MLA Style Guide

Part of doing research or using library and information resources is to distinguish between what you create or already knew and what you borrow or learned in your research. According to the MLA Handbook, the reasons for citing your sources “include demonstrating the thoroughness of the writer’s research, giving credit to original sources, and ensuring that readers can find the sources consulted in order to make their own conclusions about the writer’s argument” (8th ed., p. 4). In order to avoid plagiarism, you must indicate the sources that you used, but also what you derived from each source, and where in the work you found the material. Plagiarism according to Merriam–Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary is defined as committing “literary theft” and is considered “always a moral and ethical offense” (MLA Handbook 8th ed., p. 7).

Rules for Parenthetical Citations:

First, you must indicate that you have borrowed something from a source. This is called Parenthetical Citation. Second, it must point directly to your Works Cited. Even if you paraphrase all the words, you must give credit to the source. If you mention the author (or the title if no author) in the text, you only need to Include the page number, if available, in parenthesis after the information (in quotations or rephrased) and before the period. If you do not mention the author (or title) in the text, you must include both the author's last name (or the title's first word) and the page number, if available, in parenthesis. If no author, then you use the first words of the title. If you have indented the quote, the citation follows the period.

Examples: Robert Townsend stated that "blah, blah, blah" (10). -- OR-- It was stated that "blah, blah, blah" (Townsend 10). If no author: It was stated that: blah blah blah blah. (Tales of History 5-6).

Rules for MLA Works Cited

- List all sources in a Works Cited Sheet in alphabetical order by author's last name or, if no author, by title, but ignore leading articles (A, An, or The) when you put it alphabetical by title, e.g. The Handmaid's Tale would be alphabetically under Handmaid's.
- Capitalize all significant words in the title and subtitle.
- Italicize all titles of books, periodicals, films and media items, databases, and web sites.
- If the date is not listed, use n.d.; if the page is not listed, use n. pag.; if no publisher, use N. p.
- The URL of a web source is needed for a direct web site but is optional for something obtained from an online database.
- Use correct punctuation (periods, commas, semi-colons) and end each citation with a period.
- Indent the second and any subsequent line five spaces.
- If you’re citing a source used within another source (e.g. an essay in book or source cited in another source), first cite the original source and then add the citation for the source it is in.

Books (in Print and eBooks from an electronic resource):


Essays/Chapters/Criticism in Books with or without Editor (in print or from an electronic resource):

Basic Form -- Author of Essay Name. "Title of Essay." Title of the Book, edited by and Editor(s) Name(s), Publisher, Publication date, p. or pp. and page number(s). If electronic, add: Title of Electronic Resource (italicized).


**Magazine and Newspaper Articles (print or from an electronic resource):**

**Basic Form --**

Author Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, date of issue, p. or pp. and page(s) (or section and page for newspaper). OR *Title of Electronic Resource (italicized).* [NOTE: date of access is optional].

**Examples --**


**Scholarly Articles (including in an anthology or literary criticism) and in print or from an electronic resource:**

**Basic Form --**

Author Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, vol. and volume number, no. and issue number, date of issue, p. or pp. for page or pages, *Title of Electronic Resource (italicized).* [Note: URL or doi is optional].

**Examples --**


**DVDs, Videocassettes, Films, Media on Demand, and YouTube:**

**Basic Form --**

*Title* (italicized). Directed by followed by director's name, performances by followed by names of performers. Other relevant roles followed by names. Original copyright year. Distributor, Year. *Title of Electronic Resource or Web site*.

Note: If you are citing the contribution of a particular individual (director, performer, writer), begin with his/her name.

**Examples --**


**Web Sites:**

**Basic Form --**

Author (if any). "Title of page" (if part of a larger site). *Title of Web Site* (italicized). Publisher or sponsor of web site (or N.p.), Date of publication or update (or n. d.). URL or DOI. Access Date.

**Examples --**


From: *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. MLA, 2016. A copy is kept at the library reference desk. The MLA web site is http://www.mla.org/. Most electronic resources provide help with citing, but double-check that it is correct. The following web sites also help with citing: KnightCite: http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite; Bedford/St. Martin's: http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc; and University of Georgia: http://www.libs.uga.edu/researchcentral/writing/guides.html/

*Vinta M. Oviatt, OCC Library (2/17)*