

Tips on Using MLA Style—Updated 2020

This handout will briefly describe MLA documentation procedures. It is not intended to be inclusive, nor is it intended to replace the MLA handbook.

Guidelines for writing a Work(s) Cited section:

- The Work(s) Cited page follows your completed essay. Place the Work(s) Cited title in the center of the page, an inch from the top.
- Double space all lines.
Note: To save space, the following examples on this tip sheet are not double-spaced.
- Begin the first line of all entries at the left margin, and indent all subsequent lines within the same citation by 5 spaces (one tab or ½ inch). This is also known as a hanging indent.
- Alphabetize the list by the last names of authors. If no author is given, alphabetize by title.

How to make citations within the text:

- **If you have used the author's name in your paraphrased information**, put only the page numbers in parentheses after the segment you are citing.
Example: Monroe argues for abolition of . . . (177-98).
- **If you did not name the author in your paraphrased information**, put both the name and page numbers in parentheses at the end of the segment.
Example: Johnson's political opinions are usually described as progressive, yet she . . . (Monroe 177-98).
- **Quoted material in your text:** Enclose quotations of fewer than four lines in quotation marks.
Example: Monroe describes Sarah Johnson as a "political trendsetter for the twenty-first century" (198).
- **Block quoting in the text** is used for presenting a long quotation (more than 4 lines). The entire quote is set off from the text by indenting ten spaces, or one inch, and it is **double-spaced** throughout. **DO NOT** use quotation marks around the block quote.
Example: The American Library Association released a statement regarding the updated role of city and county libraries:
People from households making less than \$25,000 annually are three times more likely to rely on library computers than those earning more than \$75,000 annually. Computer access at the local library helps to close the technology gap, and access to the internet through public computers is a major step toward closing the educational divide. (2)
a) **Writer must use a *complete sentence* to introduce quote, followed by a colon.**
b) **Do not indent** the first line an extra amount or add quotation marks not present in quote.
c) For a block quote, place page number **after** the period.

The Core Elements of a Work(s)-Cited Entry:

The eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook* introduces a new model for entries in the works-cited list, one that reflects recent changes in how works are published and consulted. Instead of consulting guidelines for citing a book (or DVD or web page), the writer creates an entry by utilizing the MLA's list of core elements—facts common to most works—which are assembled in a specific order.

The MLA core elements appear below, and the numbered elements are followed by appropriate punctuation for that particular element's order in the citation:

Core Element:	Explanation:
1. Author.	Who created the source --or whose work on the source you chose to emphasize first and foremost.
2. Title of source.	The title of the <i>specific</i> source you are citing. This could be a whole book or a short poem within it, if your focus is on the poem.
3. Title of container,	The title of a larger source containing the source you are citing. When a source stands alone (like a whole film or novel), there is no container. When an essay (source) is published in a journal (large source), then that journal (larger source), is called a container .
4. Other contributors,	Noteworthy contributors to the work , such as editors, translators, or performers.
5. Versions,	Description of a source that appears in more than one version , such as a book in revised editions.
6. Number,	Number indicating the source's place in a sequence , such as volume and issue numbers for journals, or season and episode numbers for television shows.
7. Publisher,	Organization that produces or sponsors the source and delivers it to readers.
8. Publication date,	When the source was made available to the public. This might be a year, a month, a specific date, or even a specific time.
9. Location.	Where to find a specific source. This could be page number for print sources, a URL or DOI for online sources, or the location of a lecture or performance.

Example:

Author. Title of source. Title of container, Other contributors, Versions, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.

In the new model, the writer asks, "Who is the author? What is the title?" and so forth—regardless of the nature of the source. It is usually best to account for all the containers that enclose your source. Each container likely provides useful information for a reader seeking to understand and locate the original source.

EXAMPLES of how to list entries in the Work(s) Cited page—double-space all lines:

Book with one author

Oyeyemi, Helen. *Mr. Fox: A Novel*. Riverhead Books, 2012.

Book with two or more authors

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

Source with two or more editors

Holland, Merlin, and Rupert Hart-Davis, editors. *The Complete Letter of Oscar Wilde*. Henry Holt, 2000.

Book with author and editor

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

An essay, short story, and poem in a collection

Dewar, James A., and Peng Hwa Ang. "The Cultural Consequences of Printing and the Internet." *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron et al., U of Massachusetts P/ Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007, pp. 365-77.

(If there is more than one relevant publisher to your research, list them in your citation separated by a forward slash.)

Selection from an anthology or textbook

Diaz, Junto. "Aurora." *The Ecco Anthology of Contemporary American Short Fiction*, edited by Joyce Carrol Oates and Christopher R. Beha, Harper Perennial, 2008, pp. 213-26.

Issue of a Periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper) usually carries a date on its cover or title page. Cited examples are listed below:**Journal**

Belton, John. "Painting by the Numbers: The Digital Communication Media." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 3, Spring 2015, pp. 58-65.

Magazine article

Himes, Geoffrey. "Back in the Saddle." *Rolling Stone*, Apr. 2016, pp. 34-35.

An Article in a national newspaper (print)

Simon, Lizzie. "The Art of Obsession." *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 Mar. 2016, pp. A24+. (A plus sign stands in for non-sequential pages.)

Online Periodical

Chen, Brian X. "Virtual Reality Is Here. Is Oculus Rift Worth It?" *The New York Times*, nyti.ms/IXYcowB.

(Permalink--Permanent URLs to individual pages and blog posts.)

Online Periodical in Database

Williams, David. "Outsider Candidates Generating Buzz." *The Toronto Star*, 19 Mar. 2016, p. A16. *LexisNexis Academic*, www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.wexler.hutner.cuny.edu/lnacui2api/api/version1/getDouCUI?Ini=5JJB-WWGI-DY91K4PR&csi=237924&h1=t&hv=t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc+00204&perma=true.

E-Reader (App or On Device)

Cadhain, Mairtin O. *The Dirty Dust*. Translated by Alan Titley, Kindle ed. Yale UP, 2015.

Lennard, John. *Of Modern Dragons: and Other Essays on Genre Fiction*. Humanities-EBooks LLP, 2007, http://www.humanities-ebooks.co.uk/pdf/Living_with_Genre_Fiction.pdf.

Web site

Hollmichel, Stefanie. *So Many Books*. 2003-13, somanymanybooksblog.com.

Article on Web site

Hollmichel, Stefanie. "The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print." *So Many Books*, 25 Apr. 2013, somanymanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print/. Accessed 23 July 2107.

(Since an online work may change or move at any time, it is recommended that you include the date accessed.)

Personal interview

Walcott, Derek. Interview. By Susan Lang. 22 Oct. 2017.
(Subject interviewed)

Public Speech or Live Performance

Rankine, Claudia. Keynote Address. 2016 AWP Conference and Bookfair, 31 Mar. 2017, Los Angeles Convention Center.

Work of Art

Vermeer, Johannes. *The Astronomer*. 1668. Louvre Museum, Paris.
(Place the date of creation immediately after the title.)

Email

Boyle, Anthony T. "Re: Utopia." Received by Daniel J. Cahill, 21 June 2016.
(When you document an email message, use its subject as the title.)

Film that is seen in a theater--end with the distributor and the date.

Chi-Rag, Directed by Spike Lee, Amazon Studios, 2015.

Video on the Web

CBS News, "1968 King Assassination Report." 4 Apr. 1968. *YouTube*, 3 Apr. 2019, [youtube/cm0BbxgXKvo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm0BbxgXKvo).

Podcast

Sedaris, David. "Now We Are Five." *This American Life*, Chicago Public Media, 31 Jan. 2016, www.thisamericanlife.org/podcast/episode/517/day-at-the-beach?act=4.

Tweet

@perisiankiwi. "We have report of large street battles in east & west Tehran now - #Iranelection." *Twitter*, 23 June 2013, 11:15 a. m., twitter.com/perisiankiwi/status/2298106072.