

Citation of Sources Using MLA Style

How are sources documented in a paper?

Sources are documented in a paper in two ways: an entry on the works cited page at the end of the assignment and a parenthetical citation in the text. Each of these must be written in a specific way.

Students should use the **Modern Language Association (MLA) format** for both the works cited page and parenthetical citations in all projects, unless directed to use a different style.

Since the parenthetical citation format is tied directly to the works cited format, the works cited format will be explained first. Once the works cited format is understood, parenthetical citation becomes clear.

Works Cited Page

Sources that were used in your paper must appear on the assignment's works cited page. This is a separate page (or pages) that follows immediately after the body of the essay. It serves the purpose of a bibliography. It lists, in alphabetical order, all the sources used in the writing of the paper and all important information of each source.

Why is the page called the "works cited" page? *Works* is because different kinds of sources (generally, but not always written "works") are available and used (Otherwise it would have to be labeled "Books, Magazines, Interviews and Internet Sites [etc] Cited," which would get really awkward!) And *cited* means "made reference to." So the page is a list of sources you actually used to write your paper. If you don't cite it in your paper, it doesn't belong in the list, and if you cited it in your paper, the source must be listed.

The rules for recording sources on the works cited page would be simple if there were only one kind of source available. So it is the variety of source types which makes the works cited format complicated. The basic principle is that sources need to be identified with all the information needed for your reader to find a copy of that source.

Here are some general principles or logic of works cited format. Specific rules for different types of sources will be illustrated below.

1. Your works cited page heading will be capitalized and centered at the top of a separate page: Works Cited (not Works Cited Page).
2. Each source (called an *entry*) is listed alphabetically by the first important word of the first item in the entry, regardless of type of source or nature of that first item in the entry, and regardless of the order in which each is found in your paper.
3. The first item in any entry is always the author, or the title if no author is named (This is a common enough occurrence that MLA works cited format has a rule for it. See examples below.).
4. Entries are not numbered.
5. Entries are double spaced, and double spaced between entries.
6. Right and left page margins for entries are the same as for the entire paper.
7. Pay attention to all capitalization, punctuation, and spacing. Every detail is part of the correct form.

The general format of any works cited entry is as follows:

Author's Name. Title. Publishing information. Medium of publication.

It is the publishing information which varies the most, and these varieties will be illustrated below. There are, however, consistent expectations for the first two items—author and title—which can be applied to all sources.

The author is always listed as Last name, First name.

Champlain, Marie.

If two or three authors are identified, each is listed this way:

Boeck, Wilhelm, and Jaime Sabartes.

McCrum, Robert, William Cran, and Robert McNeil.

These are listed in the order found on the title page of the source, not alphabetized by you.

If more than three authors are identified, the Latin expression et al. (“and others”) is used:

Young, Ralph, et al. [Even though it is Latin, it is not italicized.]

MLA allows the listing of all the authors by name, though this choice is rare.

If a source has a corporate (group) author, list that corporation or group in the author space:

National Reading Council.

Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

If no author is identified—a rather common occurrence in research work—the title “slides forward” and becomes the first item in the entry. Short works, such as poems and essays, are enclosed in quotation marks. Long works, such as books and encyclopedias, are italicized.

“The Sniper in the Forest.”

The Dictionary of Obscure English Words.

Remember to apply these expectations to your sources, as not all examples and varieties will be listed in this document.

Book, Textbook, or Pamphlet in Print Medium:

Author's last name, First name. *Title of book*. City of publication: Publisher, year of publication. Medium of publication.

Jones, Charles. *On the Beach*. Chicago: Squire Books, 1984. Print.

Sanders, Mary E. *How the West Was Really Won: the story of Black and Irish Americans in the Nineteenth Century*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2000. Print.

A book with an editor rather than an author follows this exact format, except the editor's name is followed with ed. before the title:

Joy, Charles, ed. *Great Sea Voyagers*. The rest follows as above.

This rule applies to two, three, or more editors as above, also.

Work in an Anthology in Print Medium:

An anthology is a collection of works, such as poems or short stories, usually compiled by an editor. In this case the format is:

Author's last name, First name. Title of work. Title of source. ed. [for editor] by First name Last name.
City of publication: Publisher, year of publication. page numbers where work is found. Medium of publication.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. *The Collected Works of Mark Twain*. ed. by Bernard De Voto. New York: Scribner's, 1985. 145-330. Print.

Dickinson, Emily. "Time's Lesson." *Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson*. ed. by Mabel Lois Odd and T.W. Higginson. New York: Avenel, 1982. 56. Print.

Note: If you use two or more works from the same anthology, you will list that anthology two or more times on your works cited page, but the title section of each entry will be different. The reason for this is that you must cite Twain (and his writing) in your paper, not De Voto.

Same Author, Multiple Sources in Print Medium:

If your works cited includes citing two or more works by the same author, use the author's name only for the FIRST entry. For subsequent entries, use three hyphens followed by a period. The three hyphens must stand for exactly the same name or names as in the preceding entry (Your word processing program may replace the hyphens with an extra long dash. This is not a mistake.).

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. New York: Scribner's, 1980. Print.

---. *The Gilded Age*. New York: Harper Collins, 1982. Print.

Note that alphabetizing is by the title of the book.

Reference Work or Encyclopedia in Print Medium:

"Title of Article as it appears in the reference." *Title of Encyclopedia*. Year of edition. Print.

"Franklin, Benjamin." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2002 ed. Print.

"State Government." *World Book*. 2003 ed. Print.

Note: If the author's name is given, begin the entry with that name: Last name, First name. (Some articles in reference works include initials of authors identified elsewhere in the work. Use the author if you can identify him or her.)

Article in a Periodical (Newspaper or Magazine) in Print Medium:

Author's last name, First name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical Source* Date: page(s) or location.
Print.

newspaper:

Author's last name, First name. "Title of article." *Name of Newspaper* day month year, Edition if given: Section letter and page number. Print.

Jerome, Paula. "The 2008 Presidential Election Campaign in Review." *New York Times* 12 Nov. 2008: A1+. Print.

Note: Capitalize the article title as the newspaper does—not all newspapers follow the same capitalization style. The + indicates that the article continues on other pages, a common occurrence in newspapers.

magazine:

Shrewsbury, Norm. "Llama Trekking for Landscapes." *Outdoor Photographer* Sept. 1991: 26-34. Print.

Morris, Betsy. "Coke: The Real Story—How One of the World's Great Companies Lost Its Way." *Fortune* 31 May 2004: 84-98. Print.

Note: Both newspapers and magazines often print articles without naming the author; use the title as the first item, as illustrated above.

Sacred texts:

Italicize titles of individual published editions of scriptural writings, such as *The New International Version*, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, *The Upanishads: A Selection for the Modern Reader*. Cite these sources in the works cited list like any other published book.

New International Version. Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1984. Print.

The Koran. Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Elmhurst: Tahrike, 2000. Print.

Web sites:

Because the Internet is an ever-changing structure, citing Web sources creates some unique challenges. One consistent works cited format is therefore impossible. Here we will present some basic formats only.

An entry for a website usually contains most of the following, in this order:

Name of the author, editor, etc. "Title of the work." *Title of the overall website*, if distinct from item 2.
Version or edition, if applicable. Publisher or sponsor of the site. Date of publication. Medium of publication. Date of access.

Note that the "Medium of publication" is in a slightly different location for Internet sources.

If you cannot find some of these items, cite what is available.

"Weather Patterns Help Predict Dengue Fever Outbreaks." *Science Daily*, 27 Oct. 2009.
ScienceDaily LLC. Web. 12 Nov. 2009.

"Motorists be aware: New crosswalk at the Fort Piqua Plaza." *News Summary*. Dayton Daily News. Dayton: Cox Ohio Publishing, 20 May 2008. Web. 20 May 2008.

MLA discourages including the URL, because URLs can change quickly. However, if you believe the URL will assist your reader in accessing the site, you may include it. Place it immediately following the

date of access, a period and a space. Enclose the URL in angle brackets and end with a period. The end of your citation would look like this:

22 July 2009. <<http://www.name.com/>>.

Many of the print sources listed above may also be found on the web. If you access the web version, the works cited entry will be a combination of the print information and the web information. Begin with the relevant print facts as shown above, and replace "Print" with the following information:

Title of the database, if used (*italicized*). Web. Date of access.

book:

Cass, Arthur. *The Spanish Civil War and its Aftermath*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. *Oxford Romance Project*. Web. 14 Apr. 2009.

short story:

Bierce, Ambrose. "The Grateful Bear." *Cobwebs From an Empty Skull*. Ambrose Bierce. 1874. *The Literature Network*. Web. 9 May 2008.

magazine:

Shrewsbury, Norm. "Llama Trekking for Landscapes." *Outdoor Photographer* Sept. 1991. Web. 20 June 2008.

Television or Radio Broadcast:

An entry for either of these generally includes the following, in this order:

Title of episode or segment, in quotation marks. *Title of program or series*. Name of network, if any. Call letters and city of local station, if any. Broadcast date. Medium of publication.

"The Panama Canal." CBS Evening News. CBS. KELO, Sioux Falls, 27 Jan. 2008. Television.

"Car Talk." Natl. Public Radio. KWIT, Sioux City, 7 Nov. 2009. Radio.

If you use a transcript of a television or radio broadcast, identify the medium and add the word Transcript to the end:

"Car Talk." Natl. Public Radio. KWIT, Sioux City, 7 Nov. 2009. Print. Transcript.

"Car Talk." Natl. Public Radio. KWIT, Sioux City, 7 Nov. 2009. Web. Transcript.

Film or Videocassette Recording:

Title of film. Director's name. Distributor, Date produced. Medium of publication.

The Grapes of Wrath. Dir. John Ford. 20th Century Fox, 1940. Film.

If viewed on a DVD or videocassette, replace Film with the appropriate medium, capitalized.

Other Sources:

Interview:

Published interview:

Obama, Barak. Interview by Jay Leno. The Tonight Show. NBC. KELO, Sioux Falls. 18 Oct. 2009. Television.

The beginning of an interview entry will be consistent, but the “publishing” details will vary for radio, print, web, etc., formats, as shown above.

Interview you conducted:

Last name, First name of person interviewed. Personal, or Telephone, interview. Day Month Year.

Crane, Simon. Personal interview. 19 May 2008.

Stover, Franklin. Telephone interview. 14 Jan. 2009.

Article on CD-ROM or DVD-ROM:

These entries are similar to those for books, but with the medium of publication included.

Author’s (or editor’s) name, if available. Title of publication, italicized. Editor, if relevant. Edition, release, or version, if relevant. Place of publication. Name of publisher. Date of publication. Medium of publication. Supplementary information.

If you cannot find some of these items, cite what is available.

World War II. Encarta. Seattle: Microsoft, 1999. CD-ROM.

Michigan’s Lumber Industry. Ed. Charles Franks. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2000. DVD-ROM.

Sometimes the source is published periodically, like a magazine. In that case, the exact date is placed after the medium identification: CD-Rom. Feb. 1998.

Letter or E-mail You Received:

Letter writer’s last name, First name. Letter to the author. Date you received letter. TS [for typescript].

Bush, George. Letter to the author. 12 Sept. 2001. TS.

An e-mail includes the title from the message line, if any, in quotation marks and the medium of delivery:

Benson, Sarah. “Re: Slavery.” Message to the author. 16 Feb. 2008. E-mail.

Public Address, Speech, Lecture, or Public Reading

Speaker's last name, First name. “Title of presentation, if known.” Meeting and the sponsoring organization (if applicable). Location. Date. Method of delivery.

Yarbrough, Steven, Ph.D.. “Journey’s End or Beginning?” Alpha Omega Academy graduation ceremony. Grace Inn at Ahwatukee. 5 May 2004. Address.

McClure, Andrew R. “Story-Time for Children.” Starbucks, Chattanooga. 21 Mar. 2003. Reading.

Haugh, H. "Hope in Adversity." Saint James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Raleigh. 16 Aug. 2003. Sermon.

All of the above examples are patterned after the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research papers, Seventh Edition (2009). As MLA revises its citation standards, "Citation of Sources Using MLA Style" will be updated periodically. Students are encouraged to access the handbook to stay current.

Creating Hanging Indents

By now you've noticed that each sample entry above and below that takes more than one line is laid out in an unusual way. The first line of the entry extends out to the left-hand margin, but the rest of the entry is indented. This is called a *hanging indent*. Each entry for a source that takes up more than one line must use a hanging indent.

Hanging indents are easy to create on a word processor. Refer to the instructions (or help button) for the word processing program you use for setting up hanging indents.

To create hanging indents manually, look at the margin markers at the top of the page. Normally, the left-hand margin marker consists of two small arrows. Drag the bottom arrow to the right one half inch to create a hanging indent.

Don't substitute a carriage return and a tab or individual spaces to create hanging indents because when your work is transferred to a different computer the result may look quite different—and wrong. Also, do not force a new line by changing your right margin. Keep the margin consistent throughout your paper and allow the computer to create a second line if necessary.

Parenthetical Citation

A parenthetical citation is an "in-text" style of documentation. It is set off by parentheses within the actual text of an essay or other research project. Parenthetical citations are *much* less complicated than the works cited format, but they do depend upon the works cited format being done correctly. That is, again, why the works cited page needs at least to be "roughed out" before or as you write your paper, so that your parenthetical citations are clear.

A parenthetical citation is a key or "shorthand" to an entry on the works cited page. The citation contains a piece of information which leads the reader to the full description of the source on the works cited page. The basic form is the author's name and the page number where the information is found:

(Lewis 35).

Some circumstances require more than this in parentheses, and others require less, as will be illustrated below.

The example, (Lewis 35), will help you to understand why works cited entries and parenthetical citations are set up the way they are. Lewis is a last name, and will be the first item in the entry. Works cited entries are also alphabetized and use hanging indents. Thus, whatever "Lewis" wrote, the reader will be able to find that entry quickly, as it "sticks out" clearly about half way down the list. Conversely, if "Lewis" is information found in the middle or end of an entry, the reader will "never" find that source in the list. Be sure your works cited and parenthetical citations cooperate with each other.

Standard Parenthetical Citation Example:

Here is a paragraph from a research paper on Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*:

An indication that Huckleberry Finn is beginning to see Jim as a person, not just a “thing,” a slave, comes after Huck pretends the fog did not separate them and sees the pain it causes Jim. He apologizes, “. . .and I warn’t ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn’t do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn’t done that one if I’d a knowed it would make him feel that way” (Twain 82).

The citation comes after the material that needs crediting, as close as possible to the material without interrupting the flow of the sentence or idea. Notice that there is no punctuation between the name and the page number, and the word *page* (or its abbreviations, *p* or *p.*) is not found. Notice also that the period for the end of the quote, but not the quotation mark, is placed *after* the end parenthesis mark.

Rules for Special Circumstances:

Two, three or more authors:

(Sturgis and Beresford 24)

(Bradley Beatty and Long 345)

(Marks et al. 56) Note the period included with et al.

A corporate author:

(Bureau of Labor and Statistics 13)

No identified author:

Use the title, as this is the first item which “sticks out” in the works cited entry. However, titles should be shortened to keep the citation as short as possible. “The Sniper in the Forest” and *Chemistry Connections to Our Changing World* will be cited this way:

(“Sniper” 15)

(*Chemistry* 113)

Always include the title word used for alphabetizing in your title shortening. If you shorten “The Sniper in the Forest:” to “Forest,” you will send your reader to the *F* section of the works cited list, not the *S* section, where it will be found. Also notice the punctuation. It indicates a title, not a person or corporate author. A research paper on Mark Twain would certainly include citing Twain’s writing, as well as a likely essay *about* Twain with his name in the title. To avoid confusing your reader, remember that (Twain 17) without punctuation indicates a work *by* Twain; (“Twain” 4) indicates an article *about* Twain.

Parenthetical citations are designed to be kept brief. An alternate way of citing includes naming the author in the sentence or paragraph. This method allows the parenthetical citation to contain only the page number.

Twain gives an indication that Huckleberry Finn is beginning to see Jim as a person, not just a thing,” a slave. This indication comes after he pretends the fog did not separate them and sees the pain it causes Jim. He apologizes, “. . .and I warn’t ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn’t do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn’t done that one if I’d a knowed it would make him feel that way” (82).

This procedure can be used with corporate authors and titles also: The Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports that. . . (4). According to *Chemistry Connecting to Our Changing World*, “Radioactivity is the. . .

(102). However, resist the temptation to write, The Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports on page 4 that..." as this is not acceptable. And always be sure your specific source is clear before using only the page number in parentheses.

Citing a large amount of information in one paragraph:

When you have information from one source, you should cite that information at the end of the paragraph. If the information came from several pages, the citation includes all pages: (Jenson 33- 37). Separate pages rather than inclusive pages are indicated by a comma: (Jenson 33, 36).

If information came from two sources, you may still cite at the end of the paragraph in a combined parenthetical citation. The sources are separated by a semicolon: (Smith 42-44; Afman 28).

Citing a web source:

Some web sources have pagination or other markers, but many do not. For this reason, these citations do not include page numbers, just the information from the first item in the works cited entry—name or title: ("Weather Patterns"). However, in the case of a long work of literature on the web, page numbers, or at least chapter number, will assist your reader in finding the reference.

Circumstances to include more than author and page number:

If you cite two or more works written by the same author, include a comma and a key word or two of the title, correctly punctuated: (Twain, *Adventures* 214) (Twain, *Gilded* 47) Distinguishing similar titles requires additional words, also.

If you happen to have sources written by authors with the same last name, include the first name in the citation: (Hoekema, Anthony 34) (Hoekema, David 45).

Plays and poems:

For plays, do not use page numbers. Instead, use the quotation's or scene's division number, written in descending order (act, scene, canto, book, part, line) with periods separating all the numbers.

Shakespeare writes, "Now the hungry lion roars / And the wolf behowls the moon" (*Midsummer* 5.1.341-2). The numbers in the citation stand for act 5, scene 1, lines 341 through 342 of *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

For lines from poems, use the poem's line number; if there are no line numbers for the poem, simply cite the title of the poem in quotation marks. You can cite up to three lines this way.

Shakespeare concludes with the line, "I never writ, nor no man ever loved" (14).

Emily Dickinson explained that "God made a little gentian; / It tried to be a rose / And failed, and all the summer laughed" ("XLVIII" 1-3).

As you will have noticed, naming the source within the sentence or paragraph may be used in combination with the various cases illustrated above.

Quoting Format and Parenthetical Citation

For lengthier quotations, more than four lines long, quotation marks are not used. Instead, after starting a new line, the quoted material must be indented an additional inch from the left margin. This is called *block quoting*. Usually, a colon will introduce the quoted material. When the quoted material is

completed, a parenthetical citation follows it, inside the end punctuation. (This example is single spaced; all material in a research paper is double spaced.)

... Jules Verne was a master when creating suspenseful prose throughout his novel, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Here is a sample from that novel:

Captain Nemo never took his eyes off the manometer. Since the fall of the iceberg, the Nautilus had risen about a hundred and fifty feet, but it still remained at the same angle to the perpendicular. Suddenly a slight movement was felt in the hold. Evidently it was righting a little. Things hanging in the saloon were sensibly returning to their normal position. The partitions were nearing upright. No one spoke. With beating hearts we watched and felt the straightening. The boards became horizontal under our feet. Ten minutes passed (358).

Note: Do not change your margins to “force” a quote into more than four lines. Use your paper’s normal margins, and, if the quote is longer than four lines, then block quote it.

Quoting a poem of four lines or more requires you to lay out the poem as the writer intended the lines to be on the page. Indent one inch as the above example does.

All of the above examples are patterned after the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research papers, Seventh Edition*. (2009). As MLA revises its citation standards, “Citation of Sources Using MLA Style” will be updated periodically. Students are encouraged to access this handbook in a library or by purchase to stay current.