MLA 8th Edition Formatting and Style Guide

Purdue OWL Staff
Brought to you in cooperation with the Purdue Online Writing Lab
MLA (Modern Language Association) Style formatting is often used in various humanities disciplines.

In addition to the handbook, MLA also offers The MLA Style Center, a website that provides additional instruction and resources for writing and formatting academic papers. [https://style.mla.org/](https://style.mla.org/)
MLA regulates:

- document format
- in-text citations
- works-cited list
Basic rule for any formatting style:

Always
Follow your instructor’s guidelines
An MLA Style paper should:

- Be typed on white 8.5“ x 11“ paper
- Double-space everything
- Use 12 pt. Times New Roman (or similar) font
- Leave only one space after punctuation
- Set all margins to 1 inch on all sides
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch
An MLA Style paper should:

- Have a header with page numbers located in the upper right-hand corner
- Use italics for titles
- Place endnotes on a separate page before the list of works cited
The first page of an MLA Style paper will:

- Have no title page
- Double space everything
- List your name, your instructor's name, the course, and date in the upper left-hand corner
- Center the paper title (use standard caps but no underlining, italics, quote marks, or bold typeface)
- Create a header in the upper right corner at half inch from the top and one inch from the right of the page (list your last name and page number here)
Charlotte Lucas
Dr. J. Austen
ENGL 106
12 October 2008

Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand Ross-Ade Stadium

During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten Conference Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years, and played every game in front of a sold-out crowd. Looking ahead...
An **in-text citation** is a brief reference in your text that indicates the source you consulted.

- It should direct readers to the entry in your works-cited list for that source.
- It should be unobtrusive: provide the citation information without interrupting your own text.
- In general, the in-text citation will be the author’s last name (or abbreviated title) with a page number, enclosed in parentheses.
Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (263). Romantic poetry is characterized by the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (Wordsworth 263). Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Corresponding Works Cited Entry:

For the following print source


If the essay provides a signal word or phrase—usually the author’s last name—the citation does not need to also include that information.

**Examples:**

Humans have been described by Kenneth Burke as “symbol-using animals” (3).

Humans have been described as “symbol-using animals” (Burke 3).
How to cite a work with no known author:

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has “more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change…” (“Impact of Global Warming” 6).

Corresponding Entry in the List of Works Cited:
Authors with Same Last Names

*In-text example:*

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).
Work by Multiple Authors

*In-text Examples:*

Smith et al. argues that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state: “Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights” (Smith et al. 76).

A 2016 study suggests that stricter gun control in the United States will significantly prevent accidental shootings (Strong and Ellis 23).
Multiple Works by the Same Author

*In-text examples:*

Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children (“Too Soon” 38), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child's second and third year (“Hand-Eye Development” 17).

Visual studies, because it is such a new discipline, may be “too easy” (Elkins, “Visual Studies” 63).
Citing the Bible

*In-text example:*

Ezekiel saw “what seemed to be four living creatures,” each with the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle *(New Jerusalem Bible, Ezek. 1:5-10).*
Citing Indirect Sources

*In-text example*

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as “social service centers, and they don't do that well” (qtd. in Weisman 259).

**Multiple Citations**

*In-text example*

*Romeo and Juliet* presents an opposition between two worlds: “the world of the everyday… and the world of romance.” Although the two lovers are part of the world of romance, their language of love nevertheless becomes “fully responsive to the tang of actuality” (Zender 138, 141).
Sources without page numbers

_In-text example:_
Disability activism should work toward “creating a habitable space for all beings” (Garland-Thomson).

_Corresponding works-cited entry:_
Short prose quotations

*In-text example:*

According to some, dreams express “profound aspects of personality” (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express “profound aspects of personality” (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express “profound aspects of personality” (Foulkes 184)?
Quoting four or more lines

In-text example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)
In-text example for **Adding Words**:

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: “some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale” (78).

In-text example for **Omitting Words**:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that “some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale . . . and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs” (78).
Each entry in the list of works cited is made up of core elements given in a specific order.

The core elements should be listed in the order in which they appear here. Each element is followed by the punctuation mark shown here.
Author.

Begin the entry with the author’s last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work. End this element with a period.

Examples:


Title of container,

Examples:


Other contributors,

Examples:


Version,

If a source is listed as an edition or version of a work, include it in your citation.


If a source is part of a numbered sequence, such as a multi-volume book, or journal with both volume and issue numbers, those numbers must be listed in your citation.


Publisher,
The publisher produces or distributes the source to the public. If there is more than one publisher, and they are all relevant to your research, list them in your citation, separated by a forward slash (/).

Examples:
Harris, Charles “Teenie.” Woman in a Paisley Shirt behind Counter in Record Store. Teenie Harris Archive, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, teenie.cmoa.org/interactive/index.html#date08.


Publication date,

The same source may have been published on more than one date, such as an online version of an original source. When the source has more than one date, use the date that is most relevant to your use of it.


Location,

Be as specific as possible in identifying a work’s location.

Examples:


Optional elements:

• Date of original publication:


• City of publication:

Where to Go to Get More Help

Purdue University Writing Lab
Heavilon 226

Web: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/)
Phone: (765) 494-3723
Email: [owl@owl.english.purdue.edu](mailto:owl@owl.english.purdue.edu)
The End

MLA 8th Edition Formatting Style Guide
Brought to you in cooperation with the Purdue Online Writing Lab