MLA Citation Style

MLA Style for In-Text Citations

MLA style requires documentation in the text of an essay for every quotation, paraphrase, and summary as well as other material requiring documentation (12f). In-text citations document material from other sources with both signal phrases and parenthetical citations. Signal phrases introduce the material, often including the author's name. Keep your parenthetical citations short, but include the information your readers need to locate the full citation in the list of works cited at the end of the text.

Place a parenthetical citation as near the relevant material as possible without disrupting the flow of the sentence. Note in the following examples where punctuation is placed in relation to the parentheses.

1. AUTHOR NAMED IN A SIGNAL PHRASE

Ordinarily, you can use the author's name in a signal phrase-to introduce the material-and cite the page number(s) in parentheses.

Herrera indicates that Kahlo believed in a "vitalistic form of pantheism" (328).

2. AUTHOR NAMED IN PARENTHESES

When you do not mention the author in a signal phrase, include the author's last name before the page number(s) in the parentheses. Use no punctuation between the author's name and the page number(s).

In places, de Beauvoir "sees Marxists as believing in subjectivity" (Whitmarsh 63).
3. TWO OR THREE AUTHORS

Use all the authors’ last names in a phrase or in parentheses.

Gortner, Hebrun, and Nicolson maintain that “opinion leaders” influence other people in an organization because they are respected, not because they hold high positions (175).

5. ORGANIZATION AS AUTHOR

Give the full name of a corporate author or a shortened form of it in a phrase or in parentheses.

Any study of social welfare involves a close analysis of “the impacts, the benefits, and the costs” of its policies (Social Research Corporation iii).

6. UNKNOWN AUTHOR

Use the title, if it is brief, in your text – or a shortened version of the title in parentheses.

“Hype,” by one analysis, is “an artificially engendered atmosphere of hysteria” (“Today’s Marketplace” 51).

7. AUTHOR OR TWO OR MORE WORKS

If your list of works cited as more than one work by the same author, include a shortened version of the title of the work you are citing in a phrase or in parentheses.

Gardner shows readers their own silliness in his description of a “pointless, ridiculous monster, crouched in the shadows, stinking of dead men, murdered children, and martyred cows” (Grendel 2).

8. TWO OR MORE AUTHORS WITH THE SAME LAST NAME

Always include the authors’ first and last names in the signal phrases or in the parenthetical citations for their works.

Children will learn to write if they are allowed to choose their own subjects, James Britton asserts, citing the Schools Council study of the 1960s (37-42).

9. MULTIVOLUME WORK

In a parenthetical citation, note the volume number first and then the page number(s), with a colon and one space between them.

Modernist writers prized experimentation and gradually even sought to blur the line between poetry and prose, according to Forster (3: 150).

10. LITERARY WORK

Because literary works are often available in many different editions, cite the page number(s) from the edition you used followed by a semicolon, and, in addition, give other identifying information that will lead readers to the passage in any edition – such as the act and/or scene in a play (37; sc. 1). For a novel, indicate the part of chapter (175; ch. 4).

In utter despair, Dostoyevsky’s character Mitya wonders aloud about the “terrible tragedies realism inflicts on people” (376; bk. 8, ch. 2).
For poems, cite the part (if there is one) and line(s), separated by a period. If you are citing only line numbers, use the word line(s) in the first reference (lines 33-34).

On dying, Whitman speculates, “All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses./And to die is different from what anyone supposed, and luckier” (6. 129-30).

For verse plays, give only the act, scene and line numbers, separated by periods.

As Macbeth begins, the witches greet Banquo as “Lesser than Macbeth, and greater” (1.3.65).

11. WORK IN AN ANTHOLOGY

For an essay, short story, or other piece of prose reprinted in an anthology, use the name of the author of the work, not the editor of the anthology, but use the page number(s) from the anthology.

Narratives of captivity play a major role in early writing by women in the United States, as demonstrated by Silko (219).

12. BIBLE

Identify quotations by giving the title of the Bible, the book, and the chapter and verse, separated by a period. In your text, spell out the names of books. In parenthetical citations, use abbreviations for books with names of five or more letters (Gen. For Genesis).

He ignored the admonition “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (New Oxford Annotated Bible, Prov. 16.18).

13. INDIRECT SOURCE

Use the abbreviation qtd. In to indicate that you are quoting from someone else’s report of a conversation, interview, letter, or the like.

As Arthur Miller says, “When somebody is destroyed everybody finally contributes to it, but in Willy’s case, the end product would be virtually the same” (qtd. In Martin and Meyer 375).

14. TWO OR MORE SOURCES IN THE SAME CITATION

Separate the information with semicolons.

Economists recommend the employment be redefined to include unpaid domestic labor (Clark 148; Nevins 39).

15. ENTIRE WORK OR ONE-PAGE ARTICLE

Include the reference in the text without any page numbers or parentheses.


16. WORK WITHOUT PAGE NUMBERS

If a work has no page numbers or is only one page long, you may omit the page number. If a work uses paragraph numbers instead, use the abbreviation par(s).
Whitman considered their speech “a source of a native grand opera,” in the words of Ellison (par. 13).

17. ELECTRONIC OR NONPRINT SOURCE

Give enough information in a signal phrase or parenthetical citation for readers to locate the source in the list of works cited. Usually give the author or title under which you list the source. Specify a source’s page, section, paragraph, or screen numbers, if numbered, in parentheses.

Describing children's language acquisition, Pinker explains that "what's innate about language is just a way of paying attention to parental speech" (Johnson, sec. 1).

MLA Style for a List of Works Cited

The sample works cited entries that follow observe MLA's advice to underline words that are often italicized in print. Although most computers can generate italics easily, the MLA recommends that "you can avoid ambiguity by using underlining" in your research essays. If you wish to use italics instead, first-check with your instructor.

Books

1. ONE AUTHOR


2. TWO OR THREE AUTHORS

Give the first author listed on the title page, last name first; then list the name(s) of the other author(s) in regular order, with a comma between authors and an and before the last one.


3. FOUR OR MORE AUTHORS

Give the first author listed on the title page, last name first, followed by a comma and et al. (“and others”), or list all the names, since the use of et al. diminishes the importance of the other contributors.


4. ORGANIZATION AS AUTHOR

Give the name of the group listed on the title page as the author, even if the same group published the book.


5. UNKNOWN AUTHOR

Begin the entry with the title, and list the work alphabetically by the first major word of the title after any intial A, an, or The.

6. TWO OR MORE BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR(S)

Arrange the entries alphabetically by title. Include the name(s) of the author(s) in the first entry, but in subsequent entries, use three hyphens followed by a period.


If you cite a work by one author who is also listed as the first coauthor of another work you cite, list the single-author work first, and repeat the author's name in the entry for the coauthored work. Also repeat the author's name if you cite a work in which that author is listed as the first of a different set of coauthors. In other words, use three hyphens only when the work is by exactly the same author(s) as the previous entry.

7. EDITOR(S)

Treat an editor as an author, but add a comma and ed. (or eds.).


8. AUTHOR AND EDITOR

If you have cited the body of the text, begin with the author's name. Then list the editor, introduced by Ed. ("Edited by"), after the title.


If you have cited the editor's contribution, begin the entry with the editor's name followed by a comma and ed. Then list the author's name, introduced by By, after the title.


9. WORK IN AN ANTHOLOGY OR CHAPTER IN A BOOK WITH AN EDITOR

List the author(s) of the selection or chapter; its title; the title of the book in which the selection or chapter appears; Ed. and the name(s) of the editor(s) in regular order; the publication information; and the inclusive page numbers of the selection.


If the selection was originally published in a periodical and you are asked to supply information for this original source, use the following format. Rpt. Is the abbreviation for Reprinted.


For inclusive page numbers up to 99, note all digits in the second number. For numbers above 99, note only the last two digits, and any others that change in the second number (115-18, 1378-79, 296-301).

10. TWO OR MORE ITEMS FROM AN ANTHOLOGY
Include the anthology itself in your list of works cited.


Then list each selection separately by its author and title, followed by a cross-reference to the anthology.


11. TRANSLATION

Begin the entry with the author’s name, and give the translator’s name, preceded by *Trans.* (“Translated by”), after the title.


12. EDITION OTHER THAN THE FIRST

Add the information, in abbreviated form, after the title.


13. ONE VOLUME OF A MULTIVOLUME WORK

Give the volume number after the title, and list the number of volumes in the complete work after the date, using the abbreviations Vol. and vols.


14. TWO OR MORE VOLUMES OF A MULTIVOLUME WORK

If you cite two or more volumes of a multivolume work, give the number of volumes in the complete work after the title, using the abbreviation vols.


15. PREFACE, FOREWORD, INTRODUCTION, OR AFTERWORD

List the author of the item, the item title, the title of the book, and author. List the inclusive page numbers at the end of the entry.

16. ARTICLES IN A REFERENCE WORK

List the author of the article, if known. If no author is identified, begin with the title. For a well-known encyclopedia, just note the edition and date. If the entries in the reference work are in alphabetical order, you need not give the volume or page numbers.


17. BOOK THAT IS PART OF A SERIES

Cite the series name as it appears on the title page, followed by any series number.


18. REPUBLICATION

To cite a modern edition of an older book, add the original date, followed by a period, after the title.


19. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION

Begin with the author, if identified. Otherwise, start with the name of the government, followed by the agency and any subdivision. Use abbreviations if they can be readily understood. Then give the title, and underline or italicize it. For congressional documents, cite the number, session, and house; the type (Report, Resolution, Document), in abbreviated form; and the number of the material. If you cite the Congressional Record, give only the date and page number. Otherwise, end with publication information; the publisher is often the Government Printing Office (GPO).


20. PAMPHLET

Treat a pamphlet as you would a book.


21. PUBLISHED PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE

Treat proceedings as a book, adding any necessary information about the conference after the title.


22. PUBLISHER'S IMPRINT
If a book was published by a publisher's imprint (indicated on the title page), hyphenate the imprint and the publisher's name.


23. TITLE WITHIN A TITLE

Do not underline or italicize the title of a book within the title of a book you are citing. Underline or italicize and enclose in quotation marks the title of a short work within a book title.


24. SACRED BOOK

Begin the entry with the title, underlined or italicized. For versions of the Bible in which the version is not part of the title, list the version after the title.


**Periodicals**

25. ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL PAGINATED BY VOLUME

Follow the title of the publication with the volume number in Arabic numerals.


26. ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL PAGINATED BY ISSUE

Follow the volume number with a period and the issue number.


27. ARTICLE IN A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Put the month (or months, hyphenated) before the year. Separate the date and page number(s) with a colon.


28. ARTICLE IN A WEEKLY MAGAZINE

Include the day, month, and year in that order, with no commas between them.

29. ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER

After the author and title of the article, give the name of the newspaper, underlined or italicized, as it appears on the front page but without any initial A, An, or The. Add the city in brackets after the name if it is not part of the title. Then give the date and the edition if one is listed, and add a colon. Follow the colon with a space, the section number or letter (if given), and then the page number(s). If the article appears on discontinuous pages, give the first page followed by a plus sign.


30. EDITORIAL OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Use the label Editorial or Letter, neither underlined nor in quotation marks, after the title or, if there is no title, after the author's name.


31. UNSIGNED ARTICLE

Begin with the article title, alphabetizing the entry according to the first word after any initial A, An, or The.


32. REVIEW

List the reviewer’s name and the title of the review, if any, followed by Rev. of and the title and author or director of the work reviewed. Then add the publication information for the periodical in which the review appears.


33. ARTICLE WITH A TITLE WITHIN THE TITLE

Enclose in single quotation marks the title of a short work within an article title. Underline or italicize the title of a book within an article title.


Electronic Sources

34. CD-ROM, PERIODICALLY REVISED

Include the author’s name; publication information for the print version, if any, of the text (including its title and date of publication); the title of the database, underlined or italicized; the medium (CD-ROM); the name of the company producing it; and the electronic publication date (month and year, if possible).

35. SINGLE-ISSUE CD-ROM, DISKETTE, OR MAGNETIC TAPE

Cite this kind of electronic source, which is not regularly updated, much like a book, but add the medium and, if appropriate, the number of the electronic edition, release, or version. If you are citing only a part of the source, end with the page, paragraph, screen, or other section numbers of the part if they are indicated in the source – either the range of numbers (pp. 78-83) or, if each section is numbered separately, the total number of sections in the part (8 screens).


36. MULTIDISC CD-ROM

In citing a CD-ROM publication of more than one disc, include either the total number of discs or, if you use material from only one, the number of that disc.


37. ONLINE SCHOLARLY PROJECT OR REFERENCE DATABASE

To cite an online scholarly project or reference database, begin with the title, underlined or italicized, then the name of the editor, if given. Include the electronic publication information, with version number, date of electronic publication or latest update, and the name of the sponsoring organization. End with the date of access and URL, in angle brackets.


To cite a poem, essay, or other short work within a scholarly project or database, begin with the author's name and the title of the work, in quotation marks, and give the URL of the short work rather than that of the project if they differ.


To cite an anonymous article from a reference database, begin with the article title, in quotation marks, and give the URL of the article rather than that of the database if they differ.


38. PROFESSIONAL OR PERSONAL WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

Give the author's name, if known, or start with the title of the site, underlined or italicized. Include the date of publication or the latest update, the name of any institution or organization associated with the site, the date of access, and the URL, in angle brackets.


If no title exists, include a description such as Homepage.


39. ONLINE BOOK
Provide the author's name or, if only an editor, a compiler, or a translator is identified, the name of that person followed by a comma, and ed., comp., or trans. Then give the title, underlined or italicized, and the name of any editor, compiler, or translator not listed earlier, preceded by Ed., Comp., or Trans. Include the publication information (city, publisher, and year) for the print version, if given, or the date of electronic publication and the sponsoring organization if the work has not been published in print. End with the date of access and the URL, in angle brackets.


If a book is part of a scholarly project, after the information about the print version give the information about the project (title, editor, date, and sponsor).


If you are citing a poem, essay, or other short work within a book, include its title, in quotation marks, after the author's name. Give the URL of the short work, not of the book, if they differ.

40. ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE PERIODICAL

To cite an article from an online journal, magazine, or newspaper, begin with the author's name, if known; the title of the work or material, in quotation marks; the name of the periodical, underlined or italicized; the volume or issue number, if any; the date of publication; and the page or paragraph numbers, if given. End with the date of access and the URL, in angle brackets.


41. WORK FROM AN ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

To cite an article from an online service to which you subscribe personally, such as America Online, begin with the author's name, if known, and the title of the work, in quotation marks. Give the title of the online service, underlined or italicized, along with the date of access and the word Keyword, followed by the keyword used.


For a work from an online service to which a library subscribes, list the information about the work, followed by the name of the service, the library, the date of access, and the URL of the service, in angle brackets.


42. POSTING TO A DISCUSSION GROUP

To cite a posting to an online discussion group such as a listserv or Usenet newsgroup, begin with the author's name; the title of the document, in quotation marks; the description Online posting; and the date of posting. For a listserv posting, then give the name of the listserv; the number of the posting, if any, the date of access; and the URL of the listserv or the email address of its moderator. For a newsgroup posting, end with the date of access and the name of the newsgroup, in angle brackets.


You should always cite an archival version of a posting, if one is available.


43. EMAIL MESSAGE

Include the writer's name; the subject line of the message, in quotation marks; a description of the message that mentions the recipient and the date of the message.


44. SYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION (MUDs, MOOs)
In citing a posting in a forum such as a MUD, MOO, or IRC, include the name(s) of any specific speaker(s) you are citing; a description of the event; its date; the name of the forum; the date of access; and the URL. Always cite an archived version of the posting if one is available.


45. FTP (FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL), TELNET, OR GOPHER SITE

Substitute ftp, telnet, or gopher for http at the beginning of the URL.


46. OTHER ONLINE SOURCES

In citing other miscellaneous online sources, follow the guidelines given on pp. 389-390, but adapt them as necessary. Here are examples of citations for a work of art, a film clip, and an interview, accessed online.


47. WORK IN AN INDETERMINATE ELECTRONIC MEDIUM

If you are not sure whether material accessed through a local network is stored on a central computer's hard drive, on a CD-ROM, or on the Web, use the label Electronic. Include any publication information that is available, the name of the network or of its sponsoring organization, and the date of access.


Other Sources

48. UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATION

Enclose the title in quotation marks. Add the identification Diss., the name of the university or professional school, a comma, and the year the dissertation was accepted.


49. PUBLISHED DISSERTATION

Cite a published dissertation as a book, adding the identification Diss. and the name of the university. If the dissertation was published by University Microfilms International, add Ann Arbor: U41 and the year, and list the UMI number at the end of the entry.

50. ARTICLE FROM A MICROFORM

Treat the article as a printed work, but add the name of the microform and information for locating it.


51. INTERVIEW

List the person interviewed and then the title of the interview, if any, in quotation marks (or underlined or italicized if the interview is a complete work). If the interview has no title, use the label Interview (not underlined, italicized, or in quotation marks), and identify the source. If you were the interviewer, use the label Telephone interview, Personal interview, or Internet interview. End with the date the interview took place.


52. LETTER

If the letter was published, cite it as a selection in a book, noting the date and any identifying number after the title.


If the letter was sent to you, follow this form:


53. FILM OR VIDEOCASSETTE

In general, start with the title, underlined or italicized; then name the director, the company distributing the film or videocassette, and the date of its released. Other contributors, such as writers or actors, may follow the director. If you cite a particular person’s work, start the entry with that person’s name. For a videocassette, include the original film release date (if relevant) and the label Videocassette.


54. TELEVISION OF RADIO PROGRAM

In general, begin with the title of the program, underlined or italicized. Then list the narrator, writer, director, actors, or other contributors, as necessary; the network; the local station and city, if any; and the broadcast date. If you cite a particular person’s work, begin the entry with that person’s name. If you cite a particular episode, include any title, in quotation marks, before the program’s title. If the program is part of a series, include the series title (not underlined, italicized, or in quotation marks) before the network.


55. SOUND RECORDING
Begin with the name of the composer, performer, or conductor, depending on whose work you are citing. Next give the title of the recording, which is underlined or italicized, or the title of the composition, which is not. End with the manufacturer, a comma, and the year of issue. If you are not citing a compact disc, give the medium before the manufacturer. If you are citing a particular song, include its title, in quotation marks, before the title of the recording.


56. WORK OF ART

List the artist; the work’s title, underlined or italicized; the name of the museum or other location; and the city.


57. LECTURE OF SPEECH

List the speaker, the title in quotation marks, the name of the sponsoring institution or group, the place, and the date. If the speech is untitled, use a label such as Lecture or Keynote speech.


58. PERFORMANCE

List the title, other appropriate details (such as composer, writer, or director), the place, and the date. If you cite a particular person’s work, begin the entry with that person’s name.


59. MAP OR CHART

Cite a map or chart as you would a book with an unknown author, adding the label Map or Chart.


60. CARTOON

List the cartoonist's name, the title of the cartoon (if it has one), the word Cartoon, and the usual publication information.


61. ADVERTISEMENT

Name the item or organization being advertised, add the word Advertisement, and then supply the standard information about the source where the ad appears.