MLA Citation Style

This guide provides a basic introduction to the MLA citation style. It is based on the 6th edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers published by the Modern Language Association in 2003.

Copies are available at the Vanier Library Reference Desk, in the Webster Library Reference Collection and on 3-hour Reserve (Webster). The call number for the handbook is LB 2369 G53 2003.

The MLA Handbook is generally used for academic writing in the humanities. The handbook itself covers many aspects of research writing including selecting a topic, evaluating sources, taking notes, plagiarism, the mechanics of writing, the format of the research paper as well as the way to cite sources.

This guide provides basic explanations and examples for the most common types of citations used by students. For additional information and examples, refer to the MLA Handbook.

Parenthetical references in the text

Parenthetical documentation allows you to acknowledge a source within your text by providing a reference to exactly where in that source you found the information. The reader can then follow up on the complete reference listed on the Works Cited page at the end of your paper.

- In most cases, providing the author's last name and a page number are sufficient:

  In response to rapid metropolitan expansion, urban renewal projects sought “an order in which more significant kinds of conflict, more complex and intellectually stimulating kinds of disharmony, may take place” (Mumford 485).

- If there are two or three authors, include the last name of each:

  (Winks and Kaiser 176)
  (Choko, Bourassa, and Baril 258-263)

- If there are more than three authors, include the last name of the first author followed by “et al.” without any intervening punctuation:

  (Baldwin et al. 306)

- If the author is mentioned in the text, only the page reference needs to be inserted:

  According to Postman, broadcast news influences the decision-making process (51-63).

Parenthetical documentation is not used for electronic or web documents if there is no pagination.

Further examples and explanations are available in Chapter 6 of the MLA Handbook.

Works Cited

The alphabetical list of works cited that appears at the end of your paper contains more information about all of the sources you’ve cited allowing readers to refer to them, as needed. The main characteristics are:

- The list of Works Cited must be on a new page at the end of your text
- Entries are arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name or by the title if there is no author
- Titles are underlined (not italicized) and all important words should be capitalized
- Entries are double-spaced (for the purposes of this handout, single-spacing is used)

Below are some examples of the most common types of sources including online sources (web and databases).

Book with one author

A review

Television or radio program

Sound recording

Film, videorecording or DVD

Musical composition, published score

Work of art, photographed, in a book

Article from a database
Provide the same information as you would for a printed journal article and add the name of the database, the platform of the database (if applicable), the access provider (Concordia University Libraries), the date of access and the general URL for the database
NOTE - If the article is in HTML only, pagination is not required. However, you can include the start page followed by a hyphen, a space and then a period. If a PDF version is available, provide pagination.


Web page

Internet site

Article in online periodical

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