



# **MLA Citation Basics**

**MLA 7<sup>th</sup> edition**

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# MLA Citation Fundamentals

Generally, MLA citations follow the below format.

**Contributor. *Title*. Secondary Contributors. Publication Information. Medium.**

## Contributor Information and Titles

The main contributors to the source, normally the author, are placed before the title. If there is more than one author, then arrange the authors in the same order found in the source. Reverse only the name of the first author, and follow the rest in normal form.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| One author              | Smith, John K. <i>Title</i> .                                    |
| Two authors             | Smith, John K., and Tim Sampson. <i>Title</i> .                  |
| Three authors           | Smith, John K., Tim Sampson, and Alex J. Hubbard. <i>Title</i> . |
| More than three authors | Smith, John K., et al. <i>Title</i> .                            |

Sometimes the main contributor is not an author, but another contributor type, such as an editor for a book or conductor for a musical piece. In this instance, follow the contributor by an abbreviation of the contributor type (i.e. ed. or cond.). If plural, then change the abbreviation accordingly.

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| One editor    | Smith, John K., ed. <i>Title</i> .                   |
| Two editors   | Smith, John K., and Tim Sampson, eds. <i>Title</i> . |
| One conductor | Smith, John K., cond. <i>Title</i> .                 |

Many sources have secondary contributors - individuals who added to the work outside the main contributors. This can include editors and translators for books and producers and screenplay writers for movies. Place secondary contributors after the title. Precede the name of the contributors with the abbreviation for the contributor type. For instance, "Ed." means "Edited by."

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| One editor                        | Smith, John. <i>Title</i> . Ed. Bill McCoy.  |
| Two editors                       | Smith, John. <i>Title</i> . Ed. Bill McCoy and Tim Thomas.                                   |
| One conductor and three producers | Smith, John. <i>Title</i> . Cond. Bill McCoy. Prod. Tim Thomas, Jane Horton, and Rex Bryant. |

You may decide to emphasize the work, for example, when citing a live performance. In this instance, place all the contributors after the title. Authors and writers are preceded by the word "By."

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| One author and editor | <i>Title</i> . By John Smith. Ed. Bill McCoy. |
|-----------------------|---|

Some sources may have corporate or group authors. Write these organization where you would write the authors. If they are also publishers of the source, include it in the publication information as well.

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Corporate author  | Modern Language Association. <i>Title</i> .             |
| Government author | Illinois Dept. of Industrial Relations.. <i>Title</i> . |

Some sources are found within other sources, such as a chapter in a book, or an article in a periodical. These rules apply both to the contributors of the chapter and book, or to the article.

Chapter author and editor and two book compilers      Smith, John. "Chapter." Ed. Bill McCoy. *Title*. Comp. Russell Engels and Steve Simpson.

Author and translator of an article      Smith, John. "Chapter." Trans. Bill McCoy. *Periodical Title*

## Title Rules

Generally, capitalize all principal words as well as the first word and last word in the title. If citing a title for an entire source, such as a book or periodical title, place in italics. If citing an article, essay, poem or short story within a larger work, place in quotes. If a novel or published independently, then place in italics.

## Publication Information

After the title and contributor information comes the publication information. In MLA7, you must also list the publication medium (Print, Web) after the publication information. MLA7 abbreviates all months except for May, June and July. Below are different publication information templates.

Book	Last, First M. <i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year Published. Medium.
Journal	Last, First M. "Article." <i>Title</i> Volume.Issue (Year): Page(s). Medium.
Magazine	Last, First M. "Article." <i>Title</i> Date Month Year Published: Page(s). Medium.
Newspaper	Last, First M. "Article." <i>Title</i> [City] Date Month Year, Edition, Section: Page(s). Medium.

If you cannot find all publication information, use place holders "N.p., n.p., n.d." which represents no place, no publisher, and no date. If there are no page numbers use "N. pag." Capitalize the abbreviations appropriately based on where they are placed.

Note that we format according to MLA7, we believe adding such place holders is unnecessary, as it provides no information, and the lack of information can be assumed by its absence in the citation.

## Additional information

For less conventional source types, you can add descriptions about the source after the title. For example, you can add "Cartoon." or "Map." after the title of a cartoon or map to clarify to the reader what type of source you are citing.

When citing non-periodical sources, advanced information such as the edition and section come before the publication information. Series information comes after the medium description. See the fictional example below:

Smith, John. *Power*. Ed. Tom Riley. 5th ed. Vol 12. New York: Random, 2002. Print. Ser. 50.

## Web Sources

See our web resources guides to learn how to properly cite sources found online.

# MLA Examples of Popular Sources

# MLA Examples of Popular Sources



## Book

**MLA** Last, First M. *Book*. City: Publisher, Year Published. Print.

**Ex:** Carley, Michael J. 1939: *The Alliance That Never Was and the Coming of World War II*. Chicago: Dee, 1999. Print.

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## Chapter/Anthology

**MLA** Last, First M. "Section Title." *Book/Anthology*. Ed. Book Editor First M. Last. Edition. Ex: 5th ed. City: Publisher, Year Published. Page(s). Print.

**Ex:** Melville, Herman. *Hawthorne and His Mosses. The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Nina Baym. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 1989. 5-25. Print.

\*Essays, shorts stories, and poems are put in quotes. Works originally published independently such as plays and novels generally are italicized

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## Magazine

**MLA** Last, First M. "Article Title." *Magazine Title* Date Month Year Published: Page(s). Print. Ex: 1-5 or 15.

**Ex:** Pressman, Aaron. "Bottom Fishing in Rough Waters." *BusinessWeek* 29 Sept. 2008: 27. Print.

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## Newspaper

**MLA** Last, First M. "Article Title." *Newspaper Title* Date Month Year Published: Page(s). Print. Ex: 1-5 or A12.

**Ex:** Campoy, Ana. "Gasoline Surges in Southeast After Ike." *The Wall Street Journal* 23 Sept. 2008: A14. Print.

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## Journal

**MLA** Two Authors Last, First M., and First M. Last. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Ex: 13 Volume.Issue (Year): Ex: 2-7 or 32. Page(s). Print.

**Ex:** Bharadwaj, Parag, and Katerine T. Ward. "Ethical Considerations of Patients with Pacemakers." *American Family Physician* 78 (2008): 398-99. Print.

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## Website

**MLA** Last, First M. "Article Title." *Website Title*. Publisher, Date electronically published Date Month Year. Web. Date Accessed Date Month Year.

**Ex:** Satalkar, Bhakti. "Water Aerobics." *Buzzle.com*. Buzzle.com, 15 July 2010. Web. 16 July 2010.

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## Online Database (Journal)

**MLA** Last, First M. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Ex: 12.3 Volume.Issue (Year): Page(s). *Database Name*. Web. Day Month Year.

**Ex:** Ahn, Hyunchul, and Kyoung-jae Kim. "Using Genetic Algorithms to Optimize Nearest Neighbors for Data Mining." *Annals of Operations Research* 263.1 (2008): 5-18. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 25 Sept. 2008.

\*Note that months in MLA are abbreviated. For example, "February" is "Feb."

## TV/ Radio

**MLA** "Episode." Contributors. *Program*. Network. Call Letter, City, Date. Medium.

**Ex:** "The Saudi Experience." Prod. Mary Walsh. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS. WCBS, New York, 5 May 2009. Television.

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## Film

**MLA** *Title*. Contributors. Distributor, Year of release. <sup>DVD, Film etc..</sup> Medium viewed.

**Ex:** *The Dark Knight*. Dir. Christopher Nolan. Perf. Christian Bale, Heath Ledger, and Aaron Eckhart. Warner Bros., 2008. DVD.

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## Sound Recording

**MLA** Contributors. "Song." *Album*. Band. Manufacturer, Year. <sup>MP3, CD etc...</sup> Medium.

**Ex:** Corgan, Billy, and Butch Vig. "Today." *Siamese Dream*. Smashing Pumpkins. Virgins Records America, 1993. CD.

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## Visual Art / Photograph

**MLA** Last, First M. *Painting*. Year created. Medium of work. Museum / collection, City.

**Ex:** Picasso, Pablo. *Three Musicians*. 1921. Oil on panel. Museum of Mod. Art, New York.

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## Lecture / Speech

**MLA** Last, First M. "Speech." Meeting / Organization. Location. Date. Description.

**Ex:** Obama, Barack H. "Inaugural Address." 2009 Presidential Inaugural. Capitol Building Washington. 20 Jan. 2009. Address.

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## Interview

**MLA** Interviewee. <sup>If any</sup> "Title." Interview by interviewer. <sup>Magazine, newspaper, television information</sup> Publication information. Medium.

**Ex:** Abdul, Paula. Interview by Cynthia McFadden. *Nightline*. ABC. WABC, New York. 23 Apr. 2009. Television.

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## Cartoon

**MLA** Last, First M. <sup>If any</sup> "Title." Cartoon / Comic strip. <sup>Magazine, newspaper, book</sup> Publication information. Medium.

**Ex:** Trudeau, Garry. "Doonesbury." Comic strip. *New York Times* 8 May 2008: 12. Print.

\*Note that months in MLA are abbreviated. For example, "February" is "Feb."

# MLA Web Rules

When citing sources from the Internet, try adding as much of the following in the same sequence:

1. Contributor information	5. Publisher or sponsor of website
2. Title of work (quotes)	6. Date of electronic publication
3. Title of overall website (italicized)	7. Medium of publication (web)
4. Version / Edition	8. Date accessed

  

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧
<b>Contributors. "Title." Website. Edition. Website Publisher, Date. Web. Date accessed.</b>							

*\*Note that MLA7 does not require a URL. However, we encourage you to include it. Do so in angled brackets at the end of the citation*

## Sources Published Directly Online

Sources published directly online have no in print originals, and therefore, it is important to include online publication information (i.e. the website publisher/sponsor and date of electronic publication). If unavailable, for online only sources, MLA7 suggests writing "N.p, n.d." which means no publisher and no date, respectively. We believe adding such place holders is unnecessary, as it provides no information, and the lack of information can be assumed by its absence in the citation.

### *Citing an article from an online only resource*

Friedland, Lois. "Top 10 Natural and Wildlife Adventure Travel Trips." *About.com*. New York Times Company, 22 Sept. 2008. Web. 25 Sept. 2008.

### *Citing an entire website with no identifiable electronic publication date*

*EasyBib.com*. ImagineEasy Solutions, n.d. Web. 8 May 2009.

Note that newspaper and magazines websites are considered non-periodical, directly published online sources, even if they have in print copies. Follow the published directly online format.

### *Citing an article from an online only news source*

Chen, Stephanie. "Growing up is Hard with Mom in Prison" *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 7 May 2009. Web. 8 May 2009.

Many times, the publisher's name is the same as the online newspaper name.

### *Citing an article from an online newspaper*

Shorto, Russell. "Going Dutch." *New York Times*. New York Times, 3 May 2009. Web. 8 May 2009.

Some online only sources have publication information unique to its source type, such as online only journals (volume & issue information). Follow the journal format and add information on the date accessed.

Glotzer, Richard and Anne Federlein. "Miles that Bind: Commuter Marriage and Family Strength." *Michigan Family Review* 12 (2007): 7-31. Web. 8 Apr. 2009.

## Sources Published Indirectly Online

As opposed to some sources published by a website (direct), other sources may be originally in print, or in another medium, and found online. Cite these sources as you would in their original form, and then add as much relevant web information as possible (website title, publisher / sponsor, date of electronic publication, medium, and date accessed). However, because the source was not published by the website, you do not have to use the “N.p, n.d.” place holders if no website publisher or date of electronic publication is available.

### *Citing a book originally in print found online*

Catton, Bruce. *The Civil War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2005. Google Book Search. Web. 15 May 2008.

### *Citing a newsletter found online with no page information*

Puzzanchera, Charles. "Juvenile Arrests 2007." *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (Apr. 2009): n. pag. *National Criminal Justice Reference Service*. Web. 8 May 2009.

### *Citing a video found online*

West, Kanye. *Amazing*. Prod. Hype Williams. Roc-A-Fella Records, 2009. *Youtube*. Web. 8 Feb. 2009.

### *Citing a painting viewed online*

Picasso, Pablo. *Three Musicians*. 1921. *ArtQuotes.net*. Web. 5 Apr. 2006.

### *Citing a musical recording listened to online, with no discernable manufacturer or date*

Park, Obadiah. "Hey Ya." N.d. *TheSixtyOne.com*. Web. 10 Feb. 2007.

### *Citing a digital image found on Google images*

Bruce Springsteen. Digital image. *Google Images*. LIFE. Web. 9 Oct. 2009. <<http://images.google.com>>.

\*Note in the above example the title is not in quotes because it is a description of the digital image. The URL was truncated to the search URL because it was too long and complicated.

Sources found in online databases typically have been published elsewhere. Include as much as the original publication information as possible, and then add the database name, medium (web), and the date accessed.

### *Citing an originally in print journal article found in a database*

Ahn, Hyunchul, and Kyoung-jae Kim. "Using Genetic Algorithms to Optimize Nearest Neighbors for Data Mining." *Annals of Operations Research* 263.1 (2008): 5-18. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 25 Sept. 2008.

# MLA Parenthetical Citations

## Why we use parenthetical / in-text citations

Researchers place brief parenthetical descriptions to acknowledge which parts of their paper reference particular sources. Generally, you want to provide the last name of the author and the specific page numbers of the source. If such information is already given in the body of the sentence, then exclude it from the parenthetical citation.

Place the parenthetical citation where there is a pause in the sentence - normally before the end of a sentence or a comma. The in-text citation will differ depending on how much information you provide within the sentence.

Example with author's name in text:

Johnson argues this point (12-13).

Example without author's name in text:

This point had already been argued (Johnson 12-13).

## Citing sources with more than one author

If you use sources with the same author surnames, then include a first name initial. If the two sources have authors with the same initials, then include their full names.

(J. Johnson 12-13). or (John Johnson 12-13).

If there are two or three authors of the source, include their last names in the order they appear on the source.

(Smith, Wollensky, and Johnson 45).

If there are more than three authors, you can cite all the authors with their last name, or you can cite the first author followed by "et al." Follow what is shown the works cited list.

(Smith et al. 45).

## Citing sources without an author

Some sources do not have authors or contributors - for instance, when you cite some websites. Instead, refer to the name of the source in your parenthetical citation in place of the author. Shorten / abbreviate the name of the source but ensure that your reader can easily identify it in your bibliography (abbreviate the title starting with the same word in which it is alphabetized). Punctuate with quotations or italicize as you would in its bibliographic form (a book is italicized; an article is in quotes).

Double agents are still widely in use (*Spies* 12-15, 17).

With prices of energy at new highs, bikes have been increasingly used ("Alternative Transportation" 89).

## Citing part of a work

When citing a specific part of a work, provide the relevant page or section identifier. This can include specific pages, sections, paragraphs or volumes. When the identifier is preceded by an abbreviation or word, place a comma between the identifier and the source reference.

Example of an entire volume of a multivolume work:

It is arguably the most innovative period in history (*Webster*, vol 4).

When citing a specific page(s) of a multivolume work, precede the page number by the volume number and a colon. Do not separate by a comma.

It was arguably the most innovative period in history (*Webster* 4:12-15).

Example of a chapter within a book (if no specific numbers can be referenced):

The electoral college undermines democracy (Sanders, "Government Injustices").

Example of an article in a periodical:

Allen claims there is an inverse correlation between higher taxes and patriotic feelings worldwide (B2).

Use "par." or "pars." when referring to specific paragraphs.

The marketing dollars of big studio films has overshadowed good indie movies (Anderson, pars. 12-34).

## Citing group or corporate authors

In your parenthetical citation, cite a corporate author like you would a normal author. Preferably, incorporate the corporate author in your text instead of the parenthetical citation.

Facial transplants pose significant risk to the autoimmune system (American Medical Association 12-43).

As noted by the American Medical Association, facial transplants pose significant risk to the autoimmune system (12-43).

## Citing an entire source

When citing an entire work, there are no specific page numbers to refer to. Therefore it is preferable to refer to the source within the text itself with either the author or the title of the source. For example:

Hartford suggests the Internet provides more distractions than it does information.

## Citing multiple works by the same author

If you reference more than one source by the same author, distinguish the parenthetical citations by including the name of the source. Use a comma to separate the author from the source

Wars can be economic catalysts (Friedman, *World* 77-80).

Industrialized nations are better equipped to rebound from recessions (Friedman, "High tides" 56).

## Citing indirect sources

When an original source is unavailable, then cite the secondhand source - for instance, a lecture in a conference proceedings. When quoting or paraphrasing a quote, write "qtd. in" before the author and pages.

John Murray calls Tim Smith "interesting but egotistical" (qtd. in Jesrani 34).

## Citing literary / classic and religious works

For works such as novels, plays and other classic works, it's helpful to provide further identifying information along with the page information. Do this by adding a semicolon and then the identifying information following the page number.

(Tolstoy 5; pt. 2, ch. 3).

When citing classic poems and plays, replace page numbers with division numbers (part, book, scene, act). The below refers to book 10 line 5. Bear in mind the divisions and the way they are written can vary by source.

Fear plays a role in Homer's *Odyssey* (10.5).

The title of books in the bible and other famous literary works should be abbreviated.

(*New Jerusalem Bible*, Gen. 2.6-9).

## Placing parenthetical citations in direct quotations

When directly quoting a source, place the parenthetical citation after the quote. For example:

Sanders explains that economic woes are due to "the mortgage crisis and poor risk assessment" (20).

Place the parenthetical citation at the end of an indented quotation. There should be no period after the parenthetical citation. The last sentence of the indented quote should look like:

It's unclear whether multilateral tariffs are disruptive to bilateral talks. (Evert 30-31)

## Citing online sources

Generally, follow the same principals of parenthetical citations to cite online sources. Refer to the author, and if possible, a permanent identifier that would be the same for any reader.

The economy will rebound with the new monetary policies (Smith).

Solar power will become the primary source of energy (Williams 2).

## Citing online sources with no author

If there is no author, use the title that begins the citation, either the article or website title. Be sure it also takes the same formatting, i.e. articles are in quotes and website titles are italicized. Shorten / abbreviate the name of the source but ensure that your reader can easily identify it in your bibliography (abbreviate the title starting with the same word in which it is alphabetized).

Elephants are thought to be one of the smartest mammals (“Smart Elephants”).

Nineteen men and women were convicted (*Salem Witchcraft Trials*).

**Ideally, when citing online sources, try to reference the source within your sentence, with either the author or the title to avoid writing a parenthetical citation**