MLA (8th edition) Citation Guide

While the handbook still gives examples of how to cite sources, it is organized according to the process of documentation, rather than by the sources themselves. This process teaches writers a flexible method that is universally applicable. Once you are familiar with the method, you can use it to document any type of source, for any type of paper, in any field.

Here is an overview of the process:
When deciding how to cite your source, start by consulting the list of core elements. These are the general pieces of information that MLA suggests including in each Works Cited entry. In your citation, the elements should be listed in the following order:

1. Author.
2. Title of source.
3. Title of container,
4. Other contributors,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication date,
9. Location.

(Each element should be followed by the punctuation mark shown with it.)

1. **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.

   

2. **Title of source**
The title of the source should follow the author's name. Depending upon the type of source, it should be listed in italics or quotation marks.

A book should be in italics:

A website should be in italics:
   Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili."

A periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper article) should be in quotation marks:
   

A song or piece of music on an album should be in quotation marks:

"MLA Formatting and Style Guide." Purdue Online Writing Lab, Purdue OWL Staff, The Writing Lab & The Owl at Purdue and Purdue University, 27 January 2017, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/.

*The eighth edition handbook recommends including URLs when citing online sources. For more information, see the “Optional Elements” section below.

3. **Title of container**

Unlike earlier versions, the eighth edition refers to containers, which are the larger wholes in which the source is located. For example, if you want to cite a poem that is listed in a collection of poems, the individual poem is the source, while the larger collection is the container. The title of the container is usually italicized and followed by a comma, since the information that follows next describes the container.


The container may also be a television series, which is made up of episodes.


The container may also be a website, which contains articles, postings, and other works.


In some cases, a container might be within a larger container. You might have read a book of short stories on Google Books, or watched a television series on Netflix. You might have found the electronic version of a journal on JSTOR. It is important to cite these containers within containers so that your readers can find the exact source that you used.


4. **Other contributors**

In addition to the author, there may be other contributors to the source who should be credited, such as editors, illustrators, translators, etc. If their contributions are relevant to your research, or necessary to identify the source, include their names in your documentation.

*Note: In the eighth edition, terms like editor, illustrator, translator, etc., are no longer abbreviated.


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


**6. Number**
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.


**7. 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 (/).


Note: the publisher’s name need not be included in the following sources: periodicals, works published by their author or editor, a Web cite whose title is the same name as its publisher, a Web cite that makes works available but does not actually publish them (such as YouTube, WordPress, or JSTOR).

**8. Publication date**
The same source may have been published on more than one date, such as an online version of an original source. For example, a television series might have aired on a broadcast network on one
date, but released on Netflix on a different date. When the source has more than one date, it is sufficient to use the date that is most relevant to your use of it. If you’re unsure about which date to use, go with the date of the source’s original publication.

In the following example, Mutant Enemy is the primary production company, and “Hush” was released in 1999. This is the way to create a general citation for a television episode.


However, if you are discussing, for example, the historical context in which the episode originally aired, you should cite the full date. Because you are specifying the date of airing, you would then use WB Television Network (rather than Mutant Enemy), because it was the network (rather than the production company) that aired the episode on the date you’re citing.


9. Location
You should be as specific as possible in identifying a work’s location.

An essay in a book, or an article in journal should include page numbers:


The location of an online work should include a URL:


A physical object that you experienced firsthand should identify the place of location:

A Quick Guide

1 All Citations should follow this order of information. Include adaptations if necessary. (Ex. For a photo, you will include photographer instead of author.)
   1. Author.
   2. Title of source.
   3. Title of container,
   4. Other contributors,
   5. Version,
   6. Number,
   7. Publisher,
   8. Publication date,
   9. Location.

2 Citing an Article in a Database
Author's Last name, First name. “Title of the source." Title of the first container, First name Last name of any contributors, Version, Numbers, Publisher, Publication date, Location. Name of Database, URL or DOI.


3 Citing a Website
Author’s Last name, First name. “Title of the Article or Individual Page.” Title of the website, Name of the publisher, Date of publication, URL.


4 Citing a Book (Print)
Author’s Last name, First name. “Title of chapter or section.” Title of the work, translated by or edited by First name Last name, vol. number, City of Publication*, Publisher, Year the book was published, page number(s).


5 Citing a Book (Electronic)
Author's last name, First name. “Title of the chapter or section." Title of the e-book, translated by or edited by First name Last name, vol. number, Publisher, Year of publication, page number(s). Title of the website or database, URL.


6 Film or Video (Viewed Online)
Last name, First name of the creator. “Title of the film or video." Title of the website, role of contributors and their First name Last name, Version, Numbers, Publisher, Publication date, URL.