



# The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

## Modern Language Association [MLA] General Guidelines Updated for 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

When citing a source using MLA, you have the choice of including the author name/title as part of an in-text signal phrase or within the parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence. In the following handout, both ways of citing are presented.

All information garnered from a source not your own **must** be cited and **must** include page numbers or other location information in text (when available). This includes directly quoted material AND all other information borrowed from another source – including summaries, paraphrases, statistics, specific facts, or visuals.

The following handout is divided into three sections. **Section 1** details general MLA formatting guidelines. **Section 2** details the most common types of in-text citations. **Section 3** details how to create Works Cited entries for the most common sources.

### Formatting Guidelines

- Typically, MLA papers will not have a separate title page. On the first page of the document, left justify and double-space the following information: Name, professor's name, class title, due date. For example:

Syn 1

Benjamin Syn

Professor McCandless

English 1020

31 Oct 2016

Paper Title

- The full title of the paper is centered just below the aforementioned paper information.
- In the top right hand corner of every page, list your last name and the page number. You will have a page number on every page, including the first page and the Works Cited.

### In-Text Citations

In-text citations appear at the end of sentences as parenthetical citations in order to note where information was found. These citations will typically include the author and page number, though in some cases where there isn't an author this might be a shortened version of a title or a corporate author.

- When mentioning the title of an article (or chapter, poem, song, etc.) in text, place it in quotation marks. Example: John Varkman’s article “The Moon is the Future” notes that the American government should begin planning more moon missions (8).
- When mentioning the title of a book (or journal, film, sculpture, etc.) in text, italicize the title. Example: George Yardley’s book *The Future Mars Missions* notes that astronauts will have to recycle many materials on the spacecraft to make missions a success (99).

In signal phrase, one author:	George Yuks states that “most modern television programs lack emotional depth” (8).
In signal phrase, two authors	According to Ronald Gorky and Omar Jacobs, “The Soviet Moon program had many successes (99).
Parenthetical citation, single author	Moreover, “Most modern television programs lack emotional depth” (Yuks 8).
Parenthetical citation, two authors	In fact, “The Soviet Moon program had many successes” (Gorky and Jacobs 99).
Parenthetical citation, three or more authors	When citing sources with three or more authors, list only the first author’s name followed by “et al.” The study found that “most Americans believe that the moon landings occurred” (Varkland et al. 88).
Signal phrase, three or more authors	According to Varkland et al, “most Americans believe that the moon landings occurred” (88).
No page number but paragraph, chapter, or section number, parenthetical or signal phrase	Some web-based publications use paragraph numbers in lieu of page numbers. If this is the case, provide the relevant paragraph (par. or pars.), chapter (ch. or chs.), or section number (sec. or secs.). Unlike other in-text citations, put a comma between the author and the location marker. Research discovered that most students consumed between “two and three cups of coffee per day” (Frank, par. 1).
Unknown page number	According to Fuller, “Conspiracy theories that question America’s landing on the moon have no merit.” OR: In fact, “Conspiracy theories that question America’s landing on the moon have no merit” (Fuller).
Corporate authors	Corporate authors (entities that publish information without an individual author’s byline – for example, the CDC) are cited in the same fashion as individual authors unless the corporate author is the same as the publisher, in which case you cite the source with the title of the document (see “Sources with no identifiable author” below): The Corporation for Freedom of Military Information notes that the United States Department of Defense coordinates the military activities of the United States and has a budget of \$400 billion (3-4). <b>OR:</b> The United States Department of Defense coordinates the military activities of the United States and has a budget of \$400

	billion (Corporation for Freedom of Military Information 3-4).
Indirect sources (source within a source)	At times, quoted words or important information can be found in a source written by someone else: According to Karl Taylor, “General Patton had a unique style of command” (qtd. in Franklin 24).
Sources with no identifiable author	At times, an author of a source cannot be identified (e.g., some encyclopedias, dictionaries, or web sites). In this case, cite the title of the article or entry without the page number: Coronal mass ejections can disrupt communications on earth (“Coronal Mass Ejections”).
Two or more authors/works with similar conclusions	At times, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that numerous studies, works, or authors have come to similar conclusions or have had similar research. In these cases, alphabetically cite the authors in the parenthetical citation and separate with semicolons: The effect of weightlessness on tiny screws has been studied extensively (Farkley 50; Potsticker 699; Zooley 2).
Title mentioned in text	In other cases (e.g., short stories, novels, and plays without acts or line numbers), it is necessary to mention both the author and the title of the work: George Qarnioti’s “The Luna Program” notes that the Soviets were able to land unmanned probes on the moon (67).
Lines of poetry	If you quote more than one line or your lines fall across two stanzas, use one backslash (“/”) for a single line break and two backslashes (“//”) for stanza breaks: David Hinton’s translation of the <i>Tao te ching</i> says that the ancient masters were “so deep beyond knowing / we can only describe their appearance: // perfectly cautious, as if crossing winter streams...” (78).
Verses in a play	When citing specific lines from a play, give the act, scene, and line numbers. Use backslashes to denote line breaks: Our protagonist seems resolute as he asserts “Haste me to know’t, that I, with wings as swift / As meditation... / May sweep to my revenge” ( <i>Hamlet</i> 1.5.35-37).
Quoted material longer than four lines (prose) or three lines (poetry/drama)	If you must quote long stretches of text (don’t do this just to take up space), set it off from the rest of the paragraph as a block indented half an inch from the left margin. Do <i>not</i> use quotation marks not present in the original or indent the first line further. At the conclusion of <i>Lord of the Flies</i> , Ralph is overcome by  great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too (Golding 186).
Using ellipses to omit part of a quotation	Sometimes, only some of a longer quotation is relevant to your argument, or you might want to make longer quotes more concise. You

	<p>can use an ellipsis to stand in for omitted material. However, <i>never allow ellipses to cause confusion about the author’s original message.</i></p> <p><u>Original text:</u>  “Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stressed air as the communicator of disease, ignoring sanitation or visible carriers” (Tuchman 101-2).</p> <p><u>Revised with omitted clause:</u>  “Medical thinking ... stressed air as the communicator of disease, ignoring sanitation or visible carriers” (Tuchman 101-2).</p>
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**Works Cited Lists**

A Works Cited list contains all the sources cited in-text with a complete reference. When creating a Works Cited page, the words **Works Cited** should be typed and centered at the top of the page. Sources should be alphabetized based upon the last name of the author(s). For each reference, the first line of the citation will be left justified in the document with each subsequent line indented half an inch.

- When works have one or two authors, list the authors how they are listed in the source and reverse only last name/first name of the first author.
  - Example: Brunsfeld, George and Tallis Denmark.
- When works have three or more authors, list only the first author’s name followed by “et al.”
  - Example: Franks, John, et al.
- When referencing journals, cite the volume and issue numbers. Occasionally, some journals have only volume numbers and no issue numbers.
- When creating a Works Cited page reference, italicize the names of books, journals, newspapers, and web site titles; use quotation marks for articles, chapters, web page titles, etc.

Each entry in the Works Cited list will follow the same order. MLA calls the larger sources “containers.” The first container is the smaller container, for instance the journal name, or if a media source, the television show name. The larger container, which comes second, is where the first container is housed. Examples of the larger container would include the database where you accessed the journal (e.g., EBSCO) or the media web site that streams the source (e.g., Hulu or Netflix).

Last name, First name. Title of Work. Title of Container 1, version, number, publisher, Publication date, location. Title of Container 2, Container 2 location.

	Element	Explanation
1	Author.	The author is the primary person in charge of

		writing the source. Typically you will begin the reference with the writer's last name followed by a comma and their first name.
2	Title of Work.	The full title of the source exactly as it is listed.
3	Title of Container,	When the source is part of a larger whole, you must also list the Container. The Container could be the name of the anthology the article is printed in, the name of the television show the episode you are referencing comes from, etc.
4	Version,	If the book or text provides the version or edition, note that here. For instance: 7 <sup>th</sup> ed.
5	Number,	This includes both volume and issue number. For instance: vol. 67, no. 8 OR season 6, episode 5
6	Publisher,	This is the organization that produced the source or distributed it. For example: Oxford UP, If more than one publisher is listed, put a slash between the two organizations. For example: Oxford UP/Harvard UP,
7	Publication Date,	The date that the information was published or the most relevant date if there are multiple dates given
8	Location.	This section depends on the medium of publication. For print texts, this will be the page number(s). If it is a single page, use p.; if it is more than one page, use pp. to indicate the page range. For online sources, this might be either the URL or DOI.
9	Container 2	Container 2 is not always needed, but when the information is provided, it comes after container 1. You will use a second Container if the information in Container 1 (a scholarly journal) is housed in a larger Container, like a database (for instance on JSTOR). In this case, you will list the title of Container 2 and the location. For example, Container 2 might include: <i>JSTOR</i> , www.jstor.org. OR <i>Hulu</i> , www.hulu.com.

### Works Cited – Non-Digital Mediums

Document Type	Works Cited Entry
Article in a Scholarly Journal	Connelly, Deborah S. "To Read or Not To Read: Understanding Book Censorship." <i>Community &amp; Junior College Libraries</i> , vol. 15, no. 2, 2009, pp. 83-90.
Article in a Newspaper	Wines, Michael. "China: Censors Bar Mythical Creature." <i>New York Times</i> , 30 Mar 2009, p. 8.

Article in a Magazine	Liu, Melinda. "Blog the Record Straight." <i>Newsweek</i> , 9 Oct 2009, p. 9.
Review	Freeman, Lisa A. "Exit Lord Chamberlain, Stage Left." Rev. of <i>Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson</i> , by David Thomas et al., <i>TLS</i> , 7 Nov 2008, p. 23.
Book by a Single Author	Heins, Marjorie. <i>Not in Front of the Children: Indecency, Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth</i> . Rutgers University Press, 2007.
Anthology or Collection	Byrd, Cathy and Susan Richmond, eds. <i>Potentially Harmful: The Art of American Censorship</i> . Georgia State University, 2006.
Book by Three or More Authors	Karolides, Nicholas, et al. <i>100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature</i> . Checkmark Books, 1999.
Book by a Corporate Author	Corporate authors are cited as the primary author when the information is published by an organization or entity without an individual author's byline. However, if the organization is also the publishing entity, simply use the title in lieu of the author and only list the organization once in place of the publisher.  Feminists Against Censorship. <i>Pornography and Feminism: The Case Against Censorship</i> , edited by Gillian Rodgerson and Elizabeth Wilson, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1991.
Work in an Anthology	Rosenblatt, Roger. "We Are Free to Be You, Me, Stupid, and Dead." <i>Language Awareness</i> , edited by Paul Eschholz et al., 10th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009, pp. 453-58.
Article in a Reference Book	"Censorship." <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., 1989.
Work of Visual Art	For visual art, it is also necessary to mention what medium the artist used to make the piece  Fergus, Daniel C. <i>Censorship</i> . 1993, Watercolor, ink, and color pencil.
Interview	Hansen, James and Mark Bowen. Interview by Terry Gross. <i>Fresh Air</i> . National. Public Radio, WHYY, 8 Jan. 2008.

### Works Cited – Digital Mediums

Document Type	Works Cited Entry
Work Cited on the Web	When the source has a date of publication, defer to that. However, if the date of publication isn't listed, you can include the access date. This information would be listed as "Date accessed: 8 Nov. 2016" and it would follow the URL.  "The Right to Sext: Sending Nude Photos of Oneself is a Right." <i>Natl. Coalition Against Censorship</i> , 26 Mar. 2009, <a href="http://www.ncac.org/The-Right-to-Sext-Sending-Nude-Photos-of-Oneself-is-a-Right">www.ncac.org/The-Right-to-Sext-Sending-Nude-Photos-of-Oneself-is-a-Right</a> .
Periodical Publication In an Online Database	Rich, Motoko. "Amazon Ranking Errors Ignite a Twitter-Fed Outrage." <i>New York Times</i> , 14 Apr. 2009, p.1. EBSCO, <a href="http://www.ebsco.com">www.ebsco.com</a> .
Film/Video Recording	For films or other recorded performances, the citation varies based on

	<p>what or whom you are primarily referencing. If you are referencing an entire film for its content, then you will cite the film title first and the director second. However, if you are primarily concerned with a particular author's performance or how the director enacted his vision, you would cite them first:</p> <p><i>This Film Is Not Yet Rated</i>. Directed by Kirby Dick. Independent Film Channel, 2006.</p> <p>Dick, Kirby. <i>This Film Is Not Yet Rated</i>. Independent Film Channel, 2006.</p>
<p>A short or untitled message on the internet</p>	<p>@TheEllenShow. "If only Bradley's arm was longer. Best photo ever. #oscars." Twitter, 2 Mar. 2014, 8:06 PM., <a href="https://twitter.com/TheEllenShow/status/44032224407314432/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw">https://twitter.com/TheEllenShow/status/44032224407314432/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw</a></p>