

CSUDH Library

Introduction to Citation Styles: MLA 9th ed.

Transcript

When you use or present information and ideas from other sources, or analyze sources using direct quotes, citations give credit to the ideas of others and make you a more credible author. Citations can also indicate to your readers that you're writing in an academic genre that provides information to help them find the same sources again!

Citation styles are guidelines and conventions that different disciplines follow to present writing and sources in a consistent way. MLA Style from the Modern Language Association of America, is a common citation style used primarily in arts, humanities, cultural studies, English, and literature.

There are two main components of a citation.

First, when you directly quote or reference another source, include an in-text citation in the body of your paper. In MLA Style, this citation typically includes the author's last name and the page number of a direct quote in parentheses. If there are two authors, use the word "and" between the authors' last names. If there are more than three authors, use the abbreviation et al., which means "and others." If you've already clearly introduced the source earlier in your paper, you can just include the page numbers in parentheses at the end of the direct quote. Then, include a complete citation on the Works Cited page at the end of your paper. Your in-text citations and Works Cited should match.

The core elements for Works Cited include the author, the title of the work, versions or editions of the source, the publisher, the publication date, and the location, which can include page numbers and links. For a Works Cited page, use a hanging indent, and organize your references alphabetically by an author's last name. This helps your readers skim through the list to find a source using the in-text citation. Works Cited citations will vary based on the type of source you're citing and the information available. Use the official handbook or an online citation guide to check which details about the source you should include.

Let's look at one example.

In college, you'll probably be citing some academic journal articles. First, include the last name "comma" first name of the author. If the author uses their middle name or initials, include that too. If there are two authors, use "and" then write out the first name, middle initial (if listed), and last name of the second author in that order. If there are more than three authors, you can just list the first author and use et al. as you would with an in-text

citation. Then, include the title of the article using quotation marks and headline-style capitalization. This means that most words in the title are capitalized, except for “less important” words like a, and, and the. Next, include the name of the academic journal where the article was published in italics. Academic journals publish collections of articles throughout the year. A journal might have a volume for each year and publish a new issue every few months. Use the abbreviation “v-o-l period” and the volume number. If there’s an issue number, add a comma and use the abbreviation “n-o period” and the issue number. Then, include a comma and the year the article was published, and another comma and the page range, using the abbreviation “p-p period.” Formatting citations and your paper can require some attention to detail.

If you’re not sure how to cite a source using MLA Style, ask a librarian!