



# MLA Citation QuickGuide

This is a quick reference for using MLA bibliographic format. If you are asked to use MLA, you are most likely writing a paper the arts or humanities, including subjects like English, languages, art, and philosophy. For authoritative coverage of MLA style, refer to the *MLA Handbook*.

## What Needs to be Cited

### You need to document:

- Direct quotes, entire sentences, phrases and words
- The author's research, theories, or ideas
- Paraphrased/Summarized research, theories, or ideas
- Use of an author's argument or line of thinking
- Articles, studies, poems, stories etc.

## What Doesn't Need to be Cited?

### You don't need to document:

- Proverbs, axioms, and sayings ("A stitch in time saves nine.")
- Well-known quotations ("Only the fittest will survive.")
- Common knowledge (Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, or oxygen has an atomic number of 8, or "The Starry Night" was painted by Vincent Van Gogh.)

## How to Make Parenthetical Citations in Writing

**Direct Quoting:** Reproduce the author's text word for word in your own paper when the original words are important. Parentheses always come after the final quotation mark, but before the punctuation at the end of the sentence.

Example: "In speaking about the current situation of Black women writers, it is important to remember that the existence of a feminist movement was an essential precondition to the growth of feminist literature, criticism, and women's studies, which focused at the beginning almost entirely upon investigations of literature" (Smith 170)." (Smith 170).

**Paraphrasing:** Paraphrase material by condensing it in your own words. The parentheses always come before the punctuation at the end of the sentence.

Example: The feminist movement had to occur before the establishment of feminist literature and criticism, as well as women's studies (Smith 170).

## How to Make Verbal Citations in Presentations

Use verbal citations in a speech to establish the credibility of the information presented. The audience should be assured that the information comes from a reliable source which can be looked up later by an interested listener.

When presenting a direct quote or paraphrased information, verbally cite the source. At the very least, state the person or organization who produced the information. Include the date the information was published, the credentials of the person being quoted, and the name of the publication or program in which the information appeared if you feel your audience needs this information.

**Example:** In a September 2009 speech to Congress, President Obama stated, "It has now been nearly a century since Theodore Roosevelt first called for health care reform. And ever since, nearly every President and Congress, whether Democrat or Republican, has attempted to meet this challenge in some way."

## Using a Signal Phrase for Quoting and Paraphrasing

Another way to quote or paraphrase is to use a "signal phrase" that indicates who is speaking. Signal phrases include "according to \_\_\_," "\_\_\_ argues," and "\_\_\_ indicates." When you state the name of the author before the quotation or paraphrased material, you don't have to include their last name in the parenthetical citation, just the page number.

**Example:** Barbara Smith reminds us in her well-known article, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," that when "speaking about the current situation of Black women writers, it is important to remember that the existence of a feminist movement was an essential precondition to the growth of feminist literature, criticism, and women's studies, which focused at the beginning almost entirely upon investigations of literature" (170).

## Other MLA Resources

### Hoonuit Video Guide to MLA Citation

This guide is a complete, self-paced video walkthrough of MLA style that also demonstrates how to manage citation using tools in Microsoft Word.

1. Go to iRaider: <https://portal.mountunion.edu>
2. Click on "Hoonuit" on the sidebar.
3. Log in with your Mount Union username and password.
4. Click on "Search" on the top tab and then type in what you wish to search, such as "MLA Style."

### Purdue Owl

<https://owl.purdue.edu>

### MLA Handbook

Available at the DWOC and Library

## Setting up the Works Cited Page

The works cited list is your bibliography; it includes only the sources that you cite parenthetically in your paper, not things you read and did not use. It is alphabetized by author's last name and begins on a fresh sheet of paper at the end of your paper. The first line of the entry is flush with the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented half an inch. Double space the entire list with no extra spaces in between entries. The citations in your parenthetical references will lead readers to this list to find the sources that interest them.

### Books

#### Single author

Wilson, Frank R. *The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture*. Pantheon, 1998.

#### Two or More Authors

Marquart, James W., Sheldon Ekland Olson, and Jonathan R. Sorensen. *The Rope, the Chair, and The Needle: Capital Punishment in Texas, 1923-1990*. U of Texas P, 1994.

#### Work in an Anthology or Edited Collection

More, Hannah. "The Black Slave Trade: A Poem." *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era*. Ed. Paula R. Feldman. Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. 472-82. Print.

#### Edition of a Book

Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 3rd ed. Pearson/Longman, 2004.

#### Editor, Translator, or Compiler Instead of Author

Hill, Charles A. and Marguerite Helmers, eds. *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.

### Poem or Short Story

Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl." *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*. Ed. Tobias Wolff. Vintage, 1994. 306-307.

### Articles in Periodicals

#### Print Journal Article

Baum, Rosalie Murphy. "Alcoholism and Family Abuse in Maggie and The Bluest Eye." *Mosaic* 19.3 (1986): 91-105.

#### Print Magazine Article

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. "The Creative Personality." *Psychology Today* July-Aug. 1996: 36-40.

#### Print Newspaper Article

Trachtenberg, Jeffrey A. "What's in a Movie Soundtrack? Catchy Tunes and Big Business." *Wall Street Journal* 1 Aug. 1994, eastern ed.: B1.

### Electronic Sources

If the source has a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) or permalink, use that instead of a URL. If you must use URLs, make sure that you copy the entire URL, even if it is long. Lastly, the second date after "web" indicates the date of accessing the site.

#### Full-text Journal Article a Library Database

Smith, Danielle. "The Happiness Code." *Journal of Happiness Research*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2017, pp. 173-96. ProQuest, doi:10.1017/D001856X0605665. Accessed 30 April 2018.

For sources on the public web, pay close attention to the "container." For example, the "container" of a web page is the entire website.

#### Page on a Website

"The MLA Quick Guide." *The Digital, Written and Oral Communication Studio*. www.dwoc.mountunion.edu/mla. Accessed 25 August 2018.

#### Online-only Image

Smith, Jessica. "Snowflakes in the Desert." *Image Foundary*, 3 August 2016, www.imagefoundary.tumblr.com.

### Text Citation in PowerPoint or other Presentation Aids

You should verbally cite sources used in your presentation, but you also should also cite sources using parenthetical citation on slides.

If you use an image, video clip, or other media, a convenient and economical way to cite is to use a figure and parenthetical citation. Create a small text box beneath your media, type "Fig. 1." for your first figure, then provide a typical parenthetical citation.

At the end of the presentation, create a works cited page that lists all citations, including images or other media on the last slide. A handout that contains your works cited page is also highly recommended, especially in situations where your presentation won't be turned in or be made available online. This allows interested audience members to follow up on your sources.