

MLA Style (8th edition---2016)

A handout from the Writing Lab (College of Charleston)

Previous editions of the *MLA Handbook* have been reference books for citing various sources. However, the new edition (2016) of the *MLA Handbook* is different. It provides an overarching template for *all* citations with core elements that can be chosen, in a specific order, based on the different requirements for particular sources. This approach centers not on a source's publication format but "on elements common to most sources and on the means of flexibly combining those elements to create appropriate documentation for any source" (xiii).

Here are the **core elements** (Note the punctuation after each one.):

The Core Elements
1. Author.
2. Title of source.
3. Title of container,
4. Other contributors,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication date,
9. Location.

What do "element," "container," and "location" mean?

1. Element: These are the various components that may exist in any citation: Authors, Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication Date, and Location.
2. Container: This word refers to larger works (like a database or newspaper) that contain smaller works (like individual articles). These smaller works are "nested" within the larger work.
3. Location: This term *no longer refers to place of publication*. This term now refers to page numbers, URLs, permalinks, any digital object identifiers (DOIs).

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

The Definition of Plagiarism

According to the *MLA Handbook*, plagiarism is the act of “presenting another person’s ideas, information, expressions, or entire work as one’s own” (6-7). Thus, the most logical way to avoid plagiarism is to give the author credit for the information cited in your paper. You must give credit regardless of whether or not you decide to summarize, paraphrase, or copy directly—the three ways to use your sources. Be sure to have a balance between quotations and paraphrases.

The Three Ways to Use Sources

1. You summarize—that is, give a general overview in your own words of the main point of the entire source.
2. You paraphrase—that is, explain specifics from a particular paragraph or section of the source in your own words. When paraphrasing, try to avoid simply following the structure of the original source and then using a synonym for each word in the original. You should put the entire idea which the sentence or paragraph gets across in your own words. If you cannot do so effectively, it is best to quote directly from your source.
3. You directly quote from your source—that is, you copy word for word, punctuation mark for punctuation mark, etc. from the source.

When you begin writing your paper, you will have to be selective in choosing your material, and you will have to give credit to the source of the material—whether summarized, paraphrased, or quoted. Giving credit in the text of your paper is called documentation.

DOCUMENTATION

To be an honest and responsible researcher, you must give parenthetical references (also known as in-text citations) in the text of your paper when you use any idea or quotation from a source other than your own. Following is a list of the primary steps to follow in documenting materials using the MLA Style sheet. They have been updated to reflect the recent changes made in the *MLA Handbook* published in 2016.

How often do I have to give parenthetical references?

Credit must be given when you quote directly from a source and place the sentence or phrase in quotation marks. Technically, you own each word which you do not put in quotation marks. Thus, in addition to using parenthetical references after a direct quotation, you must give credit to your source each time your sentence expresses an idea which is not your own.

EXCEPTION: When you elaborate on the ideas in one source for several sentences, you need not have a page number in parenthesis at the end of each sentence—especially if the context makes it clear that all of the information came from the same source or even the same page. In

this case, place a page number in parenthesis at the end of a sentence in which you first mention the material you are paraphrasing or summarizing. If the rest of the material is on the same page, and the reader knows that all the information within the paragraph came from the same source, you will need only one more parenthetical reference to the source; this reference will be at the end of the last sentence in which you give information from this source.

Example

An analysis of the three ways of looking at a blackbird can be found in a study by Erin Gray. First, there is the most obvious: as a bird which is black (Gray 22). Second, the same critic claims, the bird can be seen as a messenger. Third, there is the association of the bird with ancient mythology, including the connection with the demon lover (Gray 22).

What's a scholarly source?

A journal is a scholarly periodical, such as *Afro-American Literary Studies*; the magazine is a popular periodical, such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the like.

There are four ways to give credit to a book, article, or essay in the body of your paper.

1. At the end of your sentence, place in parenthesis the last name of the author, followed by the page number. **Example:** Studies have shown that the number of unwanted pregnancies has quadrupled in the last decade (Simon 133).
2. You may also name your source's author in the sentence. In that case, all you need to do is put the page number in parenthesis. **Example:** Simon indicates that many studies have shown that the number of teenage pregnancies has quadrupled in the last decade (133).
3. If you have more than one source by the same author, you will have to abbreviate the title of the source which you are using in your parenthetical citation. For books or articles, use the first key/significant word(s) in the title—that is, do not use an article (“a,” “an,” or “the”) or a preposition (“in,” “to,” etc.) as part of your abbreviation. All words are considered key except articles and prepositions. The complete title of the book or article will be found only in the List of Works Cited.
4. If you have two authors with the same last name, you will have to help your reader distinguish between them. The easiest solution is to use the first initial of each author and follow it by a period. If the names of both authors begin with the same letter, you will have to write out the full name of each author whenever you cite that person's work.

NOTE: Occasionally, you may want to use the ideas of more than one source in a particular sentence. You should not, however, do so too often. If you are using three or four different sources and wish to put information from all of them in the same sentence, you should write the last name of each author and the page number and separate them with semicolons.

Example: Of the reasons for choosing abortion, the most frequently cited is unwanted pregnancy (Smith 125; Goodwin 66; James 89).

If you use information from more than three or four sources in one sentence, you are probably not writing as effectively as you should.

How do I cite digital sources in the body of my paper?

If your Works Cited entry looks like this:

Stark, Susan. "His Naked Villainy: Sir Ian McKellen Is No Garden-Variety Richard III."

Detroit News, 20 Jan. 1996, www.detnews.com/menu/Stories/32720.htm.

then the parenthetical reference in the body of the paper should look like this:

Fueled by a renewed interest in Shakespeare resulting from Kenneth Branagh's success in bringing the playwright to the big screen (Stark), the film sparked a controversy concerning Loncraine's choice of setting.

Here are more guidelines for citing electronic sources:

In parenthetical references, works on the World Wide Web are cited just like printed works—that is, if your source has no author, then you cite the title of the work in your parenthetical reference. If your source lacks numbering, omit numbers from your parenthetical references. If your source includes section numbering (such as numbering of paragraphs), give the relevant number preceded by the label par. or pars., citing the relevant numbers. Give the appropriate abbreviation before the numbers. If it uses sections or chapters, use sec. or secs. Or chs. or chs. **Example:** (Moulthrop pars. 19-20). (For a document on the Web, the page numbers of a printout should normally not be cited, because the pagination may vary in different printouts.)

EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION

A Book or Article with One Author

The number of unwanted pregnancies has quadrupled in the last decade (Simon 133).

A Book or Article with Two Authors

Working primarily with a collaborator, McClintcock discovered that many were wrong about chromosomes and genes (Vare and Hoffman 236).

A Book with Three or More Authors

The three most important factors are personality, attitude, and progress (Jameson et al. 33).

NOTE: You will put only the last name of the first author listed on the title page of a book or article.

Two Sources Written by the SAME Person

The three most important factors are personality, attitude, and progress (Jameson, *Teaching* 22).

Also contributing to teaching excellence is expertise in the subject area (Jameson, “Classroom” 67).

In the above examples, the first key/significant word in the title is listed. If you do not have more than one source by the same person, you do not need to put an abbreviation of the title.

Two or More Sources by People with the SAME Last Name:

Teaching for non-native speakers can be achieved best through avoiding subjects on which there is considerable disagreement from culture to culture (J. Garcia 45).

The most controversial subjects are religion and politics, but even such seemingly harmless issues like the roles of men and women have been found to cause unnecessary conflict in the classroom (M. Garcia 86).

NOTE: If the authors have the same first initial, type out their full first names.

Indirect Sources

Whenever you can, take material from the original source, not a secondhand one. Sometimes, however, only an indirect source is available. If what you quote or paraphrase is itself a quotation, put the abbreviation qtd. in (“quoted in”) before the indirect source you cite in your parenthetical reference.

Example: As Arthur Miller says, “When somebody is destroyed, everybody finally contributes to it, but in Willy’s case, the end product would be virtually the same” (qtd. in Martin and Meyer 375).

Months

NOTE: For months, abbreviate all but May, June, and July, so September would be Sept.

Forward Slash

NOTE: Using “Forward Slash”: “When a source presents multiple pieces of information for a single element in the entry—for instance, more than one publisher is named— separate them with a forward slash.

Tomlinson, Janis A., editor. *Goya: Images of Women*. National Gallery of Art / Yale UP, 2002.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

For all term papers, you must have a Works Cited page—that is, a list of the sources you used in *writing* the paper. The MLA Style sheet calls this the List of Works Cited. In compiling your list, make sure that everything in the list of Works Cited is mentioned in the body of the paper. More importantly, remember to include an entry for every source you use in your paper.

The sources will be arranged in alphabetical order according to the last name of the author. The last name should be listed first in each entry; it should be followed by a comma and the author's first name. When there is no author given, the entry is alphabetized according to the first word of the title, not counting articles (“a,” “an,” and “the”). If the particular source requires more than one line to give the reader all the information required, you will indent by five spaces (or one

half-inch on the computer) the second and subsequent lines. You should also remember to double space between each line and between entries.

EXAMPLES OF WORKS CITED

BOOKS

A Book with One Author

Blocker, Dan. *The Western Hero and Television in the 1960's*. Prentice, 1972.

A Book with Two Authors

Dorris, Michael, and Louise Erdrich. *The Crown of Columbus*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.

[Note: You should list the authors in the order in which they are named on the title page.]

A Book with Three or More Authors

Pike, Joseph, et. al. *Teaching Shakespeare in the Two-Year College*. Random, 1985.

[Note: When a source has three or more authors, only the first one shown in the source is normally given.]

Two or More Books by the Same Author

Young, Brigham. *The Necessity for Bigamy*. Salt Lake City*: Mormon, 1876.

---. *Mormonism and the Call of God*. Salt Lake City*: Mormon, 1870.

*Normally, the 8th edition of *MLA* does not tell place of publication, unless the work was published before 1900 or the publishers have offices in more than one country (See p. 51 of *MLA Handbook*, 8th edition, 2016.)

A Book with an Editor (or Editors)

McMichael, George M., editor. *Concise Anthology of American Literature*. Macmillan, 1985.

Baron, Sabrina Alcorn, et al., editors. *Agents of Change*. U of Massachusetts P / Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007.

[Note: You use the phrase “et al., editors.” when there are three or more editors.]

[Note: This entry has two publishers; hence, it uses the forward slash /.]

A Book with an Author and an Editor

Woolf, Virginia. *A Writer's Diary*. Edited by Leonard Woolf, Harcourt, 1954.

An Anthology

Kennedy, X. J., editor. *The Ways to Poetry: Several Approaches*. Little, 1984.

A Work in an Anthology (or a Chapter in an Edited Book)

Woolf, Virginia. "The New Dress." *Women & Fiction: Stories by and About Women*, edited by Susan Cahill, New American Library, 1975, pp. 67-80.

Two or More Short Works from One Anthology or Collection

Agee, James. "Knoxville: Summer of 1915." Oates and Atwan, pp. 171-75.

Oates, Joyce Carol, and Robert Atwan, editors. *The Best American Essays of the Century*. Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

[Note: You should create an entry for the anthology as a whole and entries for each short work that you cite in your paper. The entries for the short works should contain ONLY the **author, title of the selection, editor, and page numbers**. Each entry should be placed in proper alphabetical order, of course.]

An Edition Other than the First

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Works of Chaucer*. Edited by Jay G. Helterman, 3rd ed., Houghton, 1989.

A Translation

Murakami, Haruki. *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Vintage Books, 1989.

The Bible (or other Religious Texts)

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

A Multivolume Work

Stark, Freya. *Letters*. Edited by Lucy Moorehead, Compton Press, 1974-82. 8 vols.

Stark, Freya. *Letters*. Edited by Lucy Moorehead, vol. 5, Compton Press, 1978. 8 vols.

ARTICLES

Signed Article in a Reference Work

Robinson, J. Bradford. "Scat Singing." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, edited by Barry Kernfield, vol. 3, London, Macmillan, 2002.

[Note: The city of publication appears in this sample because Macmillan publishes in different countries; usually no place of publication is given. See p. 51 in *MLA* 8th ed.]

[Note: No page numbers are used because the entries of the source are arranged alphabetically.]

Unsigned Article in a Reference Work/Dictionary Entry

"Noon." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 1989.

"Noon." Def. 4b. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 1989.

[Note: If you are citing a specific definition among several, add the abbreviation Def. ("Definition") and an appropriate designation (e.g., number, letter).]

An Article in a Scholarly Journal

Bird, Harry. "Some Aspects of the Prejudice in the Roman World." *University of Windsor Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1975, pp. 64-75.

An Article from a Monthly or Bimonthly Periodical

Jacobs, Jane. "The Hope of Despair: Ambiguity in Austen." *The Atlantic*, Apr. 1977, pp. 103-

110.

An Article from a Weekly or Biweekly Periodical

Greiner, Donald R. "Onward and Upward: A New Novel by John Updike." *Time*, 15 Oct. 1988, pp. 33-36.

A Signed Article from a Daily Newspaper

Goodwin, Alice. "The Role of Manner in the Teaching of English." *The State* [Columbia], 22 July 1987, p. 33.

[Note: If the city of publication is not included in the name of a locally published newspaper, add the city in square brackets, not italicized, after the name. For nationally published newspapers, this is not necessary.]

An Unsigned Article from a Daily Newspaper

"Women and Men in Despair: Teaching English at the College of Charleston." *The State* [Columbia], 22 July 1990, pp. 45+.

[Note: The + indicates that the article appears on nonconsecutive pages.]

"Women and Men in Despair: Teaching English at the College of Charleston." *The State* [Columbia], 22 July 1990, sec. 1: 45+.

[Note: If the newspaper is divided into sections, you cite it like the above example.]

Review

Gates, David. "The Trouble with Charlie." Review of *Dickens: A Biography*, by Fred Kaplan, *Newsweek*, 7 Nov. 1988, pp. 120-21.

Editorial

"False Negatives." *Wall Street Journal*, 8 Nov. 1988, Midwest ed., pp. A14. Editorial.

[Note: In this example, the "A" stands for the section.]

Letter to the Editor

Fahey, John A. "Recalling the Cuban Missile Crisis." *The Washington Post*, 28 Oct. 2012, p.

A16. Letter. *LexisNexis Library express*,

www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Inpubliclibraryexpress/.

Previously Published Scholarly Article in a Collection

Spilka, Mark. "Of George and Lennie and Curley's Wife: Sweet Violence in Steinbeck's Eden."

Contemporary Literary Criticism, vol. 21, Gale, 1992, p. 381. Originally published in

Modern Fiction Studies, vol. 20, no. 2, 1974, pp. 169-79.

OTHER TYPES OF SOURCES

Lecture

Davis, Christian. "Origins of Christianity." College of Charleston, Charleston, 1 Oct. 2008,

Lecture.

Interview Dorgon, Ruth. Personal interview, 14 Aug. 1989.

Pamphlet or Bulletin

Safety Data Sheet: Kitchen Machines. Chicago, National Restaurant Association, 1970.

Government Publication

United States, Department of Health and Human Services. *Keep the Beat Recipes: Deliciously*

Healthy Dinners. National Institutes of Health, Oct. 2009,

healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov/pdfs/Dinners_Cookbook_508-compliant.pdf.

Video on a Web Site (like YouTube)

“*Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Unaired Pilot 1996.*” *YouTube*, uploaded by Brian Stowe, 28 Jan.

2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR3J-V7qxxW.

DVD

“Hush.” 1999. *Buffy the Vampire slayer: The Complete Fourth Season*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, episode 10, Twentieth Century Fox, 2003, disc 3.

[Note: 1999 is the year of the long-running series. If you are writing about features of that episode found on the season’s DVD set, your entry will be about the discs (See the disc number.) and, thus, will include the date of their release (2003), as shown in the above example.]

Episode from a Television Series

“Hush.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Television Show, Film (not focusing on specific individual’s contribution—viewed online)

“Under the Gun.” *Pretty Little Liars*, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013. *Hulu*, www.hulu.com/watch/511318.

Radio or Television Program

“All We Intended to Be.” *Prairie Home Companion*, narrated by Garrison Keillor, National Public Radio, 15 Nov. 2008.

Digital Library

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Masque of the Red Death." *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by James A. Harrison, vol. 4, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1902, pp. 250-58. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924079574368;view=1up;seq=266.

Work of Art

Vermeer, Johannes. *The Astronomer*. 1668. Louvre Museum, Paris.

[Note: Place date of the creation of the artwork after the title. Treat the physical location (museum, city) of the artwork as its location.]

Hura, Sohrab. *Old Man Lighting a Fire*. 2015, *Magnum Photos*,
www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResults&ALID=2k1HRG681B_Q.

Stage Play or Concert

Hamlet. By William Shakespeare, directed by John Gielgud, performance by Richard Burton, Shubert Theatre, New York, 4 Mar. 1964.

Recording, Song, or Other Piece of Music

Beyoncé. "Pretty Hurts." *Beyoncé*, Parkwood Entertainment, 2013,
www.beyonce.com/album/beyonce/?media_view=songs.

Public Speech or Live Performance

Rankine, Claudia. Keynote Address. 2016 AWP Conference and Bookfair, 31 Mar. 2016, Los Angeles Convention Center.

[Note: Use descriptions of the speech (as here "Keynote Address"), if it is untitled; otherwise, use the speech's title.]

INTERNET SOURCES

Access Dates? The 8th ed. of MLA **discourages** the use of access dates, unless a source is unstable or likely to change or if your source has no date. If you do use an access date, place it at the end of your citation after the location: Accessed 24 Feb. 2016.

If the Web site does NOT have an update date or publication date, include your date of access at the end of the citation.

Bali, Karan. "Kisore Kumanr." *Upperstall.com*, upperstall.com/profesile/kishore-kumar/.

Accessed 2 Mar. 2016.

DOI'S? or URL's? For sources accessed online, provide DOIs, when given. If the DOI is not available, use a direct URL, ideally a permalink.

DO NOT use angle brackets (<>).

DO NOT use any *http://* or *https://* prefixes.

Entire Web Site

Glazier, Loss Pequeño, director. *Electronic Poetry Center*. State U of New York at Buffalo,

2014, epc.buffalo.edu/.

E-Mail Message

Franke, Norman. "SoundApp 2.0.2." Received by Rita Martinez, 29 Apr. 1996.

Article on a Web Site

Enzinna, Wes. "Syria's Unknown Revolution." *Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting*, 24 Nov.

2015, pulitzercenter.org/projects/middle-east-syria-enzinna-war-rojava.

Listserv Message (treat like entry or comment on a blog)

trex. Comment on "Going Down with the Flagship," by Roy Edroso. *Alicublog*, 24 Feb. 2016,

alicublog.blogspot.com/2016/02/going-down-with-flagship.html#disqus_thread.

[**Note:** Type the screen name, as here with "trex," as written in the Listserv.]

Online Newspaper Article

Wente, Margaret. "In the Best Interests of the Child." *The Globe and Mail*, 6 Apr. 2009,
www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/in-the-best-interests-of-the-child/article20414097.

Professional or Personal Web Site

Flanders, Julia, editor. *Women Writers Project*. Brown U., 30 June 1998,
library.brown.edu/cds/tag/women-writers-project.

Tweets

@persiankiwi. "We have report of large street battles in east & west of Tehran now-
#Iraelection." *Twitter*, 23 June 2009, 11:15 a.m.,
twitter.com/persiankiwi/status/2298106072.

Poem Online

Nesbit, Edith. "Marching Song." *Ballads and Lyrics of Socialism*, London: The Fabian Society,
1908, N. pag., *Victorian Women Writers Project*, edited by Perry Willet,
webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/vwwp/view?docId=VAB7021.

Encyclopedia Article Online

"Fresco." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 17 Apr. 2011, www.britannica.com/art/fresco-painting.

Article in an Online Journal/Periodical/Scholarly Journal

Cáceres, Sigfrido Burgos. "Towards Concert in Africa: Seeking Progress and Power through
Cohesion and Unity." *African Studies Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 4, Fall 2011, pp. 59-73,
asq.africa.ufl.edu/files/Caceres-Vol12Is4.pdf.

Homepage for a Course

Masiello, Regina. 355:101: Expository Writing. *Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences*, 2016,
wp.rutgers.edu/courses/55-355101.

A Part of an Online Book

Keats, John. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *Poetical Work*, London: Macmillan, 1884. *Bartleby.com*,
2000, www.bartleby.com/126/1000.html.

Online Government Publication

United States, Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Child Nutrition Programs.
*Eligibility Manual for School Meals: Determining and Verifying Eligibility. National
School Lunch Program*, July 2015,
www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP40_CACFP18_SFSP20-2015a1.pdf.

E-Reserve

Barbour, Brian M. "The Great Gatsby and the American Past." *The Southern Review*, vol. 9,
1973, pp. 288-99. *

[Note: E-reserve articles are cited as any scholarly journal article, since that is what they were
previously.]

[*Note: The *MLA Handbook* suggests including URL's for an E-reserve from your instructor, so
ask your professor about including the URL.]

A Periodical from an Online Database

---DOI is preferred.

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10. No. 3, 3
May 2000. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/pmc.2000.0021.

If the DOI is not found in the search record, be sure to check the pdf for a DOI.

---If no DOI, use permalink (often called “stable” links).

Goldman, Anne. “Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante.” *The Georgia*

Review, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41403188.

---If no permalink, use full URL (without *http* or *https://*) from your browser.

Comic Book

Clowes, Daniel. *David Boring. Eightball*, no. 19, Fantagraphics, 1998.

YouTube Advertisement

“Apple Watch—Dance.” Advertisement. *YouTube*, 21 Oct. 2015, [www.](http://www.youtube.com/user/Apple?v=fHE5WDO515Y)

Youtube.com/user/Apple?v=fHE5WDO515Y.

E-book Downloaded from Electronic Book Reader

James, P. D. *Death Comes to Pemberley*. Knopf, 2011. Kindle.

[Note: Cite the source like a print version, but when listing the medium, name the digital format.]

E-book from College of Charleston Library Database

Gikandi, Simon. *Ngugi wa Thion’o*. Cambridge UP, 2000. *ACLS Humanities E-book*,

hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.07588.0001.001.

Podcast or Video Podcast (Online)

Kine, Starlee, narrator. “Belt Buckle.” *The Mystery Show*, episode 3, Gimlet, 18 June 2015,

gimletmedia.com/episode/case-3-belt-buckle/.

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