Overview

The MLA citation style uses a flexible method which can be applied to a variety of resource types. When creating a citation, MLA requires that you include specific components; these components are called “core elements”, and include the following:

1. Author.
2. “Title of source”.
3. Title of container.
4. Other contributors.
5. Version.
6. Number.
7. Publisher.
8. Publication date.
9. Location.

When creating your citation, use only the elements that apply to the item you’re citing. Each element should be followed by the punctuation shown, and should include any quotation marks or italics as shown.

MLA Formatting for Essays

The essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8.5" x 11") with 1" margins on all sides. A clear, readable font should be used.

Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks. Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin. Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner. Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor’s name, the course, and the date; this should be double-space. Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks.

The Works Cited Page

The entries on the Works Cited page should be in alphabetical order by author’s last name, or by title if an author’s name is not available. If a citation continues beyond one line, these subsequent lines should have a hanging indentation. The Works Cited Page should be double spaced.

A copy of the MLA Handbook, 8th Edition, is available in the library for your use.
Creating Citations for the Works Cited Page

An article title should be in quotation marks, while the title of the publication containing the article should be in italics:


The eighth edition also recommends including URLs when citing online sources:

Author, A. Title. Publisher. Publication Date, http://xxxxx.

Title of Container (MLA Handbook, p.30)
The MLA Handbook refers to containers.


The container could also be a book, a website, a television series, or a website. Below is a sample citation of an episode of a television show:

“Episode Name.” Title of Program, created by FirstName LastName, performance by FirstName LastName, season #, episode #, Production Company, Year of Production.

Other Contributors (MLA Handbook, p.37)
There may be additional contributors who should be credited, such as editors, illustrators, translators, etc. If their contributions are relevant to your research, or necessary to identify the source, include their names in your documentation. Terms like editor, illustrator, translator, etc. should not be abbreviated:

Author, A. Title. Translated by FirstName LastName. Publisher. Publication Date.

Version (MLA Handbook, p.38)
If a source is listed as a particular edition or version of a work, include it in your citation:

Author, A. Title. Edition (i.e.: 3rd ed.), Publisher, Publication Date.

Number (MLA Handbook, p.39)
If a source is part of a numbered sequence, such as a multi-volume book, or journal with both volume (vol.#) and issue (no.#) numbers, those numbers must be listed in the citation:


Publisher (MLA Handbook p.40)
The publisher is the organization responsible for producing or distributing the source to the public. If there is more than one publisher, and they are both relevant to the research, list them in the citation, separated by a forward slash (/)

Author, A. “Article Title.” Journal Title. Publisher 1/ Publisher 2. Volume #, Issue #, Publication Date, pp.-pp.

Publication Date (MLA Handbook, p.42)
The same source may have been published on more than one date; this is especially common with online sources. For example, an article in a book may be accompanied by a note saying that the article had previously published in a journal at an earlier date. When a source has more than one date, use the date that is most relevant to your use of the source. If you’re unsure about which date to use, go with the date of the source’s original publication:

When citing a book, look for the date of publication on the title page. If no date appears, check the copyright page. If more than one date appears, use the most recent:

Author, A. Title. Publisher. Publication Date (Year).

Web resources should be either the date of publication or the date that the resource was uploaded:

Author, A. “Article Title.” Website Title. Publisher. Day, Month, Year, http://xxxxx.

Include the dating information that is available. For example, journals may list only the month and year of publication:

Author, A. “Article Title.” Journal Title. Publisher. Volume #, Issue #, Month, Year, pp.-pp.

Location
Here, location refers not to a geographical place, but a source’s location within container – in other words, the page numbers. This element is used in the case of sources such as articles within a book or journal. A single page number is preceded by p., and a range of page numbers by pp.