MLA DOCUMENTATION STYLE: WORKS CITED PAGE

Many humanities disciplines use Modern Language Association (MLA) style to cite sources. MLA-style documents include brief in-text citations in combination with a detailed listing of sources in a separate Works Cited page at the end of a document. (See quicktip on MLA in-text citations). Citations are designed to answer two questions: how can the source be found, and who is responsible for its ideas? The 8th edition of the MLA Handbook dramatically revised citation guidelines to better answer these questions for increasingly complex electronic sources. Each MLA citation will now include some or all of the following core elements, in the listed order, followed by the punctuation indicated. Citations always end with a period.

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

Containers are larger works in which your source can be found (chapter in a book, article in a journal, page [name, not URL] on a website). Titles of containers are usually in italics. (Shorter works may be in quotation marks). Some sources have no container (ex: books); some have a second container (ex: JSTOR, Netflix). See the next page for more on containers.

Other Contributors are introduced with their role (ex: Edited by, Translated by, Performance by.) followed by their name (First Last). Some contributors must be cited (editors, directors). Other contributors are optional (ex: performers, costume directors, screenwriters) and should be included if they are relevant to your writing.

Version is used to indicate which version of a work was consulted (ex: King James Version, Kindle ed., 3rd ed., revised ed.)

Number (ex: vol. 6, no. 2; season 8, episode 5) identifies a numbered work in a serial or multivolume publication (ex: journal article, TV episode, encyclopedia volume).

Publisher identifies the person or organization that makes the source available to the public (ex: professional organization, publisher, museum). Do not repeat the publisher's name if it appears elsewhere in the citation.

Publication date may include day, month and year (ex: 25 Jan. 1998) depending on the source. Some sources have more than one date (ex: translation, rebroadcast of a TV episode). Use the date most relevant to your work.

Location indicates where to find cited information (ex: page numbers of a journal article, URL, DOI, or a physical location like a museum). Do not include https:// when citing a URL. Use a DOI or permalink instead of a long URL if available.
Example of a source with no container
When composing a citation, include any elements that are available for the source, and skip elements that are not available. Always put a period at the end of the citation. In this example you will notice there is no author, container, version, number or location. These elements can simply be omitted from the citation. Because there is no author, the citation begins with the title. Because there is no location, the date is followed by a period because it is at the end of the citation.


Example of a source with one container
This source has a container, meaning that the source is found within another larger source: in this case a chapter (source) within an edited volume (container). Many sources have containers such as articles (source) within a journal (container) or pages (source) within a website (container). Note that this source contains all of the main elements of a citation.


Example of a source with more than one container
This source has a second container, which means that the source (article) is nested within a larger source (journal) nested within an even larger source (database). Second containers are most common with sources accessed electronically or online. All elements of the first container are listed followed by a period. Then all the elements available for the second container (in this case the title and the location) are included in the listed order, followed by the punctuation indicated. Put a period after noting all available information for the second container.

This citation also contains optional “additional information,” which always follows the period at the end of the main citation. MLA encourages including the accessed date for any electronic sources as additional information.


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8. Date.
9. Location.

* 2nd Container.
* Additional information.