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MLA Eighth Edition Style Guide
With Citation Examples and Formatting Guidelines

Introduction:

MLA (Modern Language Association) style is commonly used when writing papers for many disciplines. The following is a guide to formatting and citing common sources using MLA Style, based on the 8th ed., 2016. Students should consult the *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. for more detailed information. Note that the 8th edition does not address paper formatting. The new edition does address in-text citations, capitalization, punctuation, numbers, abbreviation, etc. See MLA Paper Formatting Guidelines, below, or visit the MLA Style Center website for information on "**Formatting a Research Paper**." Be sure to follow specific directions given by your instructor.

Works Cited:

General Guidelines:

Your works cited list should start on a new page following your text, titled Works Cited, centered on the page. The first line of each citation should be flush with the margin, but each following line should be indented ½ inch or 5 (five) spaces from the left margin. This is a **hanging indention** (see examples below and MLA Paper Formatting Guidelines); use your word processor tools to format rather than the tab key or space bar. Alphabetize the citations by the authors' last names or the title if no author is given. As in the rest of your paper, all lines should be **double-spaced**.

Information to Include:

MLA, 8th ed., lists nine specific "**Core Elements**" that should be included in a citation for any source regardless of the type of source, format, or medium, as well as specifying the order in which they should be given. Note that not all sources may provide all of the core elements; in this case, skip to the next element. The Core Elements, in order as they should appear in a citation including correct punctuation, are:

Author(s). Title of the source. Title of the container, other contributors, version, number, Publisher name, publication date, location. Second container details (if necessary). Other optional elements as needed.

Also new to MLA 8th edition are the concepts of "containers" and "locations." Container refers to a larger work in which the cited source is found, such as book or periodical from which only a chapter or article is used, a document from a website, etc.; the chapter is the source and the book is the container, and so on. An item may also have more than one container, as in the case of an article from a periodical found in an online database or a video segment from a full-length video, accessed from a streaming service or other online source. Location varies with the medium; in print it refers to pages, online, it's the web address, DOI number, etc.

Other changes for MLA 8: the medium (print, web, etc.) is no longer included. MLA 7th ed. did not require a URL for online sources; in MLA 8th, a URL is included as a location element.

Core Elements Defined

Authors:

Can be persons or organizations (also called corporate authors). A corporate author is named only if it is different than the publishing organization. If the corporate author is the same as the publisher, omit the author element and start with the source title.

Title of source:

The title of the actual source that you use. This may be an entire book, a chapter, an article, etc. If the source is self-contained (e.g., a book, a movie, etc.), the title is italicized; this includes a title that may stand alone but is included within a collection, such as a novel or play in a volume of collected works. If the source is part of a larger whole (a chapter in a book, entry in an encyclopedia, periodical article), it is enclosed in quotation marks. If a source is untitled (e.g., a work or art), use a description, capitalizing the first word and any nouns; don't italicize or enclosed in quotation marks.

Title of container:

As noted above, this is a larger element in which a source is a smaller part, such as a journal or an encyclopedia, etc. This title is italicized. In the case of an article located in an online database, there will be two containers, the periodical title, and the database title. Each container may include other elements; e.g., each container will include a unique location.

Other contributors:

Others who may be credited in a work in other roles, e.g., editor, illustrator, etc. Precede these names with the appropriate role (e.g., illustrated by, adapted, by, translated by, etc.). Often, such contributors can make a significant difference between editions.

Version:

Refers to a version other than an original, such as a later or revised edition of a book, a director's cut of a film, etc.

Number:

Include this when a source is in multiple volumes or is published in a series (journal, magazine, newspaper, television series, etc.); include labels such as vol., no., season, episode, etc., as needed.

Publisher:

The organization responsible for making the work available; omit for periodicals, self-published works, or websites for which the site title is the same as the publisher. Note that websites that are not involved in the publication of a work (e.g., YouTube, databases, Google Scholar, etc.) are containers and not publishers.

Publication date:

Print sources typically have one publication date, but some may list several if there are several editions of a work; use the latest given. In some cases, especially in online sources, there may be several dates listed, including a website copyright date, a date when a page or web article was last updated, etc. Use the latest date that is the most relevant for the source being cited.

Location:

The location of a work depends on the medium. For print sources within a container (print periodical, anthology, etc.) list the page or pages preceded by p. or pp. For an online source, the location is the URL or web address; another option would be a DOI number (or digital object identifier) which is more permanent than a web address. For articles or other sources accessed through subscription databases, look for a permalink (see more on this below). Other types of locations include a disc number in a DVD collection, an actual physical location, such as a museum in the case of a physical object, etc.

Optional elements:

These may be provided as appropriate and may include the following. An **original publication date**, which would immediately follow the source title. An appropriate example might be in the case of a video originally produced in one year, then later with no alterations other than the format (VHS to DVD). Include the **city of publication** if there are differences in versions published in different cities. Include **other facts**, such a multiple volumes, if a work is part of a named series, or is an unusual type of work, like a transcript, lecture, etc. You may include the **date of access** for online sources, preceded by the word accessed (e.g., Accessed 3 Jan. 2017). For an online resource, include its URL, permalink (usually provided by databases), or, if available, a DOI (digital object identifier, a unique number that begins with doi). Note that a stable link or **permalink** is a link that usually differs from the URL (the link in the browser address) and may be provided by a database which may or may not route a user to the appropriate login page. When including links, omit the http:// or https://.

Works Cited Examples:

Book by a single author:

Kushner, Arnold S. *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Anchor Books-Random House,
    2004.

Book by two or more authors:

For books with two authors, list both in the order given, for example, Smith, Henry and Terry
Jones. For a book with three or more, start with the first author given and follow with et al, as
in Lane, Nancy, et al.

Book by a corporate or organizational author different than the publisher:

American Bar Association. *Family Legal Guide*, 3rd ed. Random House, 2004.

Book by a corporate/organizational author same as the publisher:

MLA Handbook. 8th ed., Modern Language Association, 2016.

Book with an unknown author: (do not use Anonymous, Anon, or Author Unknown)

Go Ask Alice. Simon & Schuster, 1971.

E-book:

Sanders, Pamela, editor. *Motor Carrier Safety: Oversight of High Risk and "Chameleon" Carriers*.
    New York, Nova Science Publishers, 2015. *E-book Collection (EBSCOhost)*,
    rpcc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&A
    N=1084433&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 4 Mar. 2017.

Translated book:

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Complete Fairy Tales and Stories*, translated by Erik C. Haugaard,
    first Anchor Books edition, Random House, 1983.

Edited book:

Craig, Wendy, editor. *Childhood Social Development: The Essential Readings*. Blackwell, 2000.

Work in an anthology or collection:

Anthology

(combines several works by various authors):

Valentine, Genevieve. "The Dire Wolf." *The Year's Best Dark Fantasy and Horror*, edited by
    Paula Guran, 2011 edition, Prime Books, 2011, pp.463-474.

Collection

(combines several works by one author):

Welty, Eudora. "A Curtain of Green." *Selected Stories of Eudora Welty*, Modern Library, 1992, pp.186-194.

Article from a periodical:

Note that while these are all of the same article, there are differences, e.g., for the online source, *Psychology Today* is both the periodical title and the website title.

Print version:

Davidson, Jordan. "Nature's Bounty: The Psychobiotic Revolution." *Psychology Today*, vol. 47, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 2014, pp. 40-41.

Online

Davidson, Jordan. "Nature's Bounty: The Psychobiotic Revolution." *Psychology Today*, Mar. 11, 2014, www.psychologytoday.com/articles/201403/natures-bounty-the-psychobiotic-revolution?collection=143857. Accessed 7 Dec. 2016.

From an online database:

Davidson, Jordan. "Nature's Bounty: The Psychobiotic Revolution." *Psychology Today*, vol. 47, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 2014, pp. 40-41. *Academic Search Complete*, rpcc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=94580757&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 7 Dec. 2016.

Entry from a reference source

(note: not all reference sources include authors for entries):

"Holocaust, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016. www.oed.com.rpcc.idm.oclc.org/ Accessed 4 March 2017.

Print version:

Lurigio, Arthur J. "Antianxiety Drugs." *Magill's Medical Guide*, edited by Bryan C. Augay, et al, 7th rev. ed., vol. 1, Salem Press, 2014, pp. 134-135.

Online version:

Lurigio, Arthur J. "Antianxiety Drugs." *Magill's Medical Guide*, edited by Bryan C. Augay, et al, 7th ed. *Salem Online.* Salem Press, 2014, online.salempress.com/articleDetails.do?articleName=mmg2014_0066.

Interviews:

Personal interview:

One that you conduct; list by the name of the person being interviewed:

Deaux, Jacques. Personal interview. 20 Sep. 2016.

Print, broadcast or online-only interview:

Again, list by the name of the person being interviewed. If the interview is part of a larger work, e.g., a periodical or a regular broadcast program (television, radio, etc.) and has a title, put the title of the interview in quotation marks and italicize the title of the larger work.

Print:

Abramovic, Marina. "8 Questions," by Belinda Luscombe. *Time,* vol. 188, no. 21, 2016, p. 74.

Broadcast:

Marino, Peter.   Interview by Scott Pelley. *60 Minutes,* 2 Apr. 2017.

Online-only:

Knoll, John. "Rogue One EP John Knoll Talks George Lucas' Lasting Influence and More," by Lucas Siegel. *Syfywire*, Syfy. 4 Apr. 2017, www.blastr.com/2017-4-4/rogue-one-a-star-wars-story-john-knoll-interview. Accessed 5 Apr. 2017.

Websites:

Website can vary widely, but you will look for the same components as for any other source. Just with any other source, include the components that you can find and skip those that you can't. You may cite an entire website or just a portion.

Entire site:

FDA: U. S. Food and Drug Administration. 26 Jan. 2017 www.fda.gov/default.htm. Accessed 6 Mar. 2017.

Page or document from a website:

Donovan, Robin and Kristeen Cherney. "What Do You Want to Know About Heart Disease?" *Healthline*, Healthline Media, 17 July 2015, www.healthline.com/health/heart-disease?ref=global. Accessed 6 Mar. 2017.

"Alzheimer's Disease Fact Sheet." *NIH: National Institute on Aging.* U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 27 Feb. 2017, www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/alzheimers-disease-fact-sheet. Accessed 6 Mar. 2017.

Videos:*

*Note that the focus of your research on a film or video may determine how you cite the source; for example, if you focus on a particular performer, begin your citation with that name; if your emphasis is on the director, start with that name, and so on.

Physical format:

Othello. Screenplay by Oliver Parker and William Shakespeare. Dir. Oliver Parker. Perf.
    Laurence Fishburne and Kenneth Branagh. Sony, 1995.

Online streaming service:

The Sun. Narrated by Andrew Lincoln. Dir. Michael Lachmann. BBC, 2006. *Films on Demand.*
    rpcc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=152263&x
    tid=35992. Accessed 4 Mar. 2017

Tips and Resources:

Record complete citation information for all potential sources during your search to avoid having to search for the information again. Always carefully cite your sources within your paper and on the Works Cited page in order to avoid plagiarism. Note that while many resources (databases) may provide citations, be aware that they may not be entirely accurate.

For books, whether print or e-books, get your information from the title page rather than the cover. The title page may or may not be the first page with text, but it **will** include more than just the title; it will also list the author(s), editor(s) if any, edition information (e.g., 5th edition, revised edition, etc.), publisher, city or cities of publication, and copyright date (if more than one is given, use the latest); some of this information may be on the back of the title page.

MLA Paper Formatting Guidelines:

Margins and spacing:

All margins should be set at 1 (one) inch (top, bottom, left, and right). The first word of each paragraph should be indented ½ inch or five spaces from the left margin. The paper should be *double-spaced* throughout, including headings (not headers), quotations, notes, and works cited.

Page numbering:

Page numbers should be placed in the upper right hand corner of each page, ½ inch from the top of the page and 1 (one) inch from the right side of the page. Numbering should start on the first page and continue to the end. Your last name should be inserted before the page number on every page. In word processing application, the page number is inserted in the header.

Text:

Use an easy-to-read font, like Times New Roman in a standard size (12 pts).
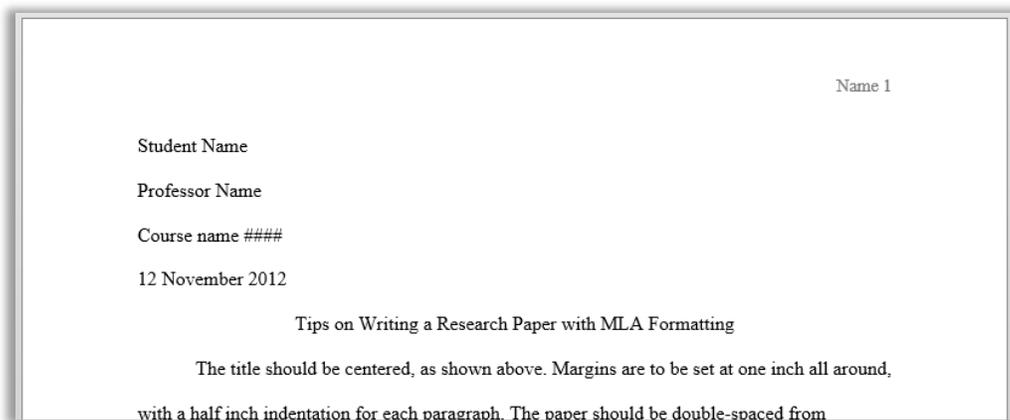
Capitalization:

Standardize capitalization in titles. If a title is in all caps or all lower case, correct as follows. The following parts of speech should be capitalized: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions. These should not be capitalized unless they begin a title or follow a major punctuation mark: articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, and *to* in infinitives (e.g., to Walk, etc.). Don't use all caps except for acronyms (NASA, CIA, etc.). See the following sections in the *MLA Handbook* for more details: 1.2 (pp. 67-75), 2.2.1 (p. 106), and 2.3 (p. 107).

In-text citations:

Brief references to the full citation should be inserted within the text whenever another person's words or ideas are incorporated into your own work. The brief reference should usually contain the author's last name or a shortened title if no author is given, and the appropriate page numbers in parentheses. For example, the theory has been proposed in the past (Jones 56-83). *Or* Jones has proposed this theory in the past (56-83). See the *MLA Handbook,* pp. 54-58 and pp. 116-127, for other examples and guidelines. For authors with the same last name, include the first initial (H. Smith 67). For a source with two authors, list both in the order given (Smith and Jones 56); for sources with more than two authors, list only the first author, followed by et al (Watson et al 96).

Heading and title:

Unless instructed otherwise, you do not need a title page. Your heading will start on the first line of the first page, followed by your instructor's name, your course name & number, and the date, each on a new line, all flush with the left margin, and double-spaced. Your title should be centered on the next line. Your text will follow on the next line.

Name 1

Student Name

Professor Name

Course name ####

12 November 2012

Tips on Writing a Research Paper with MLA Formatting

The title should be centered, as shown above. Margins are to be set at one inch all around,

with a half inch indentation for each paragraph. The paper should be double-spaced from

Hanging indentions:

Hanging indentions are used when listing your sources in your works cited. The first line is flush with the left margin, and any following lines are indented .5 inch from the left. Select your citations in your works cited list and use your word processor tools; see example below for MS Word. Avoid using the tab key to set hanging indentions.
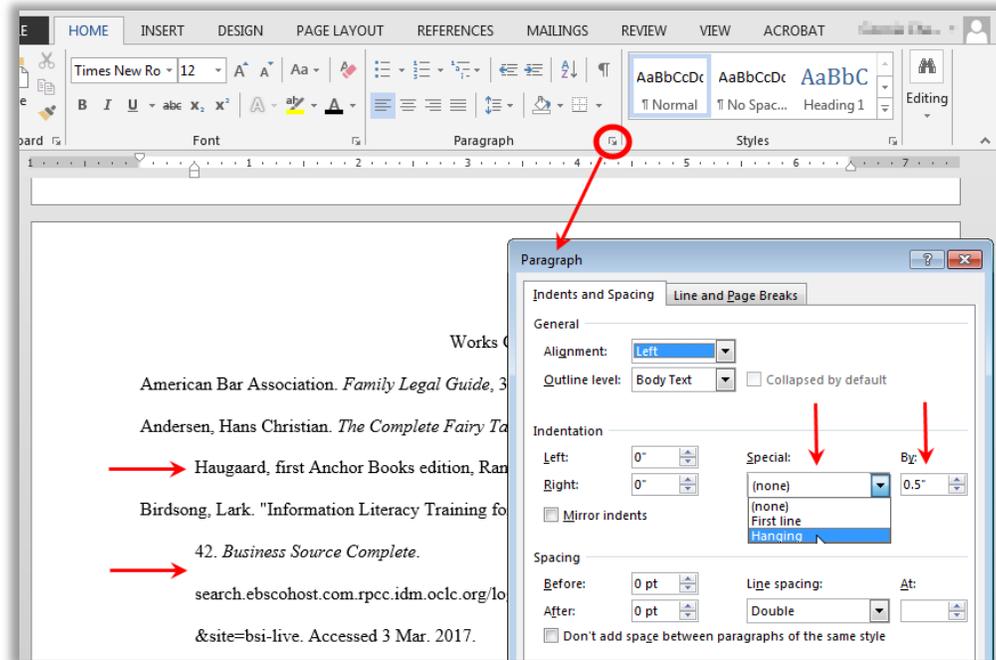
References:

MLA Handbook, 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

The MLA Style Center, Modern Language Association of America, 2016. style.mla.org

"MLA Style," *OWL: Purdue Online Writing Lab*, Purdue U, 2017.
    owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

"The Writer's Handbook: MLA Documentation Guide," *The Writing Center.* U Wisconsin-
    Madison, 2016. www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html*

    *Note that as of August 1, 2017, this resource still refers to the MLA 7th edition, but the site is undergoing revision to reflect MLA 8th edition.