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MLA Style 9th Edition Overview

Commonly used in the humanities, the latest edition of the MLA Handbook no longer emphasizes the publication format, relying instead on the following core elements and simplified punctuation between elements:

- Author.
- Title of source.
- Title of container (the larger whole, e.g., collection, periodical, etc.),
- Other contributors,
- Version,
- Number,
- Publisher,
- Publication date,
- Location (e.g., page number, URL, doi).

To introduce the bibliography, the phrase ‘Works Cited’ should be centered (not in bold or underlined). Acknowledge authors, whose words or ideas you have used, in two places in your essay: in the ‘Works Cited’ section and in the body of the essay via in-text citations.

Formatting Checklist

Below appears a summary of selected highlights relating to the formulation of in-text citations and works cited, as applies to MLA 9th ed. For a comprehensive treatment of these guidelines, refer to the Complete style guide: MLA Handbook, 9th ed., 2021 or to the online version of this handbook. Both the print and online editions of the MLA Handbook, 9th ed., 2021 are available at YorkU Libraries.

In-Text Citations

- Use citations in your prose or in parentheses
- When mentioning authors in prose, use full names, first name(s) and last name(s), the first time mentioned. Use last name(s) only in parentheses.
- Use “and” between two names
- For sources with three or more authors, list only the first author’s name, and replace the additional authors names with “et al.” in parentheses. In prose list all the names or use “and others” or “and colleagues”, instead of “et al.”
• Normally include page numbers (or other location markers, e.g., line numbers, time stamp) in parentheses to indicate a specific part of the work is quoted or paraphrased. Some exceptions to this rule apply including:
  o Works that are only 1-page in length
  o Resources with no pagination (i.e. blog post)
  o Time stamps should be used for quoted/paraphrased video content

Works Cited

• For English titles and subtitles, capitalize all title words (except articles, prepositions and conjunctions when they fall in the middle of a title)
• For French titles and subtitles, capitalize only the first word and all words normally capitalized (e.g., people and places)
• Double-space within and between entries
• Indent the second line of each work (hanging indent)
• Italicize titles

Resource Types

Please note that this guide provides selected examples of commonly used resource types (see list below). For a comprehensive list of resource types, refer to Appendix 2 from the online publication of the MLA Handbook 9th edition.

Books

One author
In-text: (Munro 39)

Two authors
In-text: (Ewen and Coates 30)

Three or more authors
In-text: (Higham et al. 94)

Corporate author (when corporate author is the publisher)
In-text: (OECD 12)

Multiple editions
In-text: (Dickason 102)
Edited book
In-text: (Bloom 117)

Chapter in a book
In-text: (Won 130)

E-book (downloaded)
Citations for downloaded e-books closely resemble those for physical books, but the term "Ebook" or the reader type (i.e. Kindle) is added before the publisher.
In-text: (Fallis 29-30)

E-book (with URL)
For e-books with URLs or DOIs, the format is similar to those used for webpages, but add the database name before the URL.
In-text: (Goldman 75-80)

Articles

E-journal article (from a database, with a DOI)
In-text: (Heller 42)

E-journal article (from a database, with a URL/permalink)
In-text: (McDonald et al. 386)

Journal article, print
In-text: (Pigott et Kalbach 12)

**Magazine article, print or online**

For a magazine article consulted online, include a URL at the end of the citation. Specific page numbers may not be indicated for online articles but should be cited if available.


In-text: (Gladwell 33)

**Newspaper article, print**


In-text: (Gagnon A11)

**Newspaper article, online**


In-text: (Brody)

**Course Materials**

**Online lecture slides (eClass, Canvas, etc.)**

You can add a supplemental element at the end of an entry to indicate a format or file type, such as: Lecture, PDF download, *PowerPoint* presentation, Slides, Video recording, etc.


In-text: (“Lecture 1”, slide 6)

**Course kit**


In-text: (Vernon 137)

**Web Pages**

**Entire website**


In-text Citation: (*Occupy Toronto*)
Web page, authored


In-text: (Northrup)

Web page, no author or date

An access date for an online work should generally be provided if the work lacks a publication date or if you suspect that the work has been altered or removed.


In-text: (“Our ArQuives”)

Blog post


In-text: (Bowen 2021)

Encyclopedias

Print


In-text: (“Conflict Theory” 135)

Online


In-text: (Peters)

Wikipedia

For Wikipedia, use the URL for the archived version of the page. You can find it by selecting the “view history” tab and clicking on the most recent date.


In-text: (“Lester B. Pearson”)

Film & Media

In-text citations for film and media will include the title of the work or shortened version of it, and where referring to a specific segment of a film or TV episode, the time range of relevance in the format hour: minutes: seconds, as
shown below.

**Film**
In-text: (*Force of Nature* 00:03:16-17)

**TV series**
*Corner Gas: Season Two.* Created by Brent Butt, PrairiePants Productions, 2005.
In-text: (*Corner Gas*)

**TV series episode**
In-text: (“World’s Biggest Thing” 00:15:00-00:17:22)

**YouTube video**
In-text: (“Three Degrees” 00:07:41-8:45).

**Digital image**
In-text: (Morey)

**Poetry & Plays**

**Poem**
In-text: (Oliver)

In-text: (Oliver 82)

**Poetry Citations: Notes**
1. For short poems (a page or less), do not cite any number in the text.
2. For poems longer than a page and which also use line numbers or other parts, cite the line numbers or other parts, instead of page numbers.
Use the form (line 57) or (lines 119–20) in the first citation. Do not use the label “line” or “lines” in subsequent citations.
If other parts (books, etc.) are numbered as well as lines, combine the numbers without a label. For example, (9.19) for book 9, line 19.
3. If the poem is longer than a page but does not use line numbers or other parts, cite page numbers if available.

Play, stand-alone
If you are citing a published stand-alone play, you would use the same format as a book or e-book, as shown in this example for a print play:

In-text: (Friel 23-25)

Play, in collection or anthology
In-text: (Jung 24)

Government Documents
Government publications emanate from many sources but in general can be treated like other sources written by an organization:

- If there are no personal author(s), use the government agency as it appears in the source as a corporate author. Cite as the author the government agency that issued the document, listing the entities from largest to smallest: state the name of the government first, followed by the name of the agency or agencies. Alphabetize the agency as it appears in the document and do not reverse the name (for example, use: United Nations, not Nations, United).
- If the agency has many component parts, you can truncate it, keeping only the name of the primary agency (for example: United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics can be shortened to just: United States Department of Justice).
- At the end of entries for legislative documents, provide as much additional information as possible, such as the number and session of Parliament, the chamber (Senate or House of Commons), and the type and number of the publication.

Authored, print
In-text: (Hurley and Wherrett 3)
Government report, online


In-text: (Canada, Office of the Auditor General 13)

Government agency report, online


In-text: (Canada Council for the Arts 2011)

Legislative bill, statute, or regulation, online


In-text: (United States Congress, House)

Indirect Sources

One author quotes another

In a 2010 book by K. Anderson, you find a quote taken from Karl Marx’ Collected Works (1975). In the body of your essay, cite both authors, indicating the author of the original quote (Marx) in your sentence, and the author in whose work you found the quote (Anderson), in an in-text citation. In the Works Cited list, cite only the author in whose secondary source you found the quote (Anderson).

Marx astutely predicted that the railroad would “become the forerunner of modern industry” (qtd. in Anderson 22).

For more information on how to cite all types of sources using MLA style, see:

Complete style guide: MLA Handbook, 9th ed., 2021 [print and online versions]