What is MLA Style?

Modern Language Association (MLA) style is one of several styles for academic citations. It is used in the humanities, especially English. The examples in this guide cover the more common sources only. For more detailed information, refer to the MLA Handbook, 8th ed. available in the library at call number LB 2369.G53 2016.

The following pages explain how to acknowledge and cite the sources you use when writing essays.

There are two places in the essay where citations of sources are required.

1. In the body of the essay, you acknowledge your source at the end of the sentence containing the quotation or reference to another author’s works. We refer to these end-of-sentence citations as in-text citations.
2. At the end of the essay, after the last page, create a list of all of the sources mentioned in the essay. When using MLA Style, this list is entitled Works Cited. Do not put quotation marks around this phrase, and do not underline or italicize it. See last page of this handout for a sample Works Cited.
3. See MLA web site at style.mla.org for instructions on formatting research papers.

Works Cited

- Double-space the Works Cited.
- Use hanging indentation format. With this format, the first line of each entry starts at the left margin, but the second and any subsequent lines in each entry are indented one-half inch from left margin. In MS Word (PC) use Page Layout > Paragraph > Special > Hanging (MLA Handbook 112).
- Alphabetize entries by the author’s last name or, if there is no author, by title, ignoring initial articles such as A, An, or The (MLA Handbook 115).
- Reverse the author’s name for alphabetizing, but otherwise give the author’s name as it appears in the source.
- If there are two or more entries by the same author(s), give the name(s) in the first entry, and then use three hyphens in place of the name(s) in the following entry or entries; alphabetize the entries by title (MLA Handbook 113).
- Capitalize the first, the last and all significant words of a title and subtitle regardless of how they are capitalized in your source (MLA Handbook 67).
- Italicize titles and subtitles for works published independently such as books or journals; use quotation marks for works published only as part of another work, e.g. essay in a book or article in a journal (MLA Handbook 68).
- Shorten publisher’s name. Use U for university and P for press (MLA Handbook 97).
- When giving a URL, copy it in full from your Web browser, but omit http://. When possible, cite a DOI (digital object identifier) instead of a URL. If DOI is unavailable, try to find a stable URL or Permalink number (MLA Handbook 110).
- If two or more publishers are named in the source and they seem equally responsible for the work, cite each of them, separating the names with a forward slash (/) (MLA Handbook 40).

### In-Text Citations (also known as Parenthetical Citations)

- When you incorporate another’s words, facts or ideas, whether in a direct quotation or by paraphrasing, you need to insert a brief parenthetical acknowledgement. Give the author’s last name and page(s) of the source. If the author’s name appears in the sentence, you may omit it from the in-text citation. For the first mention of the author, use the full name. Use just the last name in subsequent references.

- Regarding the knowledge of skills of the medication profession in the last eighteenth century, George Grinnell observes that “disease often outpaced the expertise and medical techniques in the period” (MLA Handbook 32).

Paraphrase – with and without author’s name in sentence.

- In the late eighteenth century, there was a lack of knowledge about the illnesses that physicians were called upon to treat (Grinnell 32).

- Grinnell notes that doctors of the time were unaware of the causes and treatments of many diseased that affected their patients (32).

- Place the in-text citation “when possible, where there is a natural pause in the text. A parenthetical citation that directly follows a quotation is placed after the closing quotation mark” (MLA Handbook 54).

- For web resources, unless the pages or paragraphs are numbered, use only the author’s last name. If no author is indicated, use the first word of the title (56).

- “If you borrow more than once from the same source within a single paragraph and no another source intervenes, you may give a single parenthetical reference after the last borrowing” (MLA Handbook 124).

- In citing classic verse, plays and poems, omit page numbers and cite by division (act, scene, canto, book, part) and line, with periods separating various numbers. Titles of famous works are often abbreviated such as (Ham. 1.5.35-37).
### Journal Articles

**Core Elements:** Author. Title of Source. Title of Container, Number, Publication Date, Location. Title of 2nd container, Location.

**Journal article:** Retrieved from database

**Format:** Last name, First name Middle name or initial. “Title of Article.” Title of Journal, volume number (vol.), issue number (no.), Publication Date (month as well as year if available), Pages of article. Database, Location (URL).

**In-text citation:** (Author Last Name Page Number or Numbers)

**Example:**


**In-text citation:** (Lo 96)

**Notes:**
- For Location, use DOI if available. If not, try to locate the stable URL (sometimes called the Permalink).
- Title of book within the article title is italicized.
- In the in-text citation, do not put a comma between author name and page number.

**Journal article:** Retrieved from internet. No page numbers. p. 48

**Format:** Last name, First name Middle name or initial. “Title of Article.” Title of Journal, Publication Date (day & month as well as year if available), Location (URL).

**Example:**


**In-text citation:** (Keyes)

**Magazine article:** Retrieved from internet p. 48

**Format:** Last name, First name Middle name or initial. “Title of Article.” Title of Journal, Publication Date (day & month as well as year if available), Location (URL).

**Example:**


**In-text citation:** (Yoon)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format: Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal article: Print p. 30</td>
<td>Last name, First name Middle name or initial. “Title of Article.” Title of Journal, volume number (vol.), issue number (no.), Publication Date (month as well as year if available), Location (pages of article).</td>
<td>Jefferess, David. “To Be Good (Again): The Kite Runner as Allegory of Global Ethnics.” <em>Journal of Postcolonial Writing</em>, vol. 45, no.4, Dec. 2009, pp. 389-400. In-text citation: (Jefferess 390)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper article: Retrieved from internet p. 48</td>
<td>Last name, First name Middle name or initial (if available). “Title of Article.” Title of Newspaper, Publication Date (day and month as well as year), Location (URL).</td>
<td>Celis, Nikki. “LiterASIAN festival to play on themes of history and memory.” <em>Georgia Straight</em>. 15 Sept 2016, <a href="http://www.straight.com/arts/783816/literasian-festival-play-themes-history-and-memory">http://www.straight.com/arts/783816/literasian-festival-play-themes-history-and-memory</a>. In text: (“Celis”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper article: Print</td>
<td>Last name, First name Middle name or initial (if available). “Title of Article.” Title of Newspaper, Publication Date (day and month as well as year), Location (pages of article).</td>
<td>Seymour, Ron. “Riders Raise Thousands.” <em>Daily Courier</em>, 15 June 2015, p. A1. In-text citation: (Seymour A1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- MLA suggests including a long author name in the text rather than using an in-text citation. Example below.
- According to the statistics provided by Kelowna’s Planning and Development Services Dept., the city’s population was 89,465 in 1996.
### Books, Book Chapters, & Related Items

**Core Elements:** Author. Title of Source. Publisher, Publication Date.

#### Book: 1 author

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format:</th>
<th>Last name, First name Middle name or initial. <em>Title of Book</em>. Publisher, Publication Date.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-text citation:</td>
<td>(Author Last Name Page Numbers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-text citation:</td>
<td>(Grinnell 32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Book: 2 authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format:</th>
<th>Author Last Name, First Name or Initial, and Author First Name or Initial Last Name. <em>Title</em>. Publisher, Publication Date.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-text citation:</td>
<td>(McGoldrick and McGoldrick 14-15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- Arrange the authors in the order in which they are presented in the work.

#### Books: 3 or more authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format:</th>
<th>Last name, First name Middle name or initial, et al. <em>Title of Book</em>. Publisher, Publication Date.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-text citation:</td>
<td>(Gillis et al. 27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- Only the first author’s name is included. Et al. takes the place of the rest of the authors’ names.

#### Electronic Book from the internet

| Format: | Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. “Title of Chapter.” *Title of Book*, Other Contributor (editor), Version, Publisher, Publication Date, Location (pages of chapter), Internet Site, Location (URL). |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Example:** | Clarke, George Elliott. “What was Canada?” *Is Canada Postcolonial: Unsettling* | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
In-text citation: (Clarke 28)

Electronic book from a database
p. 34

Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. Title. Publisher, Publication Date, Title of Container (Database), Location (URL).

Example:

In-text citation: (Lawrence 53)

Edited book/Editor as Author
(This examples has multiple editors)
p. 23

Format:
Editor Last Name, First Name or Initial, editor (or editors). Title. Publisher. Publication Date.

Example:

In-text citation: (Carne, et al. 142)

Notes:
✧ ✧ This is a source with three editors. They assembled the book.
✧ ✧ The in-text citation does not include the word editors.

Chapter in an edited book
p. 27

Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. “Title of Chapter.” Title of Book, editor (or editors), Publisher, Publication Date, Location (pages).

Example:

In-text citation: (MacArthur 70)

Notes:
✧ ✧ Editors’ names are both arranged in first name last name order.
✧ ✧ Sometimes you will need to cite an item that has another title as part of the title. In this case, the book title Thoughts Abroad is italicized within the chapter title which is printed in regular type and enclosed by quotation marks.

Book with no author or editor

Format:
Title of Book. Version (if applicable). Name of Publisher Publication Date.
Corporate Author p. 25

Format:
Author. Title of Book. Publisher, Publication Date.

Example:
In-text citation: (Okanagan Writers' League 65)

Poem in an Anthology p. 39

Format:
Author Last Name, Author First Name or Initial. "Title of Poem." Title of Anthology, editor (or editors), Version (if applicable), Publisher, Publication Date, Location (pages).

Example:
In-text citation:
When describing angels, Page writes, “Perhaps only a dog could accept them wholly, / be happy to follow at their heels / and bark and romp with them in the green fields” (59-61).

Notes:
- When inserting poetry in an essay, use a forward slash at the end of each line of poetry. If quoted line in poetry starts with a capital letter, leave it in upper case, even in the middle of the sentence.
- If the book is a second or revised edition, place this information after the editors, or after the title if no editors.

Dictionary entry: Print p. 38

Format:
Author (if applicable). "Title of Entry." Title of Book. Version (if applicable), Publisher, Publication Date, Location (page).

Example:
In-text citation: (“Ideology” 758)

Notes:
- If published electronically, include URL after page number.
Example:

In-text citation: (“Keats, John”)

Notes:
❖❖ In in-text citation, give full title if brief or shortened version of one or two words.
❖❖ The title of the online resource is an example of a 2nd container.

Entry from Oxford English Dictionary (Online)

Format:
“Title of Entry.” Specific definition indication. Title of Book. Publisher, Publication Date, Location (URL).

Example:

In-text citation: (“Passion,” Entry 1, def. 6a)

Thesis or Dissertation: Retrieved from Online Repository. (example on MLA web site)

Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. Year of Pub. Title of Thesis. Date of Publication. Publisher, Description of Work. Container (Name of Repository), Location (URL or DOI).

Example:

In-text citation: (Wang 125)

Note:
❖❖ Example of DOI as a location.
Graphic Novel Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. *Title of Book*. Other Contributors (such as Adaptation or Translator if applicable). Series Number (if applicable), Publisher, Date of Publication.

Example:

In-text citation: (Yoshida 121)

Custom Course Materials Reprinted from another source Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. “Title of Article.” *Title of Book*, other contributors (such as editor), Publisher, Publication Date, Location (pages).

Example:

In-text citation: (Scudder 3)

Government Report: Print Format:
Author (city or country. Dept. name). *Title of Report*. Publisher, Publication Date.

Example:

In text: (Canada. Health Canada 12)

WEB DOCUMENTS

Core Elements: Author. Title of Source. Title of Container, Publisher, Publication Date, Location. Optional Element – Date of Access.

Web page as part of Web Site p. 28 Format:
Author. “Title of Web page, posting or article.” *Title of Web Site*, Publisher (if applicable), Publication Date, Location (URL). Date of Access.

Example:

In-text citation: (Rader)

Note:
_include date of access for online resources. However, they may move or change._
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blog posting</strong>&lt;br&gt;Format: Author Last Name, First Name or Initial (or Username). “Title of Blog Post.” <em>Title of Blog</em>, Publication Date, URL. Date of Access.</td>
<td>Fleming, Anne. “About Anne.” <em>Anne Fleming</em>, 2016, annefleming.ca/. Accessed 24 August 2016. In-text citation: (Fleming)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIA</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Core Elements</strong>: Author. <em>Title of Source</em>. <em>Title of Container</em>, Publisher, Publication Date, Location.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Streaming video (such as YouTube)</strong>&lt;br&gt;p. 44</td>
<td>Format: Author Last Name, First Name or Initial (if available). “Title.” <em>Internet Site</em>, Publisher (if applicable), Publication Date, (2nd container if applicable), Location (URL).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audio clip (such as a podcast): Retrieved from the internet</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Format: Author Last Name, First Name or Initial (if available). “Title.” <em>Internet Site</em>. Publisher (if applicable), Publication Date, Location (URL).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media: Facebook</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Format: Author Last Name, First Name or Initial (if available). “Title.” <em>Internet Site</em>. Publisher (if applicable), Publication Date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Media: Twitter  
Format: Author Last Name, First Name or Initial (if available). “Title.” Internet Site. Publisher (if applicable), Publication Date, Location (URL).

Example: Giustini, Dean. “Health Information Week in the UK is a great idea. Would love to see it in Canada #HIW2017 Follow the tweets #canmedlibs #iamalibrarian” Twitter, 2 July 2017, 11:20 a.m., https://twitter.com/giustini/status/881578410069213185

In-text citation: In the main text of the essay, a tweet is cited in its entirety.

Film: Writing about film in general  
Format: Title of film. Other contributors (if applicable), Distributor, Date of Release.


In text citation: (Hamlet)

Film: Focusing on contribution of person.  
Format: Title of film. Other contributors (if applicable), Distributor, Date of Release.


In-text citation: (Gibson)

Visual Art: Image retrieved from the internet  
Format: Creator's Last Name, First Name Initial. Title of Work. Internet Site, Publication Date, Location (URL). Date of Access.


In-text citation: (Lee)

Visual Art: Image retrieved from a database  
Format: Creator's Last Name, First Name Initial. Title of Work. Title of Database, Publication Date, Location (URL).


In-text citation: (Monet)
Visual Art:
Image retrieved from a web site

Format:
Creator's Last Name, First Name or Initial (if available). Title of Work. Internet Site, Publication Date, Location (URL). Date of Access.

Example:

In-text citation: (Blake)

Visual Art:
Image Exhibited in Gallery

Format:
Creator's Last Name, First Name or Initial (if available). Title of Work. Publication Date, Location (Name of Gallery).

Example:
Johnston, Byron, and Bryan Ryley. Here and There II. 2006, U of British Columbia FINA Gallery.

In-text citation: (Johnston and Ryley)

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION & NOTES

Interview conducted by researcher

Format:
Last name First Name or Initial. Type of Communication. Name of Receiver. Date.

Example:

In text citation: (Milton)

Telephone Conversation

Format:
Last name First Name or Initial. Type of Communication. Name of Receiver. Date.

Example:

In-text citation: (Stouck)

Note:

Personal communication may be cited in the running text of your paper instead of using an in-text citation ("In a telephone conversation between Dr. Stouck and the author on June 22, 2016...")
PowerPoint
Posted to Connect

Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. “Title of PowerPoint.” Container, Publisher, Publication Date, URL, Optional Element – Descriptive Term.

Example:

In-text citation: (Reeves)

E-mail
Message p. 29

Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. “Title (subject line of e-mail.)” Name of receiver, Date sent.

Example:

In-text citation: (Shearer)

Class Lecture p. 52

Format:
Author Last Name, First Name or Initial. “Title of Lecture.” Title of Class, Date, Location. Optional Element – descriptor.

Example:

In-text citation: (Senger)
Works Cited


Lawrence, Sean. Forgiving the Gift: The Philosophy of Generosity in Shakespeare and Marlowe.


