MLA 9th Edition Documentation

This handout is based on the Modern Language Association’s new ninth edition handbook and focuses specifically on creating in-text citations and citing sources. The writer’s goal should be to provide a document and list of sources that are easy for readers to use, so that the reading experience is informative and enjoyable. It is important, however, to remember that the writer’s goal and responsibility is to combine error-free writing with trustworthy documentation. For additional information on research documentation style, as well as related links, please visit the Writing Center’s homepage at http://www.molloy.edu/about-molloy-college/offices-and-services/writing-center

In Text Citing Examples

Documentation is required for any work that the writer quotes or paraphrases from. But documentation is not required for every type of borrowed material. For example, common knowledge, which is information widely available in reference works, needs no documentation.

When paraphrasing an author’s idea or quoting an author’s exact words, cite the author’s last name and the page number.

In-text citations are usually placed in parentheses and consist of the author’s last name (or the first element in the works cited entry if no author is provided) followed by a space and a page number.

Example: “It’s tough being a stickler for punctuation these days. One almost dare not get up in the mornings” (Truss 3).

The author’s name may also appear in the text itself when introducing the quoted or paraphrased material. In this case, only the page number would appear in parentheses.

Example: In her book Eats, Shoots & Leaves, Lynn Truss laments the plight of those who are orthodox punctuators: “It’s tough being a stickler for punctuation these days. One almost dare not get up in the mornings” (3).

When the works cited entry begins with the title of the source, the title is included in the in-text citation. As with using the author, the title may appear in the text itself when introducing the source material or in abbreviated form with a page number in parentheses.

Example: In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, King Arthur is described most humbly as “one who would not eat until all were served” (77).

Example: King Arthur selflessly and humbly “would not eat until all were served” (Sir Gawain 77).

Electronic sources often do not include page numbers, so only the author’s name would be included in the citation. Some sources provide explicit paragraph numbers. In such cases, give the relevant number or numbers, preceded by the label par. or pars. Other sources may provide labels instead of pages, such as sections (sec., secs.) or chapters (ch., chs.). If the author’s name begins such a citation, place a comma after the name.

Example: There is little evidence here for the claim that “Eagleton has belittled the gains of postmodernism” (Chan, par. 41).
Works Cited Examples

Works cited are alphabetized according to the first author’s last name, or by title if the source has no author. Do not alphabetize author names within an entry. The works cited list is double-spaced within and between entries. For entries longer than one line, use the hanging indent format: the first line is flush along the left margin, and subsequent lines for an entry are indented one-half inch.

PRINT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

One author

Two authors

Three or more authors

More than one book by the same author

First book by the author:

Second book by the same author:
Omit the author’s name. Instead, at the margin use three hyphens followed by a period.

Edited book

Book by anonymous (unknown) author

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Translated by Brian Stone, Penguin Group, 1974.

Translated book emphasizing the translator rather than the author

Work in an anthology
Reference book

Individually titled volume in a multi-volume set

All volumes of the multivolume set

ELECTRONIC PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

Database journal article

Online journal article

PDF journal article

ELECTRONIC NON-PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

E-book

Book published exclusively on a website

Unsigned dictionary entry

Wikipedia

Review of a work (book)
Webpage on a website with author and date

Webpage on a website with no author or date

Blog post

Tweet
Chaucer Doth Tweet [@LeVostreGC]. “A daye without anachronism ys lyke Emily Dickinson without her lightsaber.” Twitter, 7 Apr. 2018, twitter.com/LeVostreGC/status/982829987286827009.

Facebook post

YouTube video

LEGAL WORKS

United States Supreme Court [Not found in the United States Reports]
United States, Supreme Court. Brown v. Board of Education. 17 May 1954

Federal Bills

State Senate Bills
   docs.legis.newyork.gov/2017/related/proposals/sb5.

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