

## MLA (Modern Language Association) Style for Research Papers

When writing a research paper, a writer must clearly indicate to the readers where outside information comes from. In other words, he or she must give credit where it is due. By using a citation style such as APA or MLA, the writer can clearly show the reader what sources were used where. MLA (Modern Language Association) style is the format used for studies of language and literature and may also be used in certain other humanities. MLA referencing relies mainly on in-text citations (indications in the body of the paper that you have directly quoted or paraphrased a source) and on a “Works Cited” list at the end of the work, giving more complete information about the in-text citations.

**In-text Citation:** the means by which you introduce the source’s work and the technique for acknowledging the sources in your text.

*In Brief: When citing a work within your paper, you have three options:*

- Introduce the quotation using the author’s name, then put only the page number in parenthesis.

Example:

Ray Bradbury described the aliens as making “no effort, except to put one shoe before the other to keep from falling on their unusual faces” (94).

- Introduce the quotation. After the quotation put both the author’s name and the page number in parenthesis. Example:

The author described the aliens as making “no effort, except to put one shoe before the other to keep from falling on their unusual faces” (Bradbury 94).

- Paraphrase the quotation, giving credit to the author. At the end of the sentence, put the page number in parenthesis.

Introduction , “quotation” ( page or paragraph number ) .

Remember, the author’s name should be HERE or HERE!

In detail:

- Parenthetical refers to all the information that you put between parentheses. This information in conjunction with the additional details you will provide your audience with a pathway to one original source.
  - Use parenthetical citations when you quote, summarize, or paraphrase from another writer’s work

- Include the author and the page number (for print sources) or paragraph number (for online sources)
- Quotation marks are used for *directly quoted material* and are followed by the parenthetical information and then a period.
  - Introduce the quoted material with a signal word or phrase that may or may not include the author's name.
  - Follow the closed quotation mark with a parenthetical citation that includes either the page number (with no additional marking) or the paragraph number (with a "par." before the number)

Basic elements of the in-text citation:

1. *The introduction.* When you use quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material, you need to work it in to a larger sentence or idea. This means that your cited information is previewed with an introduction containing the author's words and, if there is more than one work by an author or you wish to emphasize the work at hand, the source:
  - OPTION:* In *Things I Wish My Mother Taught Me*, Cathy Graff complains, "No one ever told me that you aren't supposed to touch the metal side of the iron to see if it's on" (37).
  - OPTION:* Cathy Graff complains, "No one ever told me that you aren't supposed to touch the metal side of the iron to see if it's on" (37).
  - [If the author is listed in the parenthetical citation, it is not needed in the introduction. See #3]*
2. *The information.* Follow your introduction with the information from your outside source. It may be in quoted or paraphrased.
  - OPTION:* Joanna Matthew's latest book claims that "the stock market will never change and we will be stuck here forever" (971).
  - OPTION:* Joanna Matthew's latest book perceives a dreary future with no hope for a stock market turnaround" (971).
3. *The citation.* At the end of your outside information, include a citation letting your reader know where your information came from. If you have used your author in the signal phrase, you do not need it in the parentheses.
  - OPTION:* Jeff Wright indicates his ignorance when he claims that trees are killing the environment (par. 304).
  - OPTION:* The author is clueless when he claims that threes are killing the environment (Wright par. 304).
  - OPTION:* Jeff Wright indicates his ignorance when he argues, "It is the fault of the summer foliage that our Ozone layer is depleted" (par. 304).
  - OPTION:* The author is clueless when he argues, "It is the fault of the summer foliage that our Ozone layer is depleted" (Wright par. 304). *Some helpful notes:*



- *In an introductory phrase, use a comma only if the quotation is grammatically separate from the sentence.*
  - Ruggiero says, “Release the hounds” (90).
- *Eliminate the comma if the quotation continues a grammatical thought:*
  - Ruggiero says we should “Release the hounds (90). *The most common incidence of this is with the use of “that”*
  - Merkle claims that “all shrinks are quacks” (34).
- *If a quotation ends in an exclamation mark or question mark, keep the marking with the quotation and add the period after the citation as normal.*
  - Jamieson wants to know “Who will change the rules of the nation?” (45).
    - Akron claims “There is no hope for these people!” (12).
- *If you need to add or remove information from a quotation, any changes you make must be in brackets [like this]. Even if you add the ellipsis (the...) you still must use brackets.*
  - Original:* Placeme writes, “Each day, long after the torture of the morning had subsided and a kind of quiet peace had settled on the farm, Grandpa would tell us stories” (45).
  - Edited:* Placeme writes, “Each day [...] Grandpa would tell us stories” (45).
- *If there is a grammatical error in the quotation, do not change it. Instead, follow it with the word “sic” in brackets and in italics.*
  - Example:* “After we left the diner, Jefferson puled [*sic*] up in his new car.” *When you are adding or removing information, be very careful not to change it to fit your particular needs. This violates the original text and is plagiarism.*
  - Example:* “George Bush was not a very good president.”
  - It cannot become this:* “George Bush was [...] a very good president.”
- *If you want to use a quotation that you’ve found in a source other than the original, you need to add “quoted in” in abbreviated form so that your reader knows that you were not looking at the primary source.*
  - Example:* According to the chancellor, “This is the last time we will have a crisis of this nature on campus!” (qtd. in Waller 27).

### Basic In-Text Citations

*This is a brief list of citation rules and guidelines. It is by no means comprehensive. For specific citations not listed here, reference the MLA 2009 Handbook or other writing guide book.*

#### 1. One author

The clown’s memoirs stated that “There is nothing like a good tumble” (Marcus 12).

#### 2. Two or three authors

Huntson and Waterford are “certain that business will pick up” (23).

3. Four or more authors

Hodges, Seawright, Edwards, and Alamrani all claim that there is nothing good on the horizon (9).

*If you don't want to list all authors, add the phrase “et al.” (which means “and others”) after the name.*

Hodges et al. claim that there is nothing good on the horizon (9).

4. Organization as author

A recent survey indicates that “at least two-thirds of college students stay up all night during finals week” (Center for Disease Control par. 2).

5. Unknown author

*Use the title of the work or, if it is long, use an abbreviation of it.*

There are only “sixteen hundred polar bears left” (*Care for Your Planet* par. 12).

6. Author with more than one work referenced in the paper

*Add a brief indication of which of the author's works you are discussing.*

Erikson writes about “the truth that cannot be ignored” (*Springtime* 33).

7. Encyclopedia or dictionary entry

*Use the title of the article (or abbreviated form) in the citation. If the articles in the source are in alphabetical order, do not include a page.* Prisons where “people lose the essence of themselves” (“Prisons”).

8. Electronic or Non-print source

*Use enough information so that your reader can match the citation to your Works Cited page. For resources with page numbers – like a PDF file – include the page numbers in the parenthesis. If there are sections – as in a website – include the section number or paragraph number, counting down from the top.* Oppenheimer calls the district a “garbage-filled, infectious waste of space” (99). Dout disagrees, claiming, “It only needs a little effort to be habitable” (par. 14).

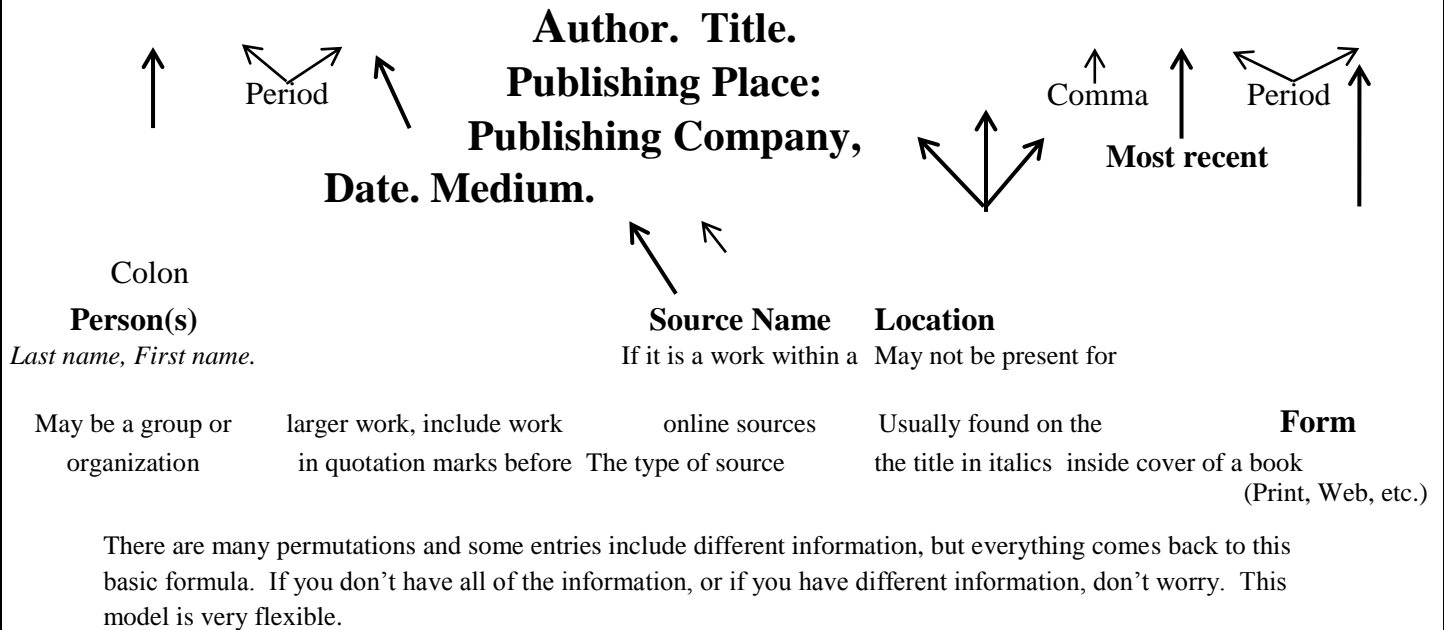
<p><b>Works Cited:</b> The Works Cited page provides full information for the parenthetical citations you used throughout the paper. It is an alphabetized list of each source you have referenced.</p>
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*There are different types of citations for different works. Some rules, however, apply to all entries:*

- 1. Always list the sources alphabetically by the author's last name. If the source has no author (see examples below), use the first part of the entry to determine where it fits in the alphabetical order.*
- 2. Double space the entire page(s), including each entry. There is no additional space between entries.*
- 3. Use consistent Times New Roman, 12 point font. Include page numbers continuing from the last preceding page of the paper.*
- 4. Entries use a reverse indent (hanging indent), meaning all the lines except for the first are indented.*



*In Brief: Your Works Cited entry needs the following elements: Title, Author, Publishing Place, Publishing Company, Date of Publication.*



Basic Works Cited Entries

*As with the in-text citation list, this is only a sampling of the many forms that works can take.*

*Use the MLA Handbook or other resource to find models of specific source entries. Core*

**form: Author. Title. Place: Company, Date.**

1. *Book* → *Core form.*  
 Meyer, Stephanie. *The Host*. New York: Penguin Press, 2009.
2. *Book, two or three authors* → *Core form+ additional author names.*  
 Jones, Jacky, and Jeremy More. *Waiting for God*. London: Oxford Press, 1990.
3. *Book, four or more authors* → *Core form +additional names OR Core form+ "et al"*  
 OPTION: Lucas, Jennifer, Clayton Saffrit, Buddy White, and Mindy Moore. *Why am I here?* Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987.  
 OPTION: Lucas, Jennifer, et al. *Why am I here?* Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987.
4. *Book, organization or group as author* → *Core form+ modified author name*



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. *Protecting the Innocent*. Racine: Members Press, 2012.

5. *Anthology or Collection (entire)* → *Core form – editor name replaces author name* Bynum, John., ed. *A Collection of Essays on Shelley*. New York: McMaillian, 1988.
6. *Entry in a Reference Work* → *Core form. "Article Title" added. Editor added. Page numbers added. (Include the page numbers that the entry covers).*  
Jelli, Bea. "Last Time I Saw Him." *Stories About Romance*. Ed. Grile Masters. London: AMC Press, 2008. 123-134. Print.
7. *Article in a Journal.* → *Core form - "Article Title" added. Article volume, issue number, date added. Location and Company removed. Page numbers added. [Note: Article and Issue number and the Date are in the Volume.Number (Date) form]*  
Meyer, Joe. "A Complete History of Moby Dick." *Journal of Melville Studies* 113.2 (2009): 54-76. Print.
8. *Website.* → *Core form – Publication place removed. Access date added.*  
Minton, Shelby. *A History of Geoducks*. University of Texas, 2010. Web. 12 August 2012.