

Short Guide to the MLA Style of Bibliographic Citation

The rules for citing some of the most commonly referenced source types you are likely to encounter are given below. Some of the source types included: a book, a newspaper article, a magazine article, a journal article, a Web page, and a few non-print sources.

This list of rules, however, is by no means comprehensive. Students should refer to the Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. This book is always on hand in the library in the Ready Reference area, call number R 808.05/M72MH7. Some of the examples of citations in the following pages are taken from this source. Also, please consult: Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 3rd ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008. This book too is located on the Ready Reference shelves with call number R 808.05/M72MS4.

I. NONPERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS IN TRADITIONAL PRINT MEDIA

1. A book by a single author:

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. New York: Arthur A.

Levine, 2005. Print.

There are four main divisions of the citation:

Author's name. *Title of the Book*. Publication information. Medium of publication consulted (i.e. Print).

The author's name is given last name first. If there is more than one author, see below. Take the name of the author as it appears on the title page of the book. Never abbreviate a name given in full on the title page or catalog record. Omit honorary titles such as "Sir", "Saint", or "Lady", or affiliations or degrees following names. Keep suffixes such as in "Rockefeller, John D., IV" or "Rust, Arthur George, Jr."

Give the full title of the book--that is, the main title, followed by a colon and the subtitle. All significant words must be capitalized. The entire title should be given in italics, and end with a period. If the title of the book ends with a question mark, or an exclamation point, then keep that punctuation.

Give the city of publication (or the first city named where there is more than one) as found on the title page or on the back of the title page of the book. If there is no place of publication named in the book, use the abbreviation n.p. (no place). The publisher's name can be shortened (e.g., Princeton UP for Princeton University Press; U of California P for University of California Press; Scholastic for Scholastic Press; Norton for W.W.Norton & Co., etc.) If you cannot find a publisher's name, use the abbreviation n.p. (no publisher). The date of publication is found on the title page or on the back of the title page. If no publication date is given use the most recent copyright date. If no date can be found anywhere, use the designation n.d.

Finally, give the media type that you consulted, in this case "Print."

2. A book by two or three authors:

For two or three authors, give the authors' names in the order in which they are listed on the title page of the book. Reverse the first author's name, and give the other authors' names in normal form with a comma and "and" before the last author's name:

Thus:

Hutcheon, Linda, and Michael Hutcheon. *Bodily Charm: Living Opera*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2000. Print.

Bradley, Fern Marshall, Barbara W. Ellis, and Ellen Phillips, eds. *Rodale's*

Ultimate Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening: The Indispensable Green

Resource for Every Gardener. New York: Rodale, 2009. Print.

Note: in the example above, the persons responsible for the book were identified on the title page as editors. In the absence of a real author, editors and compilers are treated the same as authors in the MLA citation, with the designation "ed." or "eds.," "comp." etc. added to clarify their role. Often encyclopedias are produced under editorial direction, but the editors are not mentioned in the citation if the encyclopedia is a well-known one, and the first element of the citation in this case would be the title. However, for a specialized encyclopedia such as in the

example directly above, the three editors found on the title page are included as the first element of the citation.

3. A book by more than three authors:

If there are more than three authors, you may name only the first and add *et al.* (and others), or you may list all the authors named on the title page in the order they are found there.

4. A book by a corporate author:

When you cannot find an individual author or authors (or editors, etc.) named on the title page of the book, the book may have been written by a group, committee, association, company, or commission that assumes responsibility for the content and functions as “author”. This is called a “corporate author” and such a book usually presents content that directly relates to the corporate body. Here is an obvious example:

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of*

Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of

America, 2009. Print.

Such a corporate author will normally be the publisher as well.

5. Book with an edition statement:

Give the edition statement (not in italics) immediately following the title, and before the place of publication, as in the example above. If no mention of an edition is found on the title page, or back of the title page, you may assume the book is the first edition. If the book is a first edition, normally you would not state that fact. An edition statement may not necessarily be numerical, for example “rev. and expanded ed.”, and in this case use the language you found in the book itself to make the edition statement.

6. Book with many contributions by different authors produced under the direction of an editor:

In this category you will find encyclopedias and other reference works, anthologies, collections of scholarly essays, literary works, excerpts, etc. presented with commentary and organized around a theme by an editor.

Thus, when citing such a work **as a whole** (not individual contributions) use the following format:

Alfino, Mark, John S. Caputo, and Robin Wynyard, eds. *McDonaldization Revisited: Critical Essays on Consumer Culture*. Westport: Praeger, 1998. Print.

7. Citing an individual work within a larger collection (or anthology):

More often than not, you will be citing a particular author's contribution or essay within the edited work, not the entire book. To do this, start with the author of the essay or chapter; then put the title of the essay in double quotation marks; then place the title of the entire book along with its editor(s) after that. Next give the publication information of the entire book followed by the inclusive page numbers of the individual section and finally the media type consulted (Print).

Jeannot, Thomas M. "The McCommodification of Society: Rationalization and Critical Theory." *McDonaldization Revisited: Critical Essays on Consumer Culture*. Ed. Mark Alfino, John S. Caputo, and Robin Wynyard. Westport: Praeger, 1998. 121-142. Print.

Note: in the example above, "Ed." means "Edited by", *not* "editors".

7.a. Citing an article in a well-known encyclopedia or other reference work:

"Africa." *The World Book Encyclopedia*. 2005 ed. Print.

Notice that there was no author found for this article, so the citation begins with the title of the article. The name of the encyclopedia is given in italics. Editors of the encyclopedia are not mentioned. Only the year and edition are listed, followed by the media designation. Volume and page numbers are omitted because the alphabetic arrangement of articles within the encyclopedia makes finding the articles not problematic.

“Sierra Leone.” *Time Almanac 2009*. Print.

The example above is a further reduction in the amount of description required for a citation to an article in a common reference book, an almanac. In this case the edition (year) is incorporated in the title itself, as found on the title page.

II. PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS IN TRADITIONAL PRINT MEDIA

1. Article from a printed newspaper:

Wade, Nicholas. “New Glimpses of Life’s Puzzling Origins.” *New York Times* 16
June 2009, late ed.: D1+ Print.

If a newspaper article has a named author, then start the citation with author; if not, start with article title. The title of the article is put in double quotation marks. The name of the newspaper comes next in italics (the definite article “the” is omitted—*New York Times*, **not** *The New York Times*) then the date in order of day month year. The date is followed by a comma and the edition of the newspaper in hand, followed by a colon and the section/page number. Note that most articles start on a given page and continue on a later page or pages; this is indicated by a “+” following the first page number. And finally, the indication of the media type consulted (Print).

Note: many newspapers are published in more than one edition; be careful to specify the edition of the newspaper you consulted.

Note: there is no punctuation between the title of the newspaper and the date.

2. Article from a printed magazine:

You need to be able to distinguish a magazine from a journal: there are a number of telling differences. In the broadest terms, a magazine presents articles written by non-specialists for the lay public, in order to inform, entertain, and generate income from advertisements; whereas a journal contains scientific/scholarly research in a particular academic discipline written for professionals in that field, and not written for the popular interest.

Here is an example of an article citation from a typical popular magazine:

Sarfaraz, Babak. "Iran's New Revolutionaries." *Nation* 13 July 2009: 4-6. Print.

Comment: For multiple authors, use the same rule as for authors of books. The article title is put in double quotation marks and all the important words are capitalized. The title of the magazine is italicized, and the definite article is omitted (i.e., **not** *The Nation*). The date is given as day month year, or as month or months and year, as found in the magazine. **Do not give volume or issue numbers, even if found in the source.**

3. Article from a printed journal

You must determine whether the article you are choosing is from a "scholarly journal" in order to cite it properly in MLA style. It is likely the word "journal" will appear somewhere in the title of such a periodical; however, it may not. A librarian will be glad to help you with this determination.

A journal is published in consecutively numbered issues, at a stated frequency throughout the calendar, or often the academic year. All frequencies are encountered: from once a week, once every two weeks, once a month, once every two months, or perhaps quarterly (identified as fall, winter, spring, and summer issues.)

Each yearly run of issues is called a volume of the journal, and each such volume is numbered consecutively. For example, if a given journal was started out in 1993 as volume 1, then 1994 would be volume 2, and so on.

To find the volume number, issue number, date of issue, and pagination of a scholarly journal you must examine the journal itself. More about pagination:

It is important in a journal! Usually, the page numbering runs continuously throughout all the issues of a volume. Given that issue number 1 of a given year started on page 1 and ended on page 145; then the next issue would start at page 146, and so on through all the issues of the volume.

However, many journals start page numbering at page 1 for each issue of a volume. This is called separate pagination.

For all journal citations it is the MLA rule to include both volume and issue numbers as well as the year of publication.

Here is the general scheme for a citation of an article from a journal:

Author(s) given first, followed by title of article in double quotation marks, with each important word capitalized; then the title of the journal, italicized. Give the volume number, a period, followed by the issue number if available, then the year

in parentheses, a colon, and the inclusive pages. Lastly give the medium of publication consulted (Print).

Here is an example:

Biedzynski, James. "Iranian Controversies." *Journal of Third World Studies* 26.1 (2009): 193-195. Print.

Comments: **Unlike magazine articles, always give volume and issue number for a journal article.** Never use "vol." when giving volume number, just the number, followed by a period, and the issue number.

Do **not** use "p." to indicate page numbers.

Only give the year of publication, do not give months or days or seasons (i.e. spring, summer, fall, winter) of issue even if found in the source.

III. PUBLICATIONS FOUND ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

1. Simple non-periodical text or article found on the Web that has not been previously published as a printed work:

Information for citing a Web page text or article (NOT a magazine, journal, newspaper, etc.) is taken from a careful examination of the Web site, asking various critical questions such as "who is responsible for this article?" and "who owns this website, and what are their credentials?"

The following example shows how to cite a simple text that was found on the Web site of the Lincoln Park Zoo giving some facts about the Amur tiger.

"Fact Sheet: Amur Tiger." *Lincoln Park Zoo*. Chicago. Web. 15 July 2009.

The title of the article is placed in double quotation marks, and in this case no author could be found. If an author had been found for the article in question, the author's name would be in the front position, before title, last name first. The Lincoln Park Zoo is the name of the Web site and also its publisher, and takes full responsibility for the article: it is given in italics. The place, Chicago, is added as part of the publication information. If the article had a date of publication or a date when the page was updated, it would follow the place of publication after a comma. Then the medium of publication is given: "Web". Lastly, the date of access is given as day month year. **The Web address or URL of the Web page**

that is being referenced is generally omitted, unless the source cannot be located without it, or if your instructor requires it. If the URL is needed, place it as the last element of the citation, enclosed within angle brackets, and end with a period:

"Fact Sheet: Amur Tiger." *Lincoln Park Zoo*. Chicago. Web. 15 July 2009.

<<http://www.lpzoo.org/factsheet.php?contentID=185>>.

2. An online article taken from the Web site of a newspaper or magazine:

"The Scientists Speak." Editorial. *New York Times*. New York Times, 20 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.

Another example, taken from a magazine's Web site:

Tyre, Peg. "Standardized Tests in College?" *Newsweek*. Newsweek, 16 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.

Compare the above citations with those of an article found in the print versions of a newspaper or magazine, or in an online version of a paper original as found in a subscription database such as *Custom Newspapers*.

3. An article from an online encyclopedia:

"de Kooning, Willem." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008. Web. 15 May 2008.

In the above example, no author was found for the article titled "de Kooning, Willem", so the title becomes the first element of the citation.

4. A work of art (e.g. painting) reproduced on the Web:

Currin, John. *Blond Angel*. 2001. Indianapolis Museum of Art. *IMA: It's My Art*.

Web. 9 May 2007.

In the above example, the painter's name comes first, reversed, followed by the title of the painting, italicized, the date of the painting, and the location (i.e., the museum). Following this is the name of the Web site where the digitized image was found, the medium of publication consulted (Web), and the date of access given as day month year.

5. A map found on the Web:

"Maplewood, New Jersey." Map. *Google Maps*. Google, 15 May 2008. Web. 15

May 2008.

In the above example, the date of publication and the date of access are identical.

6. An online version of a printed book (i.e. an ebook)

The following is an example of an ebook that originally appeared in print, and which was found in Ebrary, an online subscription database.

Henley, David. *Clayworks in Art Therapy: Plying the Sacred Circle*. Philadelphia:

Jessica Kingsley, 2002. *Ebrary*. Web. 17 June 2009.

Another example of a printed book scanned for electronic access by Google:

Child, L. Maria, ed. *The Freedmen's Book*. Boston, 1866. *Google Book Search*.

Web. 15 May 2008.

For books published before 1900, you do not need to include the name of the publisher.

7. A scholarly journal only existing in electronic form on the Web:

Many journals retrieved on the Web have their print counterparts; however, many do not. Those existing only in the Web format often have no page numbers or page numbers that do not carry through the entire issue. This is indicated by the abbreviation “n. pag.” Volume and issue numbers, however, are most often found in Web journals.

Ouellette, Marc. “Theories, Memories, Bodies, and Artists.” Editorial.

Reconstruction 7.4 (2007): n. pag. Web. 27 July 2009.

All months are abbreviated except for May, June and July.

8. A periodical publication in an online subscription database (such as Academic Search Complete or ProQuest Platinum Periodicals):

Begin the citation as you would for a print magazine, newspaper or journal, but drop the medium of original publication (Print). Give inclusive page numbers when available; when not available, use the first page number with a plus sign, or use the abbreviation “n. pag.” in the case that there is no page numbering at all. Then provide the title of the database in italics, the medium of publication consulted (Web), and the date of access (day month year).

Schiermeier, Quirin. “Fishy Predator Gets its Teeth into Ancient Climate History.”

Nature 428.6986 (2004): 883. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 12 June 2009.

Stone, Brad, and Noam Cohen. “Social Networks Spread Iranian Defiance

Online.” *New York Times* 16 June 2009, late ed.: A11+. *Custom Newspapers*. Web. 17 June 2009.

Bahari, Maziar. "Iran Turns Against Its President." *Newsweek* 15 June 2009:
n.pag. *ProQuest Platinum Periodicals*. Web. 17 June 2009.

Please note: An article taken from a Web site sponsored by a magazine or newspaper is treated slightly differently. See example on p. 8.

IV. PARENTHETICAL IN-TEXT CITATIONS

When you refer in the body of your research paper to a source listed on your works cited page, you need only include the author and page within parentheses after a quoted passage or to document an idea which is found in the work which is not your own.

"In the last few years, however, four surprising advances have renewed confidence that a terrestrial explanation for life's origins will eventually emerge" (Wade D1).

In the above example, the passage is directly quoted from the article by Wade.

Or, you may introduce the author's idea by naming the author and work in your text, and just give the page number in parentheses, thus:

Nicholas Wade, in a *New York Times* article of 16 June, 2009, expresses his view that new evidence may support a theory of terrestrial origin of life from chemical processes (D1).

In the above illustration, no direct word-for-word quotation is given. The referenced work by Nicholas Wade is mentioned in your introductory text, with only the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

In both illustrations above, you will give the complete citation in your list of works cited at the end of your paper, thus:

Wade, Nicholas. "New Glimpses of Life's Puzzling Origins." *New York Times* 16
June 2009, late ed.: D1+ Print.

A finished works cited page in MLA style:

Works Cited

- Bahari, Maziar. "Iran Turns Against Its President." *Newsweek* 15 June 2009: n.pag. *ProQuest Platinum Periodicals*. Web. 17 June 2009.
- Henley, David. *Clayworks in Art Therapy: Plying the Sacred Circle*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley, 2002. *Ebrary*. Web. 17 June 2009.
- Jeannot, Thomas M. "The McCommodification of Society: Rationalization and Critical Theory." *McDonaldization Revisited: Critical Essays on Consumer Culture*. Ed. Mark Alfino, John S. Caputo, and Robin Wynyard. Westport: Praeger, 1998. 121-142. Print.
- "Maplewood, New Jersey." Map. *Google Maps*. Google, 15 May 2008. Web. 15 May 2008.
- "The Scientists Speak." Editorial. *New York Times*. New York Times, 20 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.
- Stone, Brad, and Noam Cohen. "Social Networks Spread Iranian Defiance Online." *New York Times* 16 June 2009, late ed.: A11+. *Custom Newspapers*. Web. 17 June 2009.

MLA Formatting rules

- Use line **double spacing** throughout your bibliography.
- **Alphabetize citations** by the first element, whether it is a name, or in some cases, a title.
- When alphabetizing titles, ignore initial article.
- For each citation, the first line is flush with the left margin, and the second and subsequent lines of the citation (if any) are indented five spaces from the left margin. This is called “**Hanging Indention**”, and can be created in Microsoft Word as an option under the Format menu, under Paragraph.
- If you type a URL in Microsoft Word, you will have to “**Remove hyperlink**”, to enable the URL to display correctly. (Otherwise you will get an unwanted underline).
- Make single space after all final punctuation.