

MLA Citations

Different disciplines use different citation styles. Right now, I'm going to talk about MLA, which is usually used in the humanities.

Citations are an important part of writing a scholarly paper. You need to cite so that you aren't plagiarizing other people's ideas, and so that your readers can locate and evaluate the sources you used to write your paper.

Citations are two pieces: you need an in-text citation, and a reference list.

First, I'll talk about in-text.

For in-text citations, MLA uses the author-page method.

The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase.

The page numbers should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

Here are some examples.

All sources that are cited in the text must appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

For your reference list, your citation should follow this basic format:

Last name comma First name period, Title of Book italicized, City of Publication colon, Publisher comma, Year of Publication period, Medium of Publication period.

For articles, it should follow this format:

Author period, Title of Article in quotations, Title of Journal italicized, Volume period, Issue, Year in parentheses, colon pages period, Medium of publication period.

Depending on the kind of article and the format, each citation will require slightly different information – you'll need to refer to a good style guide to make sure you are citing correctly.

Purdue OWL has an online style guide that's comprehensive, easy to use, and easy to access.

MLA has a website where they answer commonly asked questions.

The library also has style guides, available here on our website.

You can also get a physical copy of a style guide.

Try to use the same style guide consistently.

Citing is easy once you can fit all the pieces together. The more you do of it, the easier it will be!
Happy citing!