

MLA (MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION)



MLA is a reference and style guide that uses **parenthetical references**. It is most often used in language, literature, and communication disciplines for stylistic consistency and also to preserve the readability of the main text.

This guide explains how to cite common sources using MLA. For information on the citation format for sources not covered in this guide, refer to the *MLA Handbook*, 8th edition.

MLA style offers flexibility and credits the author with understanding the needs of the audience. Recognizing that writers encounter texts that don't necessarily qualify as a specific genre, MLA allows you to use **common sense** to include the information you think is necessary.

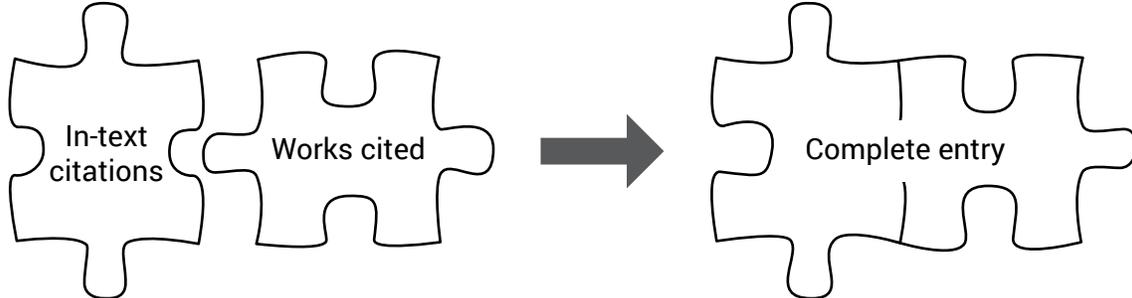
The genre is based on these principles:

- Cite simple traits shared by most works (e.g., author, title, date)
- There can be more than one way to cite a source correctly
- Documenting sources should be useful for your readers



Documenting Sources

Sources must be documented in two places: in parenthetical in-text citations and in a works-cited list.



In-text Parenthetical Citations

In MLA format, in-text citations are required for **paraphrased** and **directly-quoted** material. The basic construction for citations is as follows:

(Last name Page).
e.g., (Duncan 75).



Think of your in-text citation as a signpost to your works-cited list. Whatever word goes in the parentheses or your signal phrase should be the **first word** for that entry in your works-cited list. For example, if a work has no author, the title will be the first thing in your reference list, and will appear in the next citation like so:

e.g., *There is overwhelming consensus that GMO foods are safe to eat* ("Mandatory GMO labelling" 16).



Sample In-text Citations

Paraphrase

e.g., The government kept steering the conversation away from treaty rights and back to economic development (Duncan 43).

e.g., Palmater commented on this tactic, claiming that politicians often find a way to insert doubt (219).

In the above example, the author's name is mentioned in the signal phrase, so the parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence only needs to include the page number.

Direct Quotation (Short)

e.g., Nicolia notes that research "so far has not detected any significant hazard directly connected with the use of GM crops" (8).

Direct Quotation (Long)

A long quotation is one that is more than four lines of text. It should be indented ½ inch from the left margin and be double spaced. There are no quotation marks around the block of text, and the parenthetical citation comes after the final period, as in the example that follows.

e.g., Activists who manufacture controversy often resort to the martyr tactic:

Whenever anti-GMO groups need a study to cite, they look to a 2012 paper by Gilles-Eric Seralini. He asserted that rats fed GMO corn, and the associated pesticide glyphosate, developed increased cancerous tumours. After a number of bizarre turns, the paper was retracted, with the journal editors indicating a number of scientific irregularities in design and evidence presentation. In spite of this incident being part of the standard peer review process for publishing, Suzuki rails against it as an example of a stifling of scientific debate. (Smith 13)



Works Cited

The works-cited list is an **alphabetical** list of all the works you referenced in your paper. In the most recent handbook, MLA has tried to rethink its former, more rigid, rules for citation, aiming instead to streamline the process for sources that reflects the modern mobility of texts.

Most works contain the following **core elements**. An entry will appear in this order, respecting the punctuation given:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| [1] Author. | [2] Title of source. | [3] Title of container, |
| [4] Other contributors, | [5] Version, | [6] Number, |
| [7] Publisher, | [8] Publication date, | [9] Location. |

Notes on Core Elements

[1] Author

- The author is the person or organization who wrote the piece
- When a source has **three or more authors**, only include the **first** one listed in the source, followed by **et al.**

[2] Title of Source

- Source includes books, journal articles, newspaper articles, encyclopedia entries, interviews, YouTube videos, comic books, individual blog entries, tweets, etc.
- Include **articles** (a, an, the) as part of the title
- If the source is a **journal article** or **part of a larger work**, page numbers in the works-cited list (but not in the in-text citations) are preceded by **p.** or **pp.**
- For **larger works**, the title of the source is **italicized**. For **shorter works** or works that are part of a larger work, the title of the source is placed inside **quotation marks**.

[3] Title of Container

- Containers include websites, journals, anthologies, encyclopedias, newspapers, television series, etc.
- Include **articles** (a, an, the) as part of the title

[4] Other Contributors

- Other contributors include editors, translators, conductors of musical pieces, directors, illustrators, or adaptors
- Common terms in the works-cited list such as **editor**, **edited by**, **translator**, and **review of** are not abbreviated

[5] Version & [6] Number

- Version and number refer to **individual publications** of something in a series (e.g., journals, newspapers, magazines, blogs, etc.)
- Version also refers to editions, director's cuts, manuscript traditions, etc.
- Issues of scholarly journals are identified with, for instance, "vol. 64, no. 1"

[7] Publisher

- The publisher is the organization, company, or individual who **produced** a piece
- Publishers' names are given in full. Exceptions: business words like **Company (Co.)** are dropped, and, for academic presses, the abbreviations **U (University)**, **P (Press)**, and **UP (University Press)** are used
- A **forward slash (/)** separates the names of co-publishers
- When an organization is both an author and publisher of a work, the organization's name is given only once, usually as the publisher. No author is stated.

[8] Publication Date

- If an issue of a scholarly journal is dated with a **month** or **season**, the month or season is always cited along with the year
- Citing the date when an online work was consulted is **optional**. If it seems important, include it

[9] Location

- Location usually refers to the **place of publication** but can also refer to the physical location of an **artifact**, or a **URL** or **DOI**
- For books, the city of publication is no longer given, except in special situations
- The URL (without <http://> or <https://>) is normally given for a web source
- If you have the DOI (digital object identifier), include it



Sample MLA Works Cited List

Works Cited

Aristotle. *Rhetoric*. Translated by W. Roberts Rhys, Random House, 1954.

CBC's The National. "David Suzuki Speaks Out Against Genetically Modified Food." *CBC Archives*, 2001. www.youtube.com/watch?v=S10-Ds6Cioc

Ceccarelli, Leah. "Manufactured Scientific Controversy: Science, Rhetoric, and Public Debate." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2013, pp. 95-228.

Gatehouse, Jonathan. "The Nature of David Suzuki." *Macleans*. Nov. 18, 2013, www.macleans.ca/society/life/the-nature-of-david-suzuki/

Tietge, David J., and Allan Southern. *The Role of Science in Popular Discourse*. Cambridge UP, 2008.