MLA Format Handout
8th edition
Updated July 2017

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REMEMBER:

Your professors have the final say about how they want to see citations formatted!

No online or computerized citation tool is perfect. It is up to you to check the accuracy of your
citations before submitting research papers or other class assignments.

If you need help, contact:
Learning Center
tutoring@northampton.edu
www.northampton.edu/learningcenter

NCC Libraries
askthelibrarian@northampton.edu
www.northampton.edu/library
MLA, or Modern Language Association format is the most common form of documentation used in academic writing. This handout is a brief summary of the new MLA Style, 8th Edition. This new edition of MLA provides a “universal set of guidelines” for citing sources across all format types. The guidelines state that, if given, these major elements should be included in the citation:

1. Author
2. Title of Source
3. Title of Container
4. Other Contributors
5. Version
6. Number
7. Publisher
8. Publication date
9. Location

This MLA handout is designed to provide some practical examples of the most commonly used citations. For more complete information, please see the MLA Handbook, 8th edition, or speak to a Learning Center writing tutor or a librarian.

Example:

### BASIC RULES FOR CITATIONS

#### Works Cited

**Authors**

- Authors’ names are inverted (last name, first name).
- For works with more than one author, only the first author's name is inverted, followed by a comma. The rest of the authors are listed (first name last name) in the same order they appear on the title page.
- For more than three authors, the first author’s name is followed by et al. (meaning “and others”).
- If no author is given, alphabetize by the title of the piece, ignoring any initial *A, An, or The*.
- Corporate authors should be listed as the author in the citation. Example: United States, Department of Labor.

**Titles**

- Titles of works that are self-contained, like books, are italicized.
- Titles of works, such as articles contained in other sources, are in double quotation marks.
- If the title of the piece begins with a number, the title should be alphabetized as if the numeral were spelled out. For example, *1914: The Coming of the First World War* should be alphabetized as if it began *Nineteen-Fourteen*.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. but NOT *a, an, the*, conjunctions, or prepositions, unless they are the first word of the title or follow a colon in a title.
Italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, films, and Web sites.

**Volume, issue, and page numbers**
- For periodicals, include the volume and issue numbers with the abbreviations, vol. and no.
- Include the page number or numbers preceded by a p. for one page or pp. for a range of pages.

**Publisher**
- Include the name of the publisher in the citation.
- The city of publication is no longer required in the citation.

**Location**
- Online sources should include a location, the URL or the digital object identifier (doi); omit the http:// or https:// from the beginning of the URL. Some instructors will ask for no URL or a shortened URL. Follow your instructor's instructions.
- The digital object identifier, or doi, is preferable to the URL.
- Some databases, like JSTOR, provide stable URLs for citing their articles.

**IN-TEXT CITATIONS**
Your reader should be able to look at your in text citation and find the full citation in your works cited page. You should include an in-text citation whenever you use a quote or an idea from a text, even if you paraphrase or summarize the idea. The citation should be placed where there is a natural pause, i.e. the end of a sentence or phrase.
- Use the first term from the works cited citation in the in-text cite. Example: (Frey 54)
- For two authors, use the last name of each of the authors. Example: (Carlson and Wilner 13)
- Include the page number where you found the information or quote.
- In-text citations should be placed where a natural pause in the writing occurs, usually at the end of the sentence.
- When you repeat a source, you can use the page number only in the in-text citation after the first full cite.
- When a source has numbered paragraphs or sections and no page numbers, use those numbers in place of a page number with the abbreviation “par. or pars.” or “sec. or secs.” Example: (Chan, par. 1)
- When a source has no page numbers and no other numbers to refer to, use just the author’s last name in the in-text citation. Example: (Smith)
- Abbreviate words that are commonly abbreviated for corporate authors. Example: (United States, Dept. of Labor) [Department is abbreviated]
- If the source has no author and is listed by the title on the works cited page, use an abbreviated title in the in-text citation, usually the first noun or noun phrase or the first word of the entry. Example: (*Reading 15*)
Sample Works Cited Page Entries

### Books

**General Format:**
Author(s). *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

**Rules for Books:**
- Capitalize each word in the title of the book, but NOT a, an, the, the conjunctions or prepositions, unless they are the first word of the title or follow a colon in a title.
- For works found in anthologies, include the page numbers of where your source is located in the citation. Be sure to use the abbreviations “p.” or “pp.” before page numbers.

**Handling Authors in a Books Reference Citation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Book</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Book (single author) | Author. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.  
| Book (two or more authors) | If the book has two or more authors, list their names in the same order as they appear on the title page of the book. Reverse only the name of the first author.  
Author’s name and Author’s Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.  
| Book (more than three authors) | For more than three authors, the first author’s name is followed by et al. (meaning “and others”).  
Author, et al. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.  
| Part of a book | Author(s). “Title of Article.” *Title of Collection*, edited by Name(s), volume. Publisher, Year, Pages.  
The following “Excerpting Services” examples are used with print sources that reproduce portions of books or journal articles in a new source. Information on the original material is included with the excerpt.

Examples of excerpting services include the Gale literary criticism series, such as *Poetry Criticism*, *Short Story Criticism*, *Short Stories for Students*, and *Contemporary Literary Criticism*.

The abbreviation “Rpt.” as used below stands for “Reprinted.”

1. **Citing criticism originally published in a book.**
   Author(s). *Title of Original Book*, year of publication of the original book. Rpt. in *Title of Excerpting Series*, edited by name of editor, volume number, name of publisher, year of publication, page numbers of excerpting series.
   **Example**

2. **Citing criticism originally published in a periodical.**
   Author(s). “Title of Original Article.” *Title of Original Periodical*, volume number, issue number, publication date, page numbers. Rpt. in *Title of Excerpting Series*, edited by name of editor, volume number, name of publisher, year of publication, page numbers of excerpting series.
   **Example**

3. **Citing online criticism originally published in a periodical.**
   Author(s). “Title of Original Article.” *Title of Original Periodical*, volume number, publication date, page numbers. Rpt. in *Title of Excerpting Series*, edited by name of editor, volume number, name of publisher, year of publication. *Name of Database*, URL.
   **Example**
Citations for journal, magazine or newspaper articles are cited the same, regardless of format. If the article comes from a web source, include the name of the database or website. When available, the citing of DOIs (digital object identifiers) is encouraged. MLA also recommends that the URL (without http:// or https://) be included for electronic sources. However, this is up to the discretion of your instructor. **If your instructor does not require URLs, do not include them.**

### Articles in Scholarly Journals


### Article in a Print Journal


### Articles in Magazines


### Articles in Newspapers


### Web Sites

#### Article (Web Page) on a Web Site


#### Web Site (Whole site)

**Articles from Library Databases**

Most of the library databases will create an MLA citation for each article found. However, be sure to carefully check their suggested citation – they will often need some correcting! Include the URL for the database article unless it is not required by your instructor. If available, use the Permalink provided by the database.

**Gale Literary Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**CQ Researcher**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**EBSCOhost** (including ERIC, PsycARTICLES, and SocIndex)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Facts on File**

**Issues and Controversies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Today’s Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**World News Digest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
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</thead>
</table>
## Films on Demand


## Gale Virtual Reference Library


## JSTOR


## Opposing Viewpoints in Context

### Viewpoint Essay


### Journal Article


### Newspaper Article


## ProQuest


## Salem Press

## CITATION CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>SAMPLE CITATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Clinton, Hillary. Interview by George Stephanopoulos. <em>This Week</em>. ABC. WNEP, New York. 7 June 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Proposed format: Last Name, First Name, role. *Title of Game*. Distributor, Date of release, Gaming System or Platform.
Formatting Your Paper

- **Margins:** One-inch on the top, bottom, and sides of each page.
- **Page numbering:** Use your word processor to create a header that includes your last name and the page number in the upper right hand corner of the page, one half inch from the top of the page. Every page has this header.
- **Title page:** MLA does not require a title page; instead, the first page of the paper should begin with four lines, double-spaced, indicating: your name, name of the course instructor, name of the course, and the date.
- **Spacing:** Double-space every line (including long quotations and the citations on the Works Cited page.)
- **Indenting:** Indent the first line of every paragraph five spaces or one tab. Indent long quotations ten spaces or two tabs.
- **Font and Typeface:** Use a 12-point font in Times New Roman.

In this example from the first page of an MLA-style paper, the student’s name is Dina Flower, her instructor is Professor Vole, and the course in English 101:

```
Dina Flower
Professor Vole
English 101, section 07
October 14, 2016

The Fishing Creek Confederacy

In 1846 the military occupation of Columbia County, Pennsylvania, began. The cause of this occupation was stated as a Copperhead movement in the area (“Copperheads” 421). Insurgents “had erected a fort…they had field-pieces or cannon, and …refugees from Canada and deserters from other sections had joined them in considerable forces” (Freeze 401). The formation of this movement was a significant stage in Columbia County history.
```
Center the words “Works Cited” one inch from the top of the page.
Continue double-spacing.
If the citation takes up more than one line of the page, indent the remaining line(s) one-half inch from the left margin.
Reverse the name of the author: list the author’s last name followed by a comma and the author’s first name.
Alphabetize the works you cite by the last name of the author. If there is no author, alphabetize by the first word in the title of the work other than A, An or The.

An MLA-style works cited page looks like this:


JSTOR, doi:10.1086/428460.
