

MLA Citations (8th Edition)

The MLA style guide was recently updated to meet the information needs present in the digital age. The new style guide features a universal set of guidelines that can be modified to cite any kind of work. It is important to ensure that you cite ALL the sources that you consult for your assignments, this includes sources that have been quoted, paraphrased or summarized. If you didn't come up with the idea, it needs a citation! Citations are important because they ensure that you are properly attributing ideas to their creator. Citations also allow other people to access and evaluate the sources that you have consulted and included in your assignment.

It is important to include both in-text citations as well as a works cited list. First, we will focus on how to create a works-cited list, which will be included at the end of your assignment.

When thinking about how to cite sources in MLA format, the first things to consider are the core elements of the source. The core elements of a source are:

- (1) Author.
- (2) Title of Source.
- (3) Title of Container,
- (4) Other Contributors,
- (5) Version,
- (6) Number,
- (7) Publisher,
- (8) Publication Date,
- (9) Location.

So for example, if I am referencing this particular Harry Potter book, I can find the following core elements.

Author: Rowling, J.K.

Title of Source:

Title of Container:

Other Contributors:

Version:

Number:

Publisher:

Publication Date:

Location:

Different kinds of sources contain different kinds of information. The goal of MLA citations is to provide the reader with the most complete citation possible. It is okay if your source does not contain all of the core elements. The new addition of the MLA makes it easy to include the information that is available, and exclude the information that is not.

After you have listed your core elements, it is time to compile the elements into a citation. A complete citation may look like the following:

For *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, it would look something like this:

Author. Title of Source. Title of Container, Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication Date, Location.

Once you have finished creating a citation for all of your sources, they must be properly formatted. First, make sure that your list is presented in alphabetical order. Second, make sure that if the citation is more than one line, the second line has been indented five spaces from the left. Lastly, ensure that the entire list is double spaced.

In addition to works cited, your assignment must also contain in-text citations. In-text citations help the reader find the corresponding entry in the works-cited list, and the passage in that source. In MLA style, in-text citations include the first entry in the works cited list, which is usually author, and then a page number. Depending on your sentence structure, you can create an in-text citation in a few different ways:

The author and page number may be at the end of a passage

Or author may be included in the sentence, and the page number listed at the end of the sentence

Need more help?

McMaster Libraries has a MLA style guide that has easy to understand, step-by-step directions to creating citations.

Or how about the Purdue Online Writing Lab MLA style guide?

Prefer reading a hard copy? Come access the 8th edition of the MLA Style Guide at Mills Library.

Need a little more guidance? Ask a librarian!