



Cornell University  
Library

# MLA Citation Style

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MLA citation style refers to the rules and conventions established by the Modern Language Association for acknowledging sources used in a research paper. MLA citation style uses a simple two-part parenthetical documentation system for citing sources: Citations in the Text of a paper are used to point to an alphabetical Works Cited list that appears at the end of the paper. Together, these references identify and credit the sources used in the paper and allow others to access and retrieve this material.

Note: A parenthetical reference to a familiar historical document -- i.e., the United States Constitution -- no longer requires a corresponding entry in the Works Cited list.

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## Citing sources in the text

In MLA style, references to sources are placed in the text of the paper to briefly identify sources for readers and enable them to locate the source of the cited information in the Works Cited list. These parenthetical references should be kept as brief and as clear as possible.

- Give only the information needed to identify a source. Usually the author's last name and a page reference are all that is needed.
- Place the parenthetical reference as close as possible to the material being documented and where a pause would naturally occur, preferably at the end of a sentence.
- Parenthetical material should complement, not repeat, information given in the text. If you include an author's name in a sentence, you do not need to repeat it in your parenthetical statement.
- The parenthetical reference should precede the punctuation mark that concludes the sentence, clause, or phrase that contains the cited material.
- Electronic and online sources are cited just like print resources in references cited in the text. If an online source lacks numbering, omit numbers from the parenthetical references. If a source includes fixed page numbers or section numbering, such as numbering of paragraphs (pars.), cite the relevant numbers.

## Examples:

### Author's name in text

Dover has expressed this concern (118-21).

### Author's name in reference

This concern has been expressed (Dover 118-21).

This hypothesis (Bradley and Rogers 7) suggested

<b>Multiple authors of a work</b>	this theory (Sumner, Reichl, and Waugh 23).
<b>Two locations</b>	Williams alludes to this premise (136-39, 145).
<b>Two works cited</b>	(Burns 54; Thomas 327)
<b>Multivolume works</b>	
<b>References to volumes and pages</b>	(Wilson 2:1-18)
<b>References to an entire volume</b>	(Henderson, vol. 3)
<b>In text reference to an entire volume</b>	In volume 3, Henderson suggests
<b>Corporate authors</b>	(United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa 51-63)

### Works with no author

When a work has no author, use the work's title or a shortened version of the title when citing it in text. (If abbreviating a title, omit initial articles and begin with the word by which it is alphabetized in the Works Cited list.):

as stated by the presidential commission  
(*Report* 4).

**Online source with numbered paragraphs** (Fox, pars. 4-5)

**For more detailed information about citing references in the text, please refer to the MLA resources listed below.**

### Works Cited list

References cited in the text of a research paper must appear at the end of the paper in a Works Cited list or bibliography. This list provides the information necessary to identify and retrieve each source that specifically supports your research.

- Arrange entries in alphabetical order by authors' last names (surnames), or by title for sources without authors.
- Capitalize the first word and all other principal words of the titles and subtitles of cited works listed. (Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, or the "to" in infinitives.)
- Shorten the publisher's name; for example, omit articles, business abbreviations (Co., Inc.), and descriptive words (Press, Publisher).
- When multiple publishers are listed, include all of them, placing a semicolon between each.
- When more than one city is listed *for the same publisher*, use only the first city.

- Use the conjunction "and," not an ampersand [&], when listing multiple authors of a single work.
- **Pagination:** Do not use the abbreviations **p.** or **pp.** to designate page numbers.
- **Indentation:** Align the first line of the entry flush with the left margin, and indent all subsequent lines (5 to 7 spaces) to form a "hanging indent."
- **Italics:** Choose a font in which the italic style contrasts clearly with the regular style.

## Examples

### Books:

References to an entire book should include the following elements:

- author(s) or editor(s)
- the complete title
- edition, if indicated
- place of publication
- the shortened name of the publisher
- date of publication
- medium of publication

### No author or editor:

*Peterson's Annual Guides to Graduate Study*. 33rd ed. Princeton, NJ:  
Peterson's Guides, 1999. Print.

### One author:

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*. New York: Putnam, 1955. Print.

### Another work, same author:

---. *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*. New York: Knopf,  
1999. Print.

### Two authors:

Cross, Susan, and Christine Hoffman. *Bruce Nauman: Theaters of  
Experience*. New York: Guggenheim Museum; London: Thames & Hudson,  
2004. Print.

**Three authors:**

Lowi, Theodore, Benjamin Ginsberg, and Steve Jackson. *Analyzing American Government: American Government, Freedom and Power*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 1994. Print.

**More than three authors:**

Gilman, Sandor, et al. *Hysteria beyond Freud*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993. Print.

**Corporate author:**

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art. *A Guide to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell U, 1973. Print.

**Multivolume work:**

Morison, Samuel Eliot, Henry Steele Commager, and William E. Leuchtenburg. *The Growth of the American Republic*. 2 vols. New York: Oxford UP, 1980. Print.

**Essay or Chapter in Edited Books or Anthologies:** References to an essay or chapter in an edited book or compilation must include the following elements:

- essay or chapter author(s)
- essay or chapter title
- book title
- book editor(s) or compilers
- place of publication
- the shortened name of the publisher
- date of publication
- inclusive page numbers of the cited piece
- medium of publication

**Article in a book:**

Kowalewski, Michael. "Jack Kerouac and the Beats in San Francisco."  
*San Francisco in Fiction: Essays in a Regional Literature*. Ed.  
David Fine and Paul Skenazy. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P,  
1995. 126-43. Print.

**Reprinted article:**

Hunt, Tim. "The Misreading of Kerouac." *Review of Contemporary  
Fiction* 3.2 (1983): 29-33. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary  
Criticism*. Ed. Carl Riley. Vol. 61. Detroit: Gale, 1990. 308-10.  
Print.

**Articles or entries from reference books:**

If the article or entry is signed, place the author's name first; if it is unsigned, give the title first. For well-known reference works, it is not necessary to include full publication information. Include only the title of the reference source, edition, and date of publication.

**Dictionary entry:**

"Accord." Def. 5b. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989.  
Print.

**Encyclopedia entry:**

Bergman, P. G. "Relativity." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 15th  
ed. 1987. Print.

**Article from a less familiar reference book:**

For articles from less familiar reference sources, include the full publication information.

Sherrow, Victoria. "Politics and Hair." *Encyclopedia of Hair: A  
Cultural History*. Westport: Greenwood, 2006. Print.

### **Article in Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers:**

References to periodical articles must include the following elements:

- author(s)
- article title
- publication title (journal, magazine, etc.)
- volume number
- publication date (abbreviate months, if used)
- the inclusive page numbers
- medium of publication

Issue numbers should be stated as decimals to a given volume number. In the example below, the number 25.4 reads as Volume 25, issue 4. When citing newspapers, it is important to specify the edition used (e.g. late ed.) because different editions of a newspaper may contain different material.

### **Journal article, one author:**

Shefter, Martin. "Institutional Conflict over Presidential Appointments: The Case of Clarence Thomas." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 25.4 (1992): 676-79. Print.

### **Journal article, two authors:**

Ginsberg, Benjamin, and Martin Shefter. "Ethics Probes as Political Weapons." *Journal of Law & Politics* 11.3 (1995): 497-511. Print.

### **Magazine article:**

Pirisi, Angela. "Eye-catching advertisements." *Psychology Today* Jan.-Feb. 1997: 14. Print.

### **Newspaper article, no author:**

"Africa Day Celebrated in Havana." *Granma International* 31 May 2009, English ed.: 16. Print.

### **Newspaper article, one author, discontinuous pages:**

Yurth, Cindy. "Goodbye to Forest Lake Hero." *Navajo Times* 11 June 2009: A1+. Print.

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**Government Documents:**

References to government documents vary in their required elements. In general, if you do not know the writer of the document, cite the government agency that issued the document as author.

**State document:**

New York State. Commission on Capital Punishment. *Report of the Commission to Investigate and Report the Most Humane and Practical Method of Carrying Into Effect the Sentence of Death in Capital Cases*. Albany: Troy, 1888. Print.

**Federal document:**

United States. Cong. Senate. Committee on Governmental Affairs. *The Future of the Independent Counsel Act*. Hearings 106th Cong., 1st sess. Washington: GPO, 1999. Print.

**International document:**

United Nations. General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. New York: United Nations, 1979. Print.

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**Audio Visual****Film or video recording:**

*Annie Hall*. Dir. Woody Allen. 1977. Videocassette. MGM/UA Home Video, 1991.

**Sound recording:**

Counting Crows. *August and Everything After*. DGC, 1993. CD.

### **Sound recording, specific song:**

Counting Crows. "Mr. Jones." *August and Everything After*. DGC, 1993.  
CD.

### **CD-ROM**

Citations should include the medium of the electronic publication (CD-ROM), the name of the vendor that made the material available on CD-ROM, and publications dates for the version used, if relevant.

"Marriage." *Encyclopedia Judaica*. CD-ROM. Vers. 1.0. Jerusalem:  
Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

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## **Citing Materials from Online Sources**

### **Online Sources:**

Citations for online sources, like those for print sources, should provide information that both identifies a source and allows that source to be located and retrieved again. All citations should include the medium of publication (Web) and the date the content was accessed. If the source is difficult to locate or your instructor requires a URL, list the complete address within angle brackets after the date. In many cases, it is also necessary to identify the Web site or database that has made the material available online.

Because there are currently few standards that govern the organization and presentation of online publications, the information that is available to fulfill these objectives can vary widely from resource to resource. In general, references to online works require more information than references to print sources.

See sections 5.6.1-4 in the **MLA Handbook** for more complete information on creating citations for online sources.

### **Web page:**

This example includes the optional URL. All other examples below use the shorter citation format.

Cornell University Library. "Introduction to Research." *Cornell University Library*. Cornell University, 2009. Web. 19 June 2009  
<<http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/intro>>.

### **Personal Web site:**

If a work is untitled, you may use a genre label such as Home page, Introduction, etc.

Rule, Greg. Home page. Web. 16 Nov. 2008.

**Entry in an online encyclopedia:**

"Einstein, Albert." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1999. Web. 27 Apr. 2009.

**Article from a less familiar online reference book:**

Nielsen, Jorgen S. "European Culture and Islam." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. New York: Macmillan Reference-Thomson/Gale, 2004. Web. 4 July 2009.

**Article in an online periodical:**

If pagination is unavailable or is not continuous, use n. pag. in place of the page numbers.

Chaplin, Heather. "Epidemic of Extravagance." *Salon* 19 February 1999: n. pag. Web. 12 July 1999.

**Article in a full-text journal accessed from a database:**

Fox, Justin. "Who Wants to Be an Internet Billionaire?" *Fortune* 8 Nov. 1999: 40- . *ABI/INFORM Global*. *ProQuest Direct*. Web. 15 Nov. 2005.

**Online book with print information:**

Frost, Robert. *North of Boston*. 2nd ed. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1915. *Google Books*. Web. 30 June 2009.

**For more detailed information about Works Cited references, please refer to the MLA resources listed below.**

The examples of MLA style and format listed on this page include many of the most common types of sources used in academic research. For additional examples and more detailed information about MLA citation style, refer to the following resources:

***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.***

This book is designed for high school and undergraduate students. You can find it at the following locations:

Olin Library Reference LB2369 .G53 2009

ILR Library Reference LB2369 .G53 2009

***MLA STYLE Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing. 3rd ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008. Print.***

This book is designed for graduate students and professional writers. You can find this publication at the following locations:

Olin Library Reference PN147 .G444 2008

Uris Library Reference PN147 .G444 2008

Law Library Reserve PN147 .G444x 2008

Music Library Reference PN147 .G444 2008

**["Frequently Asked Questions about the \*MLA Style Manual\*."](#) *Modern Language Association. Modern Language Association, 2008. Web. 30 June 2009.***