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BaruchCOLLEGE **WRITING CENTER**

MLA Style Guide

The Modern Language Association (MLA) provides a method for source documentation that is used in most humanities courses.[1] In-text citations give readers information while they are reading and direct readers to the more specific "Works Cited" page at the end of an essay should a reader want to pursue a source further.[2]

How to Create an MLA In-Text Citation[3]

Generally, MLA in-text citation requires an author's name and a page number where the information being cited can be found. **The author's name, and page number, when available, should be provided for any quote or paraphrase**, in the following format:

> Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

> Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

> Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

If within the same paragraph, you are citing the same source twice, but citing from different pages of this source, you may either:[3]

1. Combine multiple page numbers in one citation at the end of the paragraph in the order the citations appeared, as follows:

> (Wordsworth 263, 265).

2. Include the author's name and page number in the first citation, like this:

> (Wordsworth 263)

and then omit the author's name from the second citation (and consecutive mentions), in cases where the author is unambiguous, like this:

> (265).

For the above citation, readers would find the following corresponding Works Cited entry:[4]

> Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. Oxford UP, 1967.

How to Create an MLA Works Cited Page

These guidelines reflect the Eighth Edition of the *MLA Handbook*, published in 2016, which includes several major changes to reference list entries. For more, see https://www.mla.org/MLA-Style/What-s-New-in-the-Eighth-Edition.

As before, the entries you create for your sources are gathered into a list, with the heading "Works Cited." All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text.[5] The list is arranged in alphabetical order by the term that comes first in each entry (usually the author's last name.) Below, you'll find a sample Works Cited list.[6]

Works Cited

Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative

Entrepreneur."

The Atlantic, 28 Dec. 2014, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-

the-artist-and-the-birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/.

Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." *Callaloo,* vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2001, pp.620-26.

@persiankiwi. "We have report of large street battles in east & west of Tehran now –

#Iranelection." *Twitter,* 23 June 2009, 11:15 a.m.,

twitter.com/persiankiwi/status/2298106072.

"Under the Gun." *Pretty Little Liars,* season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013. *Hulu,*

www.hulu.com/watch/511318.

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[5] Russell, Tony, et al. "MLA Works Cited Page: Basic Format." *The Purdue OWL,* Purdue U Writing Lab, 3 Oct. 2013, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/.

[6] *The MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

Note the following important updates, from the Eighth Edition:[7]

The MLA 8th Edition recommends that writers apply a universal set of guidelines to any type of source.

While previously, a writer created an entry by following the MLA's instructions for a source's publication format (book, DVD, Web page, etc.), in the new model, the work's publication format is not considered. **Instead of asking, "How do I cite a book [or DVD or Web page]?" the writer creates an entry by consulting the MLA's list of core elements, which are assembled in the order seen below.** Each element should be followed by the punctuation mark shown unless it is the final element, in which case it should be followed by a period. An element should be omitted if it's not relevant to the work.

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

In the new model, the writer asks, "Who is the author? What is the title?" and so forth—regardless of the nature of the source.[8]

A note on containers: when the source being documented forms a part of a larger whole, the larger whole can be thought of as a container that holds the source (ex: a book that is a collection of essays, a TV series.) A container may be nested in a larger container (ex: a book of essays may be read on *Google Books,* a TV series may be watched on *Netflix*.) It's a good idea to account for all containers that enclose a source; this provides useful info for readers seeking to locate the original.[9]

A note on web sources: The Eighth edition recommends the inclusion of URLs in works-cited list entries (if your instructor prefers that you don't include them, follow his or her instructions.) When giving a URL, copy it in full from your Web browser, but omit http://or https://. (Some publishers assign DOIs, or digital object identifiers, to their online publications. When possible, citing a DOI is preferable to citing a URL.)[10]

To learn more about these and other important updates, visit the MLA's website.

[7] *The MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.
[8] "What's New in the Eighth Edition." *Modern Language Association*, Modern Language Association of America, 2016, www.mla.org/MLA-Style/What-s-New-in-the-Eighth-Edition.
[9] *The MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016, pp. 30-31.
[10] *The MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016, p. 48.