical citation.

Example:
According to one study of climate change, the “speed of warming is more than ten times that at the end of an ice age, the fastest known natural sustained change on a global scale” (National Academy and Royal 9).
In-Text Citations

**Government Authors**

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

**Example:**

“It is States and communities, as well as public and private organizations of all kinds, that establish schools and colleges, develop curricula, and determine requirements for enrollment and graduation” (United States, Dept. of Education).
In-Text Citations

Drama and Plays

- Put the character’s name in capital letters and a period after their name.
- Follow the pattern of spacing in the play and use hanging indents for subsequent lines.

Example: 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 a strong feminine identity without having to be masculine as symbolized by her hair. In various sections at the beginning of the novel, 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. (298)

Alcott, Louisa May. *A Modern Mephistopheles; and A Whisper in the Dark*. Boston, 1889.
In-Text Citations

Poetry

- 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.

Example:
Reflecting on the incident in Baltimore, Cullen concludes, “Of all the things that happened there / That’s all that I remember.” (lines 11-12).

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42618/incident-56d2213a45f36
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:
Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 289).

Work Cited;
(Do not include Samuel Johnson in Works Cited)
Works Cited Page

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

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.

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.

Writing is 1% inspiration, and 99% elimination. — Louise Brooks
There is no great writing, only great rewriting. — Justice Brandeis
Types of Containers

Container 1
- Periodical that contains articles (journal, magazine, newspaper)
- 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
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Author.</strong></td>
<td>Goldman, Anne.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Title of source.</strong></td>
<td>“Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Title of container,</strong></td>
<td><em>The Georgia Review,</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Version,</strong></td>
<td>-----</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Number,</strong></td>
<td>vol. 64, no. 1,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Publisher,</strong></td>
<td>-----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Publication date,</strong></td>
<td>2015,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Title of 2nd container,</strong></td>
<td><em>JSTOR,</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Cited


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

- Articles (a, an, the):
  *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- 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 Titles for Non-Print Sources

Italics (whole works/container 1):

• Title of a television series
• Website
• Record album

Quotation Marks (shorter, specific works):

• Episode of the television series
• Article on website
• Song on an album
• Tweet
Works Cited

*Italics for larger texts (novels, books, volumes of collected works):*


*Quotation marks for titles of shorter works (essays, short stories, poems):*

*Quotation marks for titles of articles and italics for titles of periodicals (journals, magazines, newspapers):*

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*Writing is 1% inspiration, and 99% elimination. — Louise Brooks*
*There is no great writing, only great rewriting. — Justice Brandeis*
Books and Periodicals

Book

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

If the focus is on the work rather than the translator, cite as you would any other book. Add “translated by” and follow with the name(s) of the translator(s):

Works Cited

Film and TV

Emphasizing the creator of an entire series:

Performance of an individual:
Works Cited

Film and TV

Emphasizing a director:

Actors whose contributions are the focus of your discussion:
Works Cited

Authors

One author:

Two authors:

More than two authors, use et al.:
Works Cited

Editors

One editor:

Two editors:

Three or more editors:
Works Cited

Essay in Collection or Chapter in Book

An essay in a collection:

Chapter in a book:
Works Cited

Corporate Author

Institution, organization, or government agency reports published by a different entity:


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


*Writing is 1% inspiration, and 99% elimination.* — Louise Brooks

*There is no great writing, only great rewriting.* — Justice Brandeis
Annotated bibliographies describe or evaluate sources and use succinct phrases.

Example:


Comprehensive history of Australian print censorship, with discussion of this history’s implications for questions of transnationalism and the construction of the reader.
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.
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:**

Works Cited

Online Sources

Scholarly Article:

Magazine Article:
Works Cited

Online Sources

With publisher information:
“Materials for Teachers.” Academy of American Poets, www.poets.org/materials-teachers. Accessed 27 July 2022. (Note: Accession date is included since there is no publication date.)

Without publisher information:
Ellis, Lindsay. "Death, Personified." YouTube, uploaded by PBS Digital Studios, 24 Jan. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vQjHILQ0OQ.
Works Cited in Examples


Writing is 1% inspiration, and 99% elimination. — Louise Brooks

There is no great writing, only great rewriting. — Justice Brandeis
Works Cited in Examples


Works Cited in Examples

MLA Resources

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

MLA Style Website
www.mla.org/MLA-Style

Online-Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University
www.owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/
Remember

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