MLA 8 Works Cited Page and In-Text Citations Guide

Goals of this Study Sheet

The goal of this study sheet is to explain how to create and use in-text citation and a work cited page using the MLA format. Additionally, this sheet will explain what a citation is, why they are important, and when it is necessary to cite a source. It will also cover how to properly cite sources and the different ways to use in-text citations.

What Are Citations and Why Are They Important?

A citation is an abbreviated reference to a published or unpublished source. It is a way to tell your readers that some of the information in your work came from another source. Creating a citation gives the credit of that information to the person or organization that originally created it. A citation also gives the reader the necessary information to find that source. The main reason to use citations is to give the credit to the original author and it is the only way to use their work without plagiarizing. Citing sources is also important, because it shows the reader how much research you have done, it helps them find the original source where the ideas came from, and it strengthens your work by providing outside support to your ideas.

When Should You Use Citations?

A simple rule to decide when you should cite someone else’s work is when you borrow their words or ideas. You will always have to cite someone else’s work when you quote or paraphrase them, when you make a reference to the work of another, or use an idea that someone has already expressed.

The Basics of Creating a Citation in MLA Format
A full citation in MLA format will be created on your work cited page. A work cited page will be the last page of your paper and will contain a list of all the sources you referenced throughout your paper. The sources should be placed in alphabetical order. It is important to remember that the second and any subsequent lines in a citation will be indented while the first line will remain aligned with the left side of the paper. Additionally, skip any information that is not available.

A complete citation should look like this:

Author. "Title.” Title of the Container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher's name, Date of publication, Location.

Step-by-Step Citation Walkthrough

Your citation should include all of the following in this order:

● Author.
  ○ Last, First, and First Last (if there are two authors)
  ○ If there are three or more authors use “et al.” after the first author
  ○ It is acceptable to use usernames as author names if necessary
  ○ End this part with a period
● "Title."/Title
  ○ Use quotes if it is part of a larger work
  ○ Italicize if it stands alone (without a container)
  ○ End this part with a period
● Title of the Container,
  ○ Containers are what “holds” the work. For example a website holds an article and book holds a chapter
  ○ This part needs to be italicized
End the this part with a comma

- Other contributors,
  - Anyone who contributed to the work (producer, editor, translator, illustrator) as “an” other contributor
  - Include their role and the word “by”
    - produced by Eric Wolf
  - End this part with a comma

- Version,
  - Use “ed.” To indicate the edition
    - 2nd ed.
    - Extended ed.
    - Director’s Cut ed.
  - End with a comma

- Number,
  - The number distinguish parts of a set
  - For volumes and issue numbers abbreviate with:
    - vol. 2 no. 5
  - For everything else, spell it out
    - Season 4, episode 1,
  - End with a comma

- Publisher’s name,
  - The publisher is the company responsible for the work
  - If the publisher is the same as the title of the container, do not include it
  - End this part with a comma
• Date of publication,
  ○ Abbreviate months that longer than four letters
  ○ There are no set rules on the order of month or day. However, each citation in your work cited page must follow the same order
    ■ Oct. 11, 2018
    ■ 11 Oct. 2018
  ○ End this part with a comma
• Location.
  ○ Location is where the information was found
  ○ For printed articles or books use the page number
  ○ Use “p.” for a single page; use “pp.” for multiple pages
    ■ p. 20
    ■ pp. 20-30
  ○ For websites include the full url
  ○ Remove http:// or https://
  ○ Remove the hyper link
    ■ www.jtcc.edu/services/writing-center

Example of a citation in MLA format:

The Basics of In-Text Citations
In-text citations are used to direct the reader to the full citation on the work cited page. Consequently, the in-text citation you provide must correspond with that information.
This means that the signal word or phrase you use in your paper must be the first thing to appear in the citation you are referencing. Most of the time, an in-text citation will involve the author’s last name and any relevant page numbers. An in-text citation will appear at the end of the sentence in parentheses and followed by a period. Using the example above, this should look like (Greene). If there is no author provided for the work you are trying create an in-text citation for, simply go to the next section in the work cited entry. If the author’s name is referenced in the preceding sentence it does not need to be included in the in-text citation. However, keep in mind that the page number will still need to be provided in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Additional examples of in-text citations:

With the author’s name:
- If one author: (Greene).
- If two authors: (Greene and Lidinsky).
- If there are three or more authors: (Greene et al.).

With page numbers:
- If one page: (Greene 361)
- If two multiple pages: (Greene 361-380)

With the author’s name included in the preceding sentence:
- Greene explains that “there are two main forms of argument: deductive and inductive” (226).

When the author is not provided:
- (“The Basics of MLA Style” 226)

**Sources Referenced**

“MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics.” Welcome to the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/.

“What Is Citation?” Plagiarism.org RSS, www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-citation.