

MLA 8th Edition Quick Guide

A collaboration of the Metropolitan State University Library and CAE Writing Center

Resources

Online: [The MLA Style Center](https://style.mla.org/) (https://style.mla.org/)

Book: *MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

In-Text Citation

According to MLA, citation should be thorough yet minimal, “the goals of the in-text citation are brevity and clarity, guiding the reader . . . [efficiently] to the corresponding entry in the works-cited list” (116). By the way, the ellipsis in the quote here means something was left out, the square brackets mean the words inside are not the exact ones from the source.

- Provide a brief parenthetical reference to match each entry in your Works Cited list. *Optional:* If you wish to offer an explanation or refer readers to relevant publications, you may also include a footnote or endnote, usually placed at the end of a sentence, in this way.¹
- Name the author in either the sentence or the parenthetical citation but not both. Use the author’s last name followed by a page or part number; for video or audio sources, use a timestamp. Numbered paragraphs may be indicated in this way: (Chau par. 3). If there are no page or part numbers, indicate location as briefly as possible in your prose.
- For three authors or more, list the first author then use et al., like this: Chau et al. write about MLA style. For citations with more than one source listed, separate them with a semicolon, like this: scholarly articles praise MLA style (Chau et al.; Jacobs; Morales).

For a Quote

Basic Formats in Sentences

Chau said, “MLA style is great” (123).

“MLA style is flexible” (Jacobs and Morales 23).

A Long Passage

Set off more than four quoted lines as an indented block rather than using quotation marks: the indentation indicates that the lines are a quote. Place the parenthetical reference for a prose quotation after the period in the last line, in this way, rather than inside the period as you normally would. (MLA 76-77)

Something Cited in a Source Referred to Directly in Your Essay and a Quote within a Quote

Do not make a Works Cited entry; instead, provide its author in your text and use the phrase “qtd. in” in front of the source you read that will be in the Works Cited list. If your quote contains a quote, then use single marks to show its beginning and end. If it will help with clarity, a citation can be placed next to the reference rather than at the end of the sentence. For example:

According to Morales, Ben Chau says that “‘pizza is best cold’ but . . . should be eaten hot” (qtd. in Morales 145), yet many would argue that pizza is delicious either way.

¹ For more detailed information on notes see *The MLA Style Center* website.

Quoting Poetry

Only put the author's or work's name in your parenthetical citation if it is not clear in your text which poem or author a quote came from. Only use the word "line(s)" in your first parenthetical citation to make it clear that the numbers refer to lines rather than pages; then use just the line numbers. If the quotation includes more than one line, include a / to indicate the break. If the lines are from two different sections of the poem, use // to indicate that break.

For example, the final lines of Chau's sonnet, "Attribution is simply what's polite / Credit where credit's due is only right" summarize the theme of the poem (lines 13-14). Here is another example: the final lines of the sonnet, "It's rotten when citation's forgotten // Attribution is simply what's polite / Credit where credit's due is only right" comment on the theme of considerate essay writing (Chau 12-14).

For a Paraphrase

Basic Formats in Sentences

Chau et al. praised MLA style (123-25).

The scholarly articles praise MLA style (Chau et al.; Jacobs; Morales).

A Paraphrase with a Signal Phrase

Fitzgerald introduces an interesting metaphor of a light across the bay which then extends to the overall theme of striving in the book (26).

The Same Point without a Signal Phrase

The interesting metaphor of a light across the bay is introduced and then extended to the overall theme of striving in the book (Fitzgerald 26).

Works Cited List

Create a separate page at the end of the paper titled Works Cited centered in normal text on the first line. If there is only one source, title it Work Cited. Entries are listed alphabetically by author's last name. The list is double spaced. If an entry takes more than one line, the second line is indented one half inch. To make a hanging indent, in Word, highlight the entry, then select hanging for the first line from the Paragraph tab's special indentation settings.

Basic Framework for an Entry

There are nine categories of information. Supply them if they are useful for a reader or are needed to specifically identify the source you consulted.

Author. Title of Source: Subtitle of Source. Title of Container, Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication Date, Location.

- For 3 or more authors, list the first one followed by et al.
- For more than one source by the same author, alphabetize them by title, list the author's name for the first entry, then use three hyphens, like this ---, in place of the name.
- When citing two or more sources from a collection, create a complete entry for the collection and cross-reference individual pieces to that entry with a shortened citation.

- If there is no author, begin the entry with the title. If an organization is both the author and publisher, include it only as the publisher and begin with the title.
- Titles of books, films, periodicals, websites, and blogs are in italics, *Like This*; titles of chapters, articles, webpages, posts, and comments are within quotation marks, "Like This."
- The container is the larger work that the smaller piece which is your source is a part of: a journal contains the article, a book the chapter or a website the webpage. Many works exist in multiple containers: identify all that seem important for your readers to understand what kind of source it is or where to find the exact form in which you consulted it.
- For other contributors provide explanations: adapted by, directed by, introduction by, edited by, translated by, illustrated by etc.
- For uncertain dates, use [circa year] for an approximation, and [year?] for uncertain accuracy. If an original publication date is relevant, include it after the title.

Sample Entries for Works Cited List

[Book / Work from that Same Source / Work by the Same Author](#)

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

Kingston, Maxine Hong. "No Name Woman." Oates and Atwan, pp. 383-94.

---. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Amidst Ghosts*. A. A. Knopf, 1976.

[E-book with Two Authors / E-book with a Container](#)

Resau, Laura, and Maria Farinango. *The Queen of Water*. e-book, Random House Children's Books, 2012.

Womack, Ytasha L. *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*, Chicago Review Press, 2013. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/metrostate/detail.action?docID=1381831.

[Work in an Anthology with one Other Contributor](#)

Angelou, Maya. "Pickin Em Up and Layin Em Down." *The Norton Book of Light Verse*, edited by Russell Baker, W. W. Norton, 1986, pp. 276-278.

[Journal Articles with Multiple Authors: One Container, Multiple Containers](#)

Xiong, Shoua, et al. "Engaging in Culturally Informed Nursing Care with Hmong Children and Their Families." *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, vol. 31, no. 1, Jan.-Feb. 2016, pp. 102-106, doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2015.08.008.

Tan, Noel Hidalgo, and Veronica Walker-Vadillo. "The Curious Case of the Steamship on the Mekong." *Asian Perspectives*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2015. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/asi.2016.0007.

Web Page / Blog Post

“How Do I Cite the MLA Style Center?” *The MLA Style Center*. Modern Language Association, 2 Dec. 2019, style.mla.org/citing-the-mla-style-center/.

Kaufman, Scott Barry. “Can You Be Social and Introspective?” *Beautiful Minds*, Scientific American Blogs, 16 June 2016, blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/can-you.

Online News Source with No Author / Social Media

“Uber Begins Helicopter Service in Brazil’s Biggest City.” *New York Times*, 14 June 2016, www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/06/14/world/americas/ap-It-brazil-uber.html.

@mlastyle (MLA Style). “Be among the first to get the latest MLA writing and style tips: sign up for our free newsletter—The Source” Twitter, 20 July 2020, 1:02 p.m., twitter.com/mlastyle/status/1285273946837987328.

Film / Song / Podcast Episode

Mister Rogers: It’s You I Like: A Retrospective of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. Directed by John Paulson, PBS, 2018. *Kanopy*, metrostate.kanopy.com/video/mister-rogers-its-you-i.

Prince, performer. *Purple Rain*. Directed by Albert Magnoli, 1984. Warner Brothers, 2004.

Beyonce. “Hold Up.” *Lemonade*, 2016. *Pandora*, www.pandora.com/station/play/3256717360179741083.

Meraji, Shereen Marisol, host. “COVID Diaries: Jessica and Sean Apply for a Loan.” *Code Switch*, NPR, 20 May, 2020, 34:07, www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch.

Government Document

Ingels, Steven J., et al. *Trends among Young Adults over Three Decades, 1974-2006*. NCES 2012-345, U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012345.pdf.

Dictionary Entry / Encyclopedia Article

“Ritual.” *OED*, Oxford UP, 2016, www.oed.com/view/Entry/166369

Heyes, Cressida. “Identity Politics.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2016, plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/.

Course Materials

Larson, Christine. Web Evaluation. INFS115 Information Access, May 13-July 7, 2019, metrostate.learn.minnstate.edu/d2l/qq/content/1234567/viewContent/87654321/View.

Interview / Un-recorded Class Lecture / Live Performance

Yang, Kao Kalia. Oral interview. By Mainhia Moua, 10 October 2016.

DeJonghe, Jennifer. “Books, Literacy, and Reading.” INFS315 Searching for Information, 19 May, 2020, Metropolitan State University, St Paul. Lecture.

“The Winter’s Tale.” By William Shakespeare, directed by Jonathan Munby, performance by Helen Carey, Guthrie Production Company, Guthrie Theater, 27 Mar. 2011, Minneapolis Minnesota.

Student Paper Format

For papers, the basic format is one-sided, double-spaced, with one inch margins. Font color is black only, the size is 12 point; choose from any easily readable font style Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial etc. Use only one, do not mix fonts. After the body of the paper, place any endnotes as a section titled Notes. After this, place appendices on a separate page titled Appendix; for more than one appendix, add either numbers or letters and/or a short title. Place Works Cited on a separate page as the last section.

Header, Title and Page Numbers

In the upper left hand corner of the first page, one inch from the top, flush left, type your name, the professor's name, course number, and the date. Give each one its own line and double-space. The title is on the next line, centered in plain text, and with key words capitalized. Page numbers are placed in the upper right with your last name in front, see below for an example:

Noam D. Plume
Professor B. Chau
Writing 101
3 November 2020

Plume 1

A Guide to MLA Style: Formatting a Paper

Type the title centered, in normal text on the line above the opening paragraph. Headings are optional; MLA suggests this format placed flush left with a line above and below if used:

Heading Level 1

Heading Level 2

Heading Level 3

Tables and Figures

Identify tables as Table with a numeral and title flush left on a separate line above them (Table 1 Data for Analysis). Give the source of the table and any notes immediately below the table in a caption; use lowercase letters for notes.

Identify visual material as a Figure (Fig.1), a numeral, and a caption directly below them using the full margins, do not indent. Label musical illustrations, Example (Ex.1) with a numeral and caption directly below them using the full margins.

Place Tables, Figures, and Examples near the text to which they relate. If the caption provides complete information about the source and the source is not cited elsewhere in the text, then no entry for the source in the works-cited list is necessary.