MLA Citation Style

Created by the Modern Language Association, MLA citation style is used when documenting sources in the fields of the humanities. In-text citations are placed in the body of your paper whenever you’ve used another’s words or ideas. They are brief references to the source and are placed in parentheses following quotations or paraphrases. All sources are listed at the end of your paper on a separate Works Cited page.

In-text Citations:

- Parenthetical or in-text citations direct readers to the corresponding entry on the Works Cited page.
- Following the use of another’s words or ideas, indicate in parentheses the name of the author of your source and the page number where the information may be found; if you refer to the author’s name in your paraphrase or quotation, you need only indicate the page number in parentheses.
- If the source is listed on your Works Cited page by title (no named author), indicate the title instead. Use quotation marks around the title and place in parentheses.
- For quoting another’s exact words, place quotation marks around the words being quoted and follow them with a citation. When using another’s exact words for a lengthier phrase (more than 4 lines), use a block quotation, with no quotation marks, and follow it with a citation.

Examples of in-text citations:

Between beauty, truth and goodness there is an “intrinsic relationship and correspondence” (Kahler 39).

Beauty, truth and goodness have, according to Kahler, an “intrinsic relationship and correspondence” (39).

Kahler believes that beauty, truth and goodness are related (39).

“As global ice cover decreases, the reflectivity of Earth’s surface decreases, more incoming solar radiation is absorbed by the surface, and the surface warms” (“Global Warming”).
Works Cited Page:

- MLA 8th edition uses a single, fill-in-the-blank template, consisting of nine core elements, to cover all types of sources.
- The nine core elements are recorded as follows: Author. Title. Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.
- If the title of the source is not part of any other work, italicize it. If the title of the source is contained as part of a larger work (container), do not italicize it and instead place quotation marks around it and italicize the title of the container. (ex: an article in a journal will have quotation marks around its title; the name of the journal will be italicized)
- If your resource was obtained from an electronic database, record the name of the database right before the URL and, since it is another container, italicize it.
- Location refers to where your source may be found. (ex: page number, URL, or DOI) For an electronic resource, this includes recording the date it was accessed.
- Not all sources will have all nine elements; some may have only a few of the elements.
- The first line of your citation is not indented; all subsequent lines are indented.
- List your works cited in alphabetical order by author’s last name or, if no author, by the first word of the title.

Examples of citations for different types of sources:

Print book with one author:


Print book with two authors:


Print book with more than three authors:


Print book with two editors:

Print book with more than three editors:

Section from a print book of collected works:

Article found in a print journal:

Print newspaper article with author:

eBook found in a database:

eBook, part of a series, found in a database:

Journal article found in a database:

Newspaper article, with author, found on website:
Newspaper article, with author, found in a database:


Article in an online encyclopedia:


Website homepage:


Part of a website with no named author:


Article, with an author, from a website:


Article, with no author, from an online magazine or journal:


Online video:


For additional help, please refer to the *MLA Handbook*. Eighth Edition, The Modern Language Association of America, 2016. You may also visit Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) MLA Formatting and Style Guide at: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/