MLA Style for Academic Work (2018-2019)


The Purpose of Citing Sources

1) to give credit to (cite) other people’s ideas, creations, and information (sources) used within your academic work, and
2) to direct your readers to your sources through your Works Cited list at the end of your academic work.

MLA Style

The Modern Language Association of America (MLA) style is only one citation method. Details about this style are found in

- the *MLA Handbook* (8th ed.), available in the MRU Bookstore and at the MRU Library Service Desk, and
- the *MLA Style Center* at [style.mla.org/](http://style.mla.org/) for information on formatting research papers and sample papers in MLA style.

The guiding principles of the *MLA Handbook* (8th ed.) are

- include common features (e.g., author, title) found in most sources in a citation,
- there is more than one correct way to create a citation for a source, and
- citations should be useful for readers by providing enough information to locate the source.

Avoiding Plagiarism: Citation Principles for Academic Work

Within essays, term papers, and any other written assignments (as in all academic work), you must identify (i.e., reference, document, cite) all quotations, paraphrases, ideas, and images from someone else’s work. You must name the original author or source and surround quoted material with quotation marks or set it in a block format as described in this guide. Copying any material and submitting it as your own (plagiarism) is an academic offence. Plagiarism may result in a failing grade on the assignment and, in some cases, expulsion from MRU. For more information, see the Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism and the section on “Plagiarism and Cheating” on page 14 of the MRU Student Conduct Guide.

In-Text Citations: Citing Sources within Your Academic Work

Whenever you use a quotation or summarize or paraphrase someone else’s ideas or research, you must cite the source(s). Your in-text citations and Works Cited list should correlate. In-text citations include two parts:

1) usually the *surname of the author(s)*, but sometimes a title, whichever is the first element in your Works Cited list, and
2) the *page number* (if available or other location indicator), which appears in parentheses (parenthetical citation) after the author’s name if the name is not included in your sentence. **Example:** (Laurence 167)

For more examples of how to incorporate in-text citations into your work, turn to page 2 of this guide.

Citing Short Quotations (four typed lines or fewer in your text)  
(see example on page 2)  

When you incorporate a direct quotation into a sentence, you must surround it with quotation marks and cite its source.

Citing Long Quotations (more than four typed lines in your text)  
(see example on page 2)  

Keep your quotations a brief as possible, but if the quotation extends beyond four lines of type in your text, format it as follows:

- Use a *block format* in which all lines of the quotation are *indented a half inch* from the left margin,
- Do not use quotation marks around the long quotation,
- Generally, the quotation should be *introduced with a complete sentence* followed by a colon, and
- Include a parenthetical citation after the closing punctuation (usually a period).

Citing Paraphrases or Summaries  
(see example on page 2)  

When you put someone else’s information into your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing, you must cite the source.

Citing a Source Found/Cited in Another Source  
(see example on page 2)  

If one of your sources quotes, paraphrases or mentions another source, and you wish to use this information in your work, you must give credit to the original source as well as the source in which you found it.

Whenever possible, try to find the original source.
Sample In-text Citations

**Short Quotation (Author’s name in a sentence)**
Richmond and Smith state that “educational success is a well-established determinant of Aboriginal well-being” (14).

**Short Quotation (Author’s name in a parenthetical citation)**
The authors state that “educational success is a well-established determinant of Aboriginal well-being” (Richmond and Smith 14).

**Long Quotation**
In “Where the World Began,” Margaret Laurence reflects on the influence that her hometown has on how she sees the world:

>A strange place it was, that place where the world began. A place of incredible happenings, splendors and revelations, despairs like multitudinous pits of isolated hells. A place of shadow-spookiness, inhabited by the unknown dead. A place of jubilation and of mourning, horrible and beautiful. It was, in fact, a small prairie town. Because that settlement and that land were my first and for many years my only real knowledge of this planet, in some profound way they remain my world, my way of viewing. (164)

**Paraphrase**
Margaret Laurence writes that her early years of living in a small prairie town shape her understanding of the world (164).

OR The author writes that her early years of living in a small prairie town shape her understanding of the world (Laurence 164).

**Indirect Citation**
A 2010 Auditor General’s report notes improvements in “educational success” among urban Indigenous youth; however, educational success in the non-Indigenous population is significantly outpacing gains made by the Indigenous population (qtd. in Richmond and Smith 1).

Citing Sources with No Page Numbers

- Do not create your own location indicators if none are present. Use only what is visible in the source. (Do not number the pages or unnumbered paragraphs.)
  - Example: (Huang)
- Location indicators other than page numbers may be visible in your sources, particularly in electronic sources. Some common indicators are chapter (ch., chs.), paragraph (par., pars.), section (sec., secs.) or volume (vol., vols.)
  - Example: (Beer and Penfold-Mounce, ch. 2)
- When using the author’s name in a parenthetical citation, place a comma after the name, followed by the location indicator.
  - Example: (Grassy Narrows First Nation Youth, 00:01:32)

Citing Poetry

**Short Quotations** (see example on page 3)

- Up to three lines of poetry that do not require special emphasis can be incorporated within your text.
- Individual lines should be separated with a slash and a space on each side (/ ).
- Use the original poem’s numbering system such as lines, divisions, or page numbers.

**Long Quotations** (see example below)

- Poetry quotations of more than three lines should begin on a new line.
- Indent lines a half inch from the left margin unless lines are indented inconsistently in the original poem, in which case, the quotation should reflect the original layout.
- Use the original poem’s numbering system such as lines, divisions, or page numbers.
- Include a parenthetical citation after the closing punctuation (usually a period).
- Individual lines should be double-spaced.
Sample In-text Citations from Poetry

Short Quotation from Poetry
In “The Death of the Loch Ness Monster,” Gwendolyn MacEwan writes, “Consider him tired of pondering the possible existence of man / whom he thinks he has sighted sometimes on the shore” (14–15).

Long Quotation from Poetry
Al Purdy’s “The Country North of Belleville” portrays this region as a place bereft of youth:

And this is a country where the young
leave quickly
unwilling to know what their fathers know
or think the words their mothers do not say. (58-61)

Citing from a Play

- A short quotation of **fewer than four lines** from a play, spoken by a single character, can be incorporated into your text.
- A long quotation of **four or more lines or dialogue between two or more speakers** should be set off from your text.
- The parenthetical citation following the quotation should indicate the act, scene, and line numbers (see second example below). If these details are not available, the citation should indicate the page number on which the quotation appears.
- When quoting **stage directions**, treat them as any other quoted prose. Reproduce them as they appear in the original, using ellipses ( . . . ) to indicate any deleted text.

Sample In-text Citations from a Play

Short Quotation from a Play
Tomson Highway’s *Aria* begins with the lyrical reminiscences of the Kokum, who recalls that she “[t]aught these seven daughters to tell the many moods of wind, rain of tomorrow, my five sons to hold conversation with fire and the northern lights” (81).

Dialogue Between Speakers in a Play
Shakespeare’s use of rhyming couplets emphasizes the irony in the following exchange from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*:

HERMIA  I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.
HELENA  O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!
HERMIA  I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
HELENA  O that my prayers could such affection move! (I.i.194–97)
More Tips for In-Text Citations

Tips Related to Authors

- If the author is unknown or the author is an organization that also published the source, use an abbreviated title including the appropriate capitalization and quotation marks/italics format. [[MLA 55-56, 117-18]
  Example: (MLA Style 4) is a parenthetical citation for this page of this handout, MLA Style for Academic Work.
- For two authors, use “and” before the last author’s name. Example: (Richmond and Smith 3)
- For three or more authors, give only the first author’s last name followed by “et al.” [MLA 116]
  Example: (Hacker et al. 14)
- When stating an author’s name for the first time, use first and last names in your sentence. For subsequent citations, use only the last name in your sentence. [MLA 61-62]

First Time Citing an Author in Your Work

In “Where the World Began,” Margaret Laurence describes her small prairie hometown as “a place of jubilation and of mourning, horrible and beautiful” (164).

Subsequent Times Citing an Author in Your Work

Laurence reflects on her home as “a strange place it was, that place where the world began” (164).

Tips for Incorporating Citations into Your Work

- Keep the citation as short as possible while still directing readers to the source in your Works Cited list. [MLA 54-58]
- Place citations where there is a “natural pause” in your writing (generally at the end of a sentence) to not interrupt the flow.
- Fit partial quotations grammatically within your sentences rather than inserting full-sentence quotations. [MLA 75-91]

In “Where the World Began,” Margaret Laurence describes her small prairie hometown as “a place of jubilation and of mourning, horrible and beautiful” (164).

To leave out part of a quotation, insert ellipses (three periods with a space before and after each period) where the omission occurs. This may be necessary for grammar or removal of unnecessary information. In the example below, the first period is a full stop while the others are ellipses. [MLA 80-85]

Laurence reflects on her home as “a strange place it was, that place where the world began. . . . It was, in fact, a small prairie town” (164).

To add or slightly change words within a quotation for grammar or clarity, put square brackets around the change. [MLA 86]

The researchers report that “embracing [capacity-building and knowledge formation] principles ensured that the research was conducted with Wabano in a culturally appropriate way” (Richmond and Smith 4).

When citing material already enclosed in quotation marks, such as dialogue or a title within a title, replace the double quotation marks in the original with single quotation marks. Then, surround the entire quotation with double quotation marks. [MLA 71, 87]

Laurence recalls strange things in her town as being “‘funny ha ha’; others were ‘funny peculiar,’” while some were “not so very funny at all” (166).
Creating the Works Cited List

- Accuracy in your Works Cited list is important to help readers find the particular sources you have used.
- Fill in the MLA Template (shown below) with as much information as relevant/available from each source.
- Assemble the information into a citation using the punctuation given in the Template.
- If information for a particular element is irrelevant or unavailable, simply omit that element.

MLA Core Elements Template (see detailed explanation starting on p. 6 of this guide)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MLA Core Elements Template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Title of Source.” / Title of Source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Container 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Title of Container,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other contributors,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Version,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Number,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Publisher,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Publication date,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Location,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Optional Elements (e.g. access date for online sources).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formatting the Works Cited List

- Start the Works Cited list on a new page at the end of your assignment, including only sources cited within your writing.
- The title Works Cited, or Work Cited if there is only one source, should be centred and at the top of the page.
- Double-space the entire Works Cited list, including the title line. Do not add an extra blank line after the title.
- Put the first line of each new entry to the left margin (left justified). Use a hanging indent (standard half-inch tab) for all subsequent lines of the entry.
  - Tip: In MS Word, highlight all lines of the entry and press Ctrl + t
- Organize the list alphabetically according to the first letter of each entry. Ignore “A,” “An,” and “The” when alphabetizing.
- If you have more than one entry by the same author, use the author’s name in the first entry and use three hyphens (---) in place of the author’s name in subsequent entries.

Sample Works Cited List

Works Cited


Explanation of Core Elements

1. Author.

- Enter author’s name as Last, First. Write initials and middle names as they appear in the source. Do not reduce a spelled-out middle name to its initial.
- Include multiple authors in the same order as in the source material.
  - **Two authors:**
    - Example: Richmond, Chantelle A. M., and Dawn Smith.
      (Last Name, First Name)          (First Name Last Name)
  - **Three or more authors:** Follow the first author’s name with “, et al.”
    - Example: Doe, Jane, et al.
- The author is the creator of the work’s main content and can be a person or corporate author (government agency, organization, company, etc.).
- If someone other than an author is responsible for producing the work, it can be useful to enter their name followed by a label (editor, translator, performer, creator) to add clarity.
  - Example: Grassy Narrows First Nation Youth, performers.
- If there is no author, leave this field blank and begin the entry with the title.

2. “Title of Source.” / Title of Source.

- Capitalize each major word of the title, and end with a period. If there is a subtitle, use this format: *Title: Subtitle*.
- **Italicize the title if the source is self-contained**, such as a book, a web site, a journal, or an album.
  - Example: *The Broadview Anthology of Expository Prose*.
- Place the title in quotation marks if the source is part of a larger work, such as an essay or chapter in a book, content on a web site, an article in a journal, or a song on an album. The period is placed within the quotation marks.
  - Example: “Where the World Began.”

3. Title of Container,

- The title of the container is normally italicized because most containers are self-contained. Follow it with a comma.
- Containers are the larger whole that a smaller source is a part of. **Examples of containers:** journals, newspapers, books with individually authored chapters, web sites, or series (TV, podcast, Netflix, etc.).
- Sources can have more than one container if the source is nested within other sources.
  - **Examples of sources with two containers:**
    - A short story is contained within a book, and that book is contained within Google Books.
    - A journal article is contained within a journal, and that journal is contained within the JSTOR database.
    - An episode is contained within its series, which is contained within Netflix.

4. Other contributors,

- Precede each name (or names) with “by” and a description of their role. Give the first name followed by the last name. If there are three or more contributors give only the first name, followed by “et al.,”
  - Example: edited by Laura Buzzard et al.,
- Book editor(s) need to be credited in addition to the author of a chapter/story/play/poem.
- List as many other contributors as are relevant to your assignment, or if they help differentiate the source from others like it.
  - **Examples of contributor roles:** adapted by, directed by, illustrated by, translated by.

5. Version,

- If the source has a version or edition statement, identify it using the language given in the source.
  - **Examples of versions:** edition (ed.), revised (rev.), director’s cut.
- Write ordinal numbers with arabic numerals. **Example:** 2nd ed.,

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Number,

- If the source is part of a numbered sequence, indicate the type of number, followed by the number.

  **Examples of numbered sequences**: volume (vol.), issue (no.), season, episode, year.

  **Examples**: vol. 3, no. 1, or Spring 2009.

Publisher,

- The publisher produces the work or makes it available to the public.
- Shorten University Press to UP.
- **Examples**: Oxford UP, or U of Calgary P,
- Omit business words such as Company (Co.), Corporation (Corp.), Incorporated (Inc.), and Limited (Ltd.).
- Do not list a publisher if
  - the information is not given, or there is no publisher listed in the source,
  - the source is a periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper),
  - the publisher is the same as the container title (e.g., many web sites), or
  - your source is on a web site that was not involved in producing the source, such as Twitter or Blogger.

Publication date,

- Give the publication date (and time if available) using as much information as listed in the source.
- Enter the date as day-month-year. Abbreviate names of months that are longer than four letters.
  - **Examples**: 12 Jan. 2017, or 25 July 2017, or Spring 2016, or 10:30 p.m.,
- Sources may have multiple publication dates: give the date that corresponds with the specific source you have access to.
  - **Examples**: For a book, give the most recent date (that corresponds to the specific edition/version you have). For an online publication, give the date it appeared online, not in print (if there is a difference).

Location,

- Location may be a location within a source (page numbers, disc number), a web address (URL), a digital object identifier (DOI), or a physical location (building, venue, city).
  - It may be helpful to your reader to make your links clickable, especially if you are submitting an assignment electronically.
- **Note that location does not refer to the city of publication.**
- For single page numbers, use p. For a range of pages, use pp.
  - **Example**: p. 165 (single page), or pp. 164–69 (a range of pages)
- For online journal articles, cite a DOI if there is one. If there is no DOI, cite the web address (URL).
  - A DOI is a series of numbers (and sometimes letters) preceded by ‘doi:’. DOIs can be searched in web browsers.
  - **Example of a DOI**: doi:10.1080/07377363.2013.836823

Optional elements.

- If a source has been republished, it can be useful to provide the date of original publication. Place this date after the title of the source.
- For online sources without a listed publication date or with content that may change or be removed, give the date you accessed the source.
  - **Example**: Accessed 29 June 2017.
Sample Citations Using the MLA Core Elements Template

A Source in One Container: An Essay in a Book

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | **Author.**  
Laurence, Margaret. |
| 2 | **“Title of Source.” / Title of Source.**  
“Where the World Began.” |
| 3 | **Container 1**  
*Title of Container,*  
*The Broadview Anthology of Expository Prose,* |
| 4 | **Other contributors,**  
edited by Laura Buzzard et al., |
| 5 | **Version,**  
2nd ed., |
| 6 | **Number,**  
 |
| 7 | **Publisher,**  
Broadview Press, |
| 8 | **Publication date,**  
2011, |
| 9 | **Location,**  
pp. 164-69. |

Work Cited Entry

A Source in One Container: A Music Video Embedded on a Web Site

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | **Author.**  
Grassy Narrows First Nation Youth, performers. |
| 2 | **“Title of Source.” / Title of Source.**  
“Home to Me.” |
| 3 | **Container 1**  
*Title of Container,*  
*N’we Jinan,* |
| 4 | **Other contributors,**  
 |
| 5 | **Version,**  
 |

Work Cited Entry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Publisher,</th>
<th>Publisher is omitted because it is the same as the Title of Container (web site name).</th>
<th>[MLA 42]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Publication date, 2 Apr. 2016,</td>
<td>Enter the date as day-month-year. Abbreviate names of months that are longer than four letters.</td>
<td>[MLA 94-95]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Location, nwejinan.com/home-grassy-narrows-first-nation-song-released/</td>
<td>Use a URL if a DOI is not available, as in this case. Omit http:// and https://. Add a period at the end.</td>
<td>[MLA 48]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Cited Entry**


### A Source in Two Containers: A Journal Article Retrieved from a Database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Author, Richmond, Chantelle A. M., and Dawn Smith.</th>
<th>Authors’ names are given as stated in the source. Do not reduce a spelled-out name to its initial.</th>
<th>[MLA 21]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Title of Source,” / <em>Title of Source</em>, “Sense of Belonging in the Urban School Environments of Aboriginal Youth.”</td>
<td>Title is in quotation marks because a journal article is part of a larger work (the journal).</td>
<td>[MLA 25-29]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Container 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title of Container, <em>The International Indigenous Policy Journal,</em></th>
<th>The container is the journal that the article is found in. Journals are self-contained, so use italics.</th>
<th>[MLA 25-29]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other contributors,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Version,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Number, vol. 3, no. 1,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Publisher,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Publication date, 2012,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Location, pp. 1-17.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Container 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title of Container, <em>ProQuest,</em></th>
<th>ProQuest is given as the second container rather than as the publisher because ProQuest does not produce the content, only houses it.</th>
<th>[MLA 42]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other contributors,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Version,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Publisher,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Publication date,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Location, doi:10.18584/iipj.2012.3.1.1.</td>
<td>If a DOI is available, use it rather than a URL. Add a period at the end. [MLA 48]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Cited Entry**

**More Sample Citations, By Type of Source**

**A. Books**

| A4 Bible and other sacred writings, editor unknown [MLA 38, 107] | *The Holy Bible*. New International Version, Zondervan, 1978. **NOTE:** When using a reference that starts with “a,” “an,” or “the,” use the next word of the entry to alphabetize the entry on the Works Cited list. [MLA 115] |
### B. Entries or Chapters in Edited Books or Encyclopedia

**NOTE**: Book editor(s) need to be credited in addition to the author(s) of the chapter/story/play/poem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### C. Articles: Periodicals (journals, newspapers, magazines)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### C6 Magazine article, with author, periodical version from a library database

**NOTE:** If no DOI is available, use the stable or persistent link to the article.

### C7 Magazine article, with author, from magazine’s website

### D. Web Sites and Web Pages

**D1 Web page with author, but no listed publication date**

**NOTE:** Access date is an optional item. It is useful to include one if the material may change or if no publication date is listed. [MLA 53]

**D2 Web page on an organization’s website, no author, no publication date**

**D3 Report on a website, same author/publisher/name of website**

**NOTE:** In this case, the author, publisher and website are all the same, so *Enmax* is listed as the container. [MLA 53]

**D4 Government report on a website, with author**

**D5 Instructor’s slides or notes posted to Blackboard**

### E. Various Media

**E1 Image with unknown creator and no title, found on a website**

**E2 Image with known creator but no title, in an article, found on website**

**E3 Work of visual art, known creator and title, found in a book**

**E4 Work of visual art, on museum website**

**NOTE:** For more on citing images, see the separate document at mru.ca/referencing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E6 TED Talk</td>
<td>Galperin, Karina. “Should We Simplify Spelling?” <em>TED</em>, Sept. 2015, <a href="www.ted.com/talks/karina_galperin_why_don_t_we_write_words_the_way_pronounce_them">www.ted.com/talks/karina_galperin_why_don_t_we_write_words_the_way_pronounce_them</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>