MLA Citation Style Quick Guide

The following source was referenced:

Citing Sources in Your Text

When you make reference to someone else’s idea through paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting, you should:

- give the author’s last name and the page number of the work in a parenthetical citation
- provide full citation information for the source in your Works Cited.

Paraphrasing and summarizing involve putting a source’s information into your own words and sentence structures, while quoting is copying the author’s words and structures exactly as written or spoken and placing them within quotation marks. Citations have two parts. There is a parenthetical citation (a.k.a. in-text citation) and a corresponding entry on your Works Cited page.

MLA In-text Citations

Your parenthetical citation should give enough information to identify the source listed in your Works Cited. “References in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited” (Gibaldi 238).

MLA style uses an author-page method of citation. When you quote, paraphrase, or reference an idea from a source, you must include the author’s name and the page numbers in your text.

A “signal phrase” introduces a quotation in order to help the reader understand why it is important and how it fits into the rest of the paper. In the first example below, “Robertson maintains that…” is the signal phrase.

IF THE AUTHOR IS NAMED IN SIGNAL PHRASE:

*Quotation:*
Robertson maintains that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance…” (136).

*Paraphrase:*
According to Alvin Toffler, there have been two periods of revolutionary change in history: the agricultural revolution and the industrial revolution (10).

Note that the above source is paraphrased and not quoted. When paraphrasing specific information from a source, that source still must be cited in the paper and in the works cited list.

IF THE AUTHOR IS NOT NAMED IN SIGNAL PHRASE:

*Quote:*
It may be true that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance…” (Robertson 136).

*Paraphrase:*
There have been two periods of revolutionary change in history: the agricultural revolution and the industrial revolution (Toffler 10).
IF USING TWO OR MORE WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

In *Double Vision*, Northrop Frye claims that one’s death is not a unique experience, for “every moment we have lived through, we have also died out of into another order” (85).

The above example includes the book title in the signal phrase, and therefore only a page number is necessary in the citation. In the example below, the title of the book is not used, and so a recognizable abbreviation of the title belongs within the citation. The abbreviated title is not punctuated.

For Northrop Frye, one’s death is not a unique experience, for “every moment we have lived through, we have also died out of into another order (*Double Vision* 85).

IF USING AN INTERNET OR ELECTRONIC SOURCE WITH NO AUTHOR OR PAGE NUMBER:

Author Unknown:
Use the complete title in the signal phrase or an abbreviated title in the citation: (“Lawmakers” 2).

Page Number Unknown:
When the pages of a web source are fixed (as in PDF files) supply a page number. Although print-outs from websites sometimes show page numbers, MLA recommends treating them as unpaginated and allows the omission of the page number. If a web source numbers its paragraphs, give the abbreviation “par.” or “pars.” in the parentheses: (Smith, par. 4).

INDIRECT QUOTATION:

While you should always try to reference material from the original source, at times, you may have to use a secondhand or indirect source, that is, a quotation you find in another source that was quoting from the original. Use “qtd. in” to indicate the source.

Sir Thomas Malory describes “the barons espied in the sieges of the Round Table” (qtd. in Loomis 419).

LONG OR BLOCK QUOTATIONS

Sometimes, you will want to use long quotations. If your quotation is longer than four typed lines, you will omit the quotation marks and start the quotation on a new line. This block quote should be indented one inch from the left margin throughout and should maintain double spacing throughout. With a block quote, your ending punctuation will come before the parenthetical citation.

Prose block quote: (For other types of block quotes, refer to an MLA style guide.)

| Although two small studies have produced evidence to refute Dr. Jones’s claim, the most respected studies support his findings: |
| While not always popular with working parents who are too busy not to set their children in front of *Barney* all day, most pediatricians agree that children should abstain from watching television at least until age two, and even then, television time should be limited and closely monitored. Parents should remember that not all programs advertised as “children’s shows” are appropriate for all ages. (Wilson 29) |

As parents, we owe it to our children to err on the side of caution.
MLA Works Cited Page

The basic format for all MLA works cited entries, no matter what the source, includes as much of the following as is available:

1. the author’s name
2. the title of the work (italics if a book, in quotation marks if an article)
3. the city of publication
4. the publisher or n.p. (for no publisher given)
5. the year of publication or n.d. (for no date given)
6. unless citing an entire work, the page number, range, or n. pag. (for no pagination)
7. the publication medium

For electronic or internet sources, you should also include:

8. the date the source was accessed online

Indent all lines after the first one and include a period (.) at the end of all citations. Also, works cited pages must be double-spaced. The examples in this handout are not.

OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS:

- If a cited work does not have a known author, alphabetize by the title of the work and use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citation.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, films, etc. This rule does not apply to articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one of these is the first word of the title or subtitle (e.g., Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology).
-Italicize the titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, films, and album or CD titles.
- Place quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, newspapers, and web pages, as well as short stories, book chapters, poems, songs, and television shows.
- For numbers with more than two digits, use only the last two digits of the second number (e.g., if you refer to a magazine article that appeared on pages 150 through 175, list the page numbers in your Works Cited citation as 150-75; 201 through 209 would be listed as 201-09).

BASIC FORMAT FOR A BOOK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Publication Medium.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

One author:

Multiple authors:

In the above example, note that the second editor’s name is written First name and then Last name. This is true anytime there are two authors or editors to a book. If there are more than four authors or editors of a book, list only the first author’s name and use “et al” instead of writing the other names (as in the example that follows).

EDITED BOOK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor Last Name, First, Eds. Title of Book. Edition. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Publication Medium.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


For books that appear online or for electronic versions of books in print, follow the format below.
### ONLINE BOOK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>Title of Work.</th>
<th>Name of editor [if relevant].</th>
<th>Publication information for electronic version [Title of Internet site</th>
<th>Date of publication if available].</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
<th>Date of access.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIAS, DICTIONARIES, AND THESAURIS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>“Title of Entry.”</th>
<th>Title of Work.</th>
<th>Name of editor [if relevant].</th>
<th>Publication information for electronic version [Title of Internet site</th>
<th>Date of publication if available].</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
<th>Date of access.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### ARTICLE IN A MONTHLY MAGAZINE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>“Title of Article.”</th>
<th>Title of Magazine</th>
<th>Day Month Year of Publication: Page Number.</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### ARTICLE IN A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL (OR MAGAZINE):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>“Title of Article.”</th>
<th>Title of Journal or Periodical</th>
<th>Volume, Issue Number, or Other ID Number (Date of publication): Page Number.</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>“Title of Article.”</th>
<th>Title of Journal or Periodical</th>
<th>Volume, Issue Number, or Other ID Number (Date of publication): Page Number.</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
<th>Access Day Month Year.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>“Title of Article.”</th>
<th>Title of Newspaper</th>
<th>Date of publication, Edition: Section or Page Number.</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*If the source does not provide consecutive page numbers, list the first page on which the article appears and use a “+” if the article is more than one page.*

### ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE NEWSPAPER OR NEWS SERVICE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author Last Name, First.</th>
<th>“Title of Article.”</th>
<th>Title of Site or Online Newspaper</th>
<th>Publisher.</th>
<th>Date of Publication: Page Number.</th>
<th>Publication Medium.</th>
<th>Access Day Month Year.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
ARTICLE FROM A LIBRARY ONLINE DATABASE, FULL-TEXT:

Author Last Name, First. “Title of Article.” *Title of Journal or Periodical*. Date of Publication: Page Number. *Title of Database*. Title of Information Service. Name of Library or Library System. Publication Medium. Access Day Month Year.


If citing abstracts or reviews of an article from library database, include the word “Abstract” or “Review” in the citation before the title information (as in the example below).


WEB SITE:

*Title of Site*. Name of Editor [if given]. Date of Electronic Publication or of Latest Update: Page Number. Name of Sponsoring Institution or Organization. Publication Medium. Access Day Month Year.


Remember that a web site is a collection of smaller web pages on a given subject, but a web page is one page that could contain an article or another smaller part of a larger subject. For example, *AutismSpeaks.org* is a web site and the “About Us” page on *AutismSpeaks.org* is a web page.

WEB PAGE:

Author Last Name, First. “Title of Page.” Date of Publication and/or Last Update: Page Number. *Title of Site*. Publication Medium. Access Day Month Year.


GOVERNMENT, CORPORATE, OR ORGANIZATION WEB SITE:

Name of Government. Government Agency/ies. *Title of the site [or Description: Home page]*. Date of Publication [if available]. Publication Medium. Access Day Month Year.


PERSONAL INTERVIEW:

Interviewee’s Last Name, First. Publication Medium. Day Month Year.

Koe, William. Personal interview. 6 June 2013.

PERSONAL EMAIL:

Author Last Name, First. “Subject Line of E-mail.” Description of the Message that Includes the Recipient. Publication Medium. Date of Access.


GRAPHICS, AUDIO, AND VIDEO FILES:

Author Last Name, First or Poster’s Username. “Title of Image or Video.” Media Type Text. Name of Website. Name of Website’s Publisher, Date of Posting. Publication Medium. Date of Access.

PODCASTS:

Author Last Name, First or Poster’s Username. “Title of Podcast.” Date of Posting. Name of Website. Publication Medium. Date of Access.


BLOGS, NEWSGROUPS, MAILING LISTS, AND WIKIS (i.e. WIKIPEDIA ENTRIES):

Author Last Name, First. “Subject Line of Message.” Type of Document [Online Posting, Wikipedia Entry, etc.]. Date of Posting. Title of the Newsgroup. Publication Medium. Access Day Month Year.


All other types of sources not listed on this quick guide may be found in MLA style guides.