MLA Citation Style Guide

MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used in liberal arts and humanities classes, but you will find professors across all majors and programs who will require that you use it. MLA involves the general format of a paper, in-text citations within the body of a paper, and the Works Cited list at the end. It is important to note that, in most cases, every reference should have an in-text citation. Inversely, every in-text citation should correspond to a reference in the reference list.

General Format

MLA style requires the following formatting rules for writing assignments:

- Double-spaced, even on Works Cited page
- 1" margins on all sides
- 12-point font
- Use a legible font. We suggest Times New Roman
- In the upper-left of the first page of the paper:
  - Your name
  - Your professor's name
  - The course code (ENG-101, SOC-225, etc.)
  - The date
- Below the information described above, center your title. Write the title in Title Case (all important words capitalized). Do not underline, bold, or put the title in quotation marks.
- Header:
  - First page only, right-hand side. Last Name and page number
  - Rest of pages, right-hand side. Page number

In-Text Citations

In-text citations are placed within sentences and paragraphs of assignments to make it clear that the information being quoted or paraphrased is coming from a specific source on the Works Cited page. It is important to note that an in-text citation is necessary whether the information used is directly quoted from a source, or if it is paraphrased.
In-text citations require two pieces of information: author name and page number. Regardless of whether you have paraphrased the information from the source or if you are quoting directly from it, you need to include the page number. Be aware that this differs from another popular citation style, APA. Below are examples of how in-text citations must be formatted, depending on who created the source, what kind of source it is, and how you are using it.

**Works by a single author**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placing the author and page number at the end of a sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... admitting you need help is the first step (Considine 325).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When the author is mentioned in a sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considine says the first step is admitting that you need help (325).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Works by multiple authors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placing the 2 authors and page number at the end of sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The results of the study were clear (Clarke and Vaid 196).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When the 2 authors are mentioned in a sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When writing both authors in a sentence, be sure to use &quot;and&quot; and not the ampersand (&amp;) between the author names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Clarke and Vaid demonstrated (196).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For a work with more than 3 authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results of the study were unclear (Schwartz et al. 419).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works by associations, organizations, corporations, government agencies, etc.

In-text citation
When the author of a source is an association, organization, corporation, government agency, or something like that, it is acceptable to use the name of the organization followed by the page number. If the name of the organization is long, it is appropriate to use abbreviations (gov't for government, nat'l for national).

(World Health Organization 98).

Works with no author

Using the title in place of author name
If the title is long, use the first few words of the title, if it is short use the entire title. If it's a short source like an article put it in quotation marks. If it's a long source such as a play, book, or entire website, put the title in italics.

Children who watch more than 12 hours of television a week have an increased risk of becoming obese ("Television watching habits" 4).

Citing indirect sources

Sometimes you use a source cited in another source. For example, let's say you are reading a scholarly journal article. In that article, they mention the results of a previous study that you would like to use for your assignment. In this case, the source you have is citing a different source that you would like to use.

Providing an in-text citation for a source cited in a source on your reference page
In the example below, Johnson is the name of the author of the article you are reading. You will have a reference for Johnson's article on your reference page. Williams is the author of the source that Johnson is citing. Because you are getting Williams' information from Johnson's article, you only will have a reference for Johnson's article.

Williams argued... (qtd. in Johnson 4).
Works Cited

The Works Cited page should be formatted with the following rules:

- "Works Cited" is written at the top-center of the page. Do not italicize, bold, or put this in quotation marks.
- It needs to start at the top of the following page after the paper ends.
- Citations should be alphabetized by last name, or the title if there is no author.
- Citations should be formatted using a hanging indentation, which means the first line is flush left and every line thereafter is tabbed in. This begins anew for every citation.
- List page numbers efficiently. If you are citing a journal article that appeared on pages 145 through 153, list the page numbers in your citation on your Works Cited page as 145-53.

Below are examples for the types of sources you will most commonly use. When creating a citation, pay attention to all of the details. What needs to be italicized? How should things be capitalized? When and where do you need a period? All of this important to creating a perfectly formatted citation.

**Journal article, magazine, newspaper**

If you don't see an issue number, don't assume it doesn't have one. A quick Google search for the title of the article can help you verify if the issue number is missing, or if it doesn't have one. This is also handy if you don't know the page numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An article in a scholarly journal with volume numbers but no issue numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An article in a scholarly journal with volume and issue numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A magazine article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### A newspaper article


### Books

When it comes to books, make sure you know whether someone is an author or editor. It can sometimes be unclear when looking at the cover of a book. As stated above, a Google search can be a great place to confirm the information you have, or find the information you are missing. For example, the Amazon page where a book is sold will often provide all of the information you need to create a reference for a book.

#### One author, no editor


#### Multiple authors, no editor


#### A work in an anthology or collection


#### An edition other than the first


### Encyclopedia or dictionary entry

When using multiple entries from an encyclopedia or dictionary, you will want to provide one citation for the entire book. This means you will use the same in-text
citation no matter which entry you use in the assignment. The citation for this will be the same as a regular book. If you use only a single entry from the encyclopedia or dictionary, then you will want to provide a citation for that specific entry.

**A specific entry in an encyclopedia or dictionary**


**Website**

If you use multiple pages from a single website, create one citation for the homepage of the website. Do not create separate citations for each page that you use. Also, when including the medium of publication, list the medium as Web. Because websites are not static (they change frequently), MLA does not require the inclusion of URLs in citations. Keep in mind that some professors will still want you to include URLs in your citations. When this is the case, you will place them inside angle brackets after the date of access. See below for an example of what this looks like.

**Website with an author**


**Website with organization as author**