MLA 8th EDITION STYLE GUIDELINES

For more information, consult the new 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, available at the reference desk and in the circulating collection at LB2369 .G53 2016. You can also see guidelines at the MLA Style Center: [https://style.mla.org/](https://style.mla.org/) or the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)

The new style of MLA citation focuses on principles that should work for all kinds of sources (such as books, articles, videos, or songs) instead of complex requirements. Your citations should be streamlined to contain essential information for the type of paper you are writing. Always use the hanging indent format for your Works Cited page; this distinguishes a citation from other text.

OVERVIEW

Start with this list of core elements that should be included in each citation, in this order, with the punctuation that follows each element:

*Author. Title of source. Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location. Voluntary information.*

ELEMENT DETAILS

**Author:** Begin with the author’s last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work. End with a period.


**Title of source:** The title of the source should follow the author’s name. Depending upon the type of source, it should be listed in italics or quotation marks.

A *book* should be in italics:


An *article* in a website or periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper) should be in quotation marks, with the hosting website or periodical title in italics:


A *song* or piece of music on an album should be in quotation marks:

Title of container: The new edition of MLA refers to containers, which are the larger wholes in which the source is located. If you want to cite a poem that is listed in a poetry collection, the individual poem is the source, while the larger collection is the container. The title of the container is usually italicized and followed by a comma. A container may be a book, a website, a television series, or something else.


A container may be within a larger container. Maybe you found a scholarly article on ProQuest or watched a TV show on Hulu. You should cite these larger containers so that your readers can follow you to the source you used.


Other contributors: In addition to the author, there may be other contributors to the source who should be credited, such as editors, illustrators, translators, etc. Include their names if their contributions are relevant or important. Terms like editor, illustrator, translator, etc., are no longer abbreviated.


Version: Include the edition or version of your source, if that information is given.


Number: Include the volume and issue number from a journal. If your source is part of a series, like a TV show or a volume of an encyclopedia, the number must be in the citation.


Publisher: The publisher produces or distributes the source to the public. If there is more than one publisher, and they are all are relevant to your paper, then you should list them in your citation, separated by a forward slash (/).


Note: the publisher’s name need not be included in the following sources: periodicals, works published by their author or editor, a website whose title is the same name as its publisher, a website that makes works available but does not actually publish them (such as *YouTube, WordPress*, or *JSTOR*).

Publication date: The same source may have been published on more than one date, such as an online version of an original source or a TV show that aired on one date but released on Netflix later. When the source has more than one date, it is fine to use only the date that is most relevant to your use of it. If you’re unsure about which date to use, go with the date of the source’s original publication.

In the following example, Mutant Enemy is the primary production company, and “Hush” was released in 1999. This is the way to create a general citation for a television episode.


If you are discussing the context in which the show first ran, you should cite the full date. You would then use WB Television Network (rather than Mutant Enemy), because it was the network (rather than the production company) that aired the episode on the date you’re citing.


Location: You should be specific in identifying a work’s location. An essay in a book, or an article in journal should include page numbers.


The location of an online work should include a URL and the date you accessed it, since the location can change. Do not include the http:// section.


Optional elements: The new edition is supposed to streamline citations, so you should include any information that will help readers find sources, but leave out distracting extras. You may include elements such as relevant dates of different publications, the city of publication, and URLs or digital object identifiers for journal articles. For more details, check the handbook or Purdue OWL.
IN-TEXT CITATIONS

The in-text citation is a brief note within your text that indicates the source material. It should properly attribute any ideas, paraphrases, or direct quotations, and should direct readers to the entry in the list of works cited. For the most part, an in-text citation is the author’s name and page number (or just the page number, if the author is named in the sentence) in parentheses:

   Imperialism is “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory.” (Said 9).

or

   According to Edward W. Said, imperialism is defined by “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory.” (9).

If no author is listed, use an abbreviated version of the title.

   International espionage was as prevalent as ever in the 1990s (“Decade”).

If there are two authors, include both:

   The authors claim that surface reading looks at what is “evident, perceptible, apprehensible in texts” (Best and Marcus 9).

But if the article has three or more authors, just use the first one and then “et. al.”

   The authors claim that one cause of obesity in the United States is government-funded farm subsidies (Franck, et al. 327).

When creating in-text citations for media that has a runtime, such as a movie or podcast, include the range of hours, minutes and seconds you plan to reference: (00:02:15-00:02:35).

For more details and examples of using in-text citations, see the Purdue OWL’s webpage, “MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics.”

Citation examples are from the Purdue Online Writing Lab’s MLA Style Guide at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/