MLA 9th Edition: Quick Guide

A collaboration of the Metro State University Library and Writing Center

# **RESOURCES**

**Website Hyperlink:** [The MLA Style Center](https://style.mla.org/)

**Book:** MLA Handbook. 9th ed., The Modern Language Association of America, 2021.

# **IN-TEXT CITATION**

* According to MLA, citations should be thorough yet minimal using “unobtrusive [cues] that direct readers to the works-cited list … and … the location in the source being cited” (227).
  + **NOTE:** Each ellipsis in the quote here means something was left out, the square brackets mean the words inside are not quite the exact ones from the source.
* Provide parenthetical information to match each entry in your Works Cited list or provide all the information to direct a reader to the entry in the sentence.
* If you wish to offer an explanation or refer readers to relevant publications, you may use a footnote or endnote, usually placed in superscript at the end of a sentence, like this.1
* Name the author in either the sentence or the in-text citation, but not both. Use the author’s last name followed by a page number
  + For video or audio sources, use a timestamp in place of a page number
  + Numbered paragraphs may be indicated in this way: (Chau par. 3)
  + If there are no page numbers, simply leave them out
* For three authors or more, list the first author then use “et al.”, like this: (Chau et al.)
* For citations with more than one source listed, separate them with a semicolon, like this: (Chau et al.; Jacobs; Morales)

## **EXAMPLES FOR A QUOTE**

### **Basic Formats in Sentences**

* Chau said, “MLA style is great” (123).
* Compared to other styles, “MLA style is flexible” (Jacobs and Morales 23).
* According to the website *MLA and You*, the new 9th edition is “both great and flexible.”

### **Quoting a Long Passage (Block Quote)**

* Use a sentence to introduce the source and why the passage is being quoted; after the block quote, add at least one more sentence explaining how it connects to your work. 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 in-text citation after the period in the last line rather than inside the period. (MLA 254)

### **Citing a Source Within a Source**

* Do not make a Works Cited entry for the source within your source; instead, provide its author in your text and use the phrase “qtd. in” in front of the source you read for the in-text citation.
* If your quote contains a quote, 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.

### **Quoting Poetry**

* Only put the author’s or work’s title in your in-text 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). 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).

## **EXAMPLES FOR A PARAPHRASE**

### **Basic Formats in Sentences**

* Chau et al. praised MLA style (123-25).
* Many scholarly articles praise MLA style (Chau et al.; Jacobs; Morales).
* According to the website *MLA and You*, the new 9th edition is a useful writing guide.

### **Introduce a Paraphrase by Signaling the Author**

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

### **A Paraphrase with no 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” as centered 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 navigate to the “Line Spacing Options” menu, and select “hanging” in the special indentation settings drop-down menu.

## **BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR AN ENTRY IN THE WORKS CITED LIST**

In MLA, there are 9 potential categories of information to include in a citation. Supply them if they are useful for a reader or are relevant to identifying the source.

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 in subsequent entries.
* When citing 2 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*. Titles of chapters, articles, webpages, posts, and comments are within “quotation marks.”
* A container is the larger work that the smaller piece of your source is a part of; a journal contains the article, a book contains the chapter, or a website contains the webpage. Many works exist in multiple containers: identify all that seem important for your readers to understand what kind of source it is.
* For other contributors, provide explanations such as: 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 / Works by the Same Author**

Osman, Ladan. *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony.* University of Nebraska Press, 2015.

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 in a Larger Digital Collection**

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

Chestnutt, Charles W. *The Marrow of Tradition.* 1901. Project Gutenberg, 2004, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11228>.

### **Work in an Anthology with One 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**

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

### **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-lt-brazil-uber.html](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/06/14/world/americas/ap-lt-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.

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

Beyonce. “Hold Up.” *Lemonade*, 2016. Spotify, www.spotify.com/station/play/325671736017.

“COVID Diaries: Jessica and Sean Apply for a Loan.” *Code Switch*, hosted by Shereen Marisol Meraji, NPR, 20 May, 2020, [www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch](http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch).

### **Government Websites**

United Nations. *Support Sustainable Development and Climate Action*. [https://www.un.org/en/our-work/support-sustainable-development-and-climate-action](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2Fen%2Four-work%2Fsupport-sustainable-development-and-climate-action&data=04%7C01%7Ctracy.vanderleeuw%40metrostate.edu%7C29a83559a77b45df378f08d97886e828%7C5011c7c60ab446ab9ef4fae74a921a7f%7C0%7C0%7C637673343071864854%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=DCa5UDTFPaYlZ11M5SRUNDb6tlxo%2BGupdfDxQRfG%2F4c%3D&reserved=0).

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.

### **Artwork / Image**

Wiley, Kehinde. *Santos Dumont: The Father of Aviation II.* Minneapolis Institute of Art, <https://artstories.artsmia.org/#/o/107241>.

Haj-Hassan, Sarah. *Library of Light*. https://www.freeimages.com/photo/library-of-light.

### **Dictionary Entry / Encyclopedia Articles**

“Ritual, N.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 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, 16 May 2019, Metropolitan State University, metrostate.learn.minnstate.edu/d2l/content/1234567/viewContent.

### **Interview / Un-recorded Class Lecture / Live Performance**

Yang, Kao Kalia. Oral interview. 10 October 2016.

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

Shakespeare, William. *The Winter’s Tale*. Directed by Jonathan Munby, Guthrie Production Company, Guthrie Theater, 27 Mar. 2011, Minneapolis.

# **STUDENT PAPER FORMAT**

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

Plume 1

Noam D. Plume

Professor B. Chau

Writing 101

3 November 2020

A Guide to MLA Style: Formatting a Paper

Headings are optional, but MLA suggests this format flush left with a line above and below if they are used:

**Heading Level 1 (bold)**

Heading Level 2 (plain)

*Heading Level 3 (italics)*

## ***TABLES AND FIGURES***

Identify tables as “Table” with a numeral and title flush left on a separate line above them (Ex: 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 as an 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 on the Works Cited page is necessary.