

The Pearson Guide to the 2016 MLA Handbook



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Quick Start Guide

To use MLA style to document a source, follow these steps.

1. Evaluate your source

You have found a passage in a book, and you want to use part of it in a research project:

Every new tool shapes the way we think, as well as what we think about. The printed word helped make our cognition linear and abstract, along with vastly enlarging our stores of knowledge. Newspapers shrank the world; then the telegraph shrank it even more dramatically. With every innovation, cultural prophets bickered over whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia.

The passage supports your argument, the book is published by a major publisher, and the author is well known, so you decide to use it in your project.

2. Gather information about the source

Author: Clive Thompson

Title: **Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better**

Container (information about where you found the source; in this case, a printed book): **Penguin Press, 2013, page 7**

3. Create your documentation

A citation in MLA style has two components. The first is an entry in a list of works cited that appears at the end of your paper or project.

Thompson, Clive. *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better*. Penguin Press, 2013.

The second component is an in-text reference. Any quotation, paraphrase, or summary of words or ideas from a source needs to be noted in the body of your paper, as in this example.

Every time a new communication technology is invented, people argue about whether it will bring about “a technological apocalypse or a utopia” (Thompson 7).

The in-text reference in parentheses tells readers that the quoted words come from page 7 in the Thompson source. The works-cited entry provides complete information about the source, so readers can find it themselves.

Every citation in MLA style builds on this basic pattern. This guide provides additional details to help you feel confident about using MLA documentation in your writing and other research projects.

Visual Guide to an MLA Citation



An MLA citation has three basic parts—the author’s name, the title of the source, and the container.

Author’s name. In this example, the author is an individual, Steven Johnson.

Title. If a work is part of a larger whole (such as an article in a magazine, an essay in an anthology, or a poem in a collection), its title is placed inside quotation marks, as shown in the example above. Titles of self-contained or stand-alone works (such as novels) are italicized.

Container. A container is the larger whole in which the source is found. A container can be a journal, a website, a database, a newspaper, and so forth. In this example, the container is *The New York Times* website. (You can tell this article comes from an online newspaper because the citation includes a URL. Print newspapers include a page number instead.)

This guide includes information about many details of the MLA works-cited format. If you remember these three basic parts, you can apply them to create a citation for just about any type of source.

What Is MLA Documentation Style?

MLA is an abbreviation for Modern Language Association, an organization of teachers and scholars in language and literature. As a scholarly organization, MLA establishes standards and guidelines that authors and editors follow in their writing. These standards, or *conventions*, are designed to create uniform, consistent ways of handling the details of format and style used in published research.

The *MLA Handbook* is a guide to writing with sources that has been used by students and teachers in rhetoric and writing courses for many years. In 2016, MLA published the eighth edition of the Handbook, updating many elements of MLA documentation style. Because much research now takes place online, and because so many new types of sources are appearing every day, MLA decided to make some significant changes to streamline the process and give writers more flexibility in citing different kinds of sources. This guide is based on the 2016 edition of the *MLA Handbook*, so you can be sure you are current and up to speed with the latest guidelines.

MLA style can be contrasted with APA or Chicago style. MLA is used primarily in English and the humanities; APA is used in the social sciences (including psychology and communication); and Chicago style is used in history and the arts. Other common documentation styles used in college courses include APSA (political science), CSE (natural sciences), and IEEE (engineering and computer science).

As a college student, you are expected to apply high standards to your own writing and research. You are a member of a scholarly community, and you are participating in academic conversations in your classes and in your writing. Learning to use MLA style is one way to show your readers that you take yourself seriously as a writer and a researcher, and demonstrating

your mastery of the elements of MLA style helps build credibility for your work.

During your college career, you may need to learn two or three different documentation styles. While the details vary from one style to another, the general principles of documenting sources and giving credit to others for their words and ideas form the foundation of any academic style. Learning MLA style will help you adapt to other styles you may be asked to use in other courses.

2

The Basic Principles of Documenting

Any time you borrow the words or ideas of others, you need to document the source from which you are borrowing. Documenting is a way of giving credit for ideas and expressions that others have created.

Academic writing is a kind of conversation. You are sharing your ideas with your readers, and you are also engaging in a conversation with the sources you read and use in your work. In a social setting, you wouldn't tell someone else's story and pretend it was your own; in an academic environment, you are similarly responsible for noting when you are using someone else's words or ideas. The basic principles of documentation also apply to visual sources, like photographs and videos, and to music and other media as well.

Many college students are very aware of plagiarism and concerned about it. Campus orientations and first-year-experience courses often devote substantial time to explaining the possible penalties for plagiarizing, including failing grades and even suspension. This chapter covers some of the basics to help you know how best to document sources and avoid plagiarizing unintentionally. The most important principle is this: When in doubt, document!

UNDERSTANDING PLAGIARISM

Purchasing a paper from an online research-paper service and turning it in as your own. Cutting and pasting sections from a friend's research essay into yours. Copying chunks of material from a website and inserting them into your own paper. All of these are obvious, intentional acts of plagiarism that you would never willingly commit. Blatant, intentional plagiarism of this kind is relatively rare—and also rather easy to detect. Teachers can

access online sources just as instantly as students, and it doesn't take much effort to find original passages that have been copied into a student paper.

But what about subtler, unintentional plagiarism? How can learning to use MLA and other documentation styles help you avoid that? Most students who wander into unintentional-plagiarism territory do so for one of two reasons: either they forget to take good notes and keep track of their sources, or they misrepresent someone else's ideas as their own by failing to document properly.

THE ETHICS AND CONVENTIONS OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH

At the beginning of a research project, you are likely to be working quickly to find and collect sources you might use. Whether you use a paper notebook, digital files, or bookmarked websites—or all of the above—be sure to immediately capture all the information you need to cite each source. That way, you won't put yourself in a bind later when you have that perfect quote for your project, but you don't remember where it came from.

Digital notebooks like Evernote can be helpful. You can save articles, web pages, images, and other materials, and store them along with the information about the author, title, publisher, dates, and so forth—all in one place. If you prefer to work on paper, by downloading and printing copies of sources, be sure to note the author, title, and source of the publication on each printout.

Be especially careful, when taking notes or capturing information from online sources, to note the exact location as you find each source. Mark words that are copied directly from a source by putting quotation marks around them, or by highlighting them in a color, or in a different typeface. You want to be sure to differentiate words you have borrowed directly from sources and words that represent your own notes or summaries.

Being meticulous and detail-oriented as you gather sources is one way you are participating in the academic community. Academic research and scientific knowledge can grow and develop because researchers build on the work of others. One of the foundations of academic research is a respect for the work that others have done to pave the way. Taking a little time to record

information about a source when you find it can save you a lot of time later, too.

QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, AND SUMMARIZING

Sources can be used in a research paper or project in a number of different ways. If you want to use the exact words you found in a source, use quotation marks to indicate which words are borrowed from the source. If you want to capture the general ideas from a source but use your own words, use what is known as a *paraphrase*. Paraphrasing means restating someone else's ideas in your own words. A paraphrase is usually about the same length as the original source. If you want to capture the main idea of a source in a concise restatement, use summary. Summaries are usually much shorter than the original source. Sometimes you might even summarize an entire article in a single sentence.

Direct quotations, paraphrases, and summaries all need to be documented. Even if you restate another author's ideas in your own words, you still need to credit that author as the original source of the ideas and concepts you are using.

Consider some different ways you might use the excerpt below, from author Clive Thompson.

Every new tool shapes the way we think, as well as what we think about. The printed word helped make our cognition linear and abstract, along with vastly enlarging our stores of knowledge. Newspapers shrank the world; then the telegraph shrank it even more dramatically. With every innovation, cultural prophets bickered over whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia.

Suppose you decided to restate Thompson's ideas in this sentence and include it in your paper.

Every time a new technology appears, pundits argue about whether it will bring about the end of civilization or the beginning of a wonderful new era.

Do you need a citation? All of the ideas have been rewritten in your own words. But in the absence of a visible citation, this sentence would be plagiarism. The ideas are borrowed from Clive Thompson, and you need to signal that to your readers. You could do that in several ways.

- Adding an introductory signal phrase and parenthetical citation:

Technology writer Clive Thompson argues that every time a new technology appears, pundits argue about whether it will bring about the end of civilization or the beginning of a wonderful new era (7).

You are still using a summary written in your own words, but you clearly signal that the ideas come from Thompson, and the in-text reference at the end tells readers exactly which page in the Thompson source you were consulting at the time.

- Incorporating a direct quotation and a signal phrase:

Clive Thompson, a well-known technology writer, argues that every time a new technology has appeared, “cultural prophets” have debated “whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia” (7).

In this passage, the introductory phrase clearly signals that the ideas are drawing on the work of Thompson, and the quotation marks indicate the words that have been copied exactly from the original source. The parenthetical reference at the end tells readers that the quoted words may be found on page 7 in the Thompson source.

- Incorporating a longer direct quotation and naming the author in a parenthetical citation:

The printing press, newspapers, and the telegraph have each generated controversy as they appeared in daily life. One historian of technology argues that this controversy happens every time a new communication technology is

introduced: “With every innovation, cultural prophets bickered over whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia” (Thompson 7).

Here, the phrase “one historian of technology” clearly tells readers that you are drawing on someone else’s ideas. The quotation marks show which words are copied from the source, and the author’s name and page number are included in the parenthetical reference at the end.

MLA style gives you several options for integrating sources into your paper and documenting them clearly and efficiently. If you are unsure about whether your sources are documented properly, ask a friend to read a draft of your paper and underline or highlight any places where she sees ideas or words that are borrowed from another person. If she can’t see which ideas are yours and which are borrowed, then you need to make some revisions using some of the strategies in this section.

For all of the examples shown here, you would also need to include a complete citation for the Thompson source at the end of your paper, like this:

Thompson, Clive. *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better*. Penguin Press, 2013.

3

A Three-Step Process for Documenting Sources

Documenting sources is a mindset as well as a process. A research mindset involves careful attention to each source you find: What is this? Who wrote it? Does it have an agenda or a commercial purpose? Can I trust this information?

Research, inquiry, and critical thinking are vital strategies for any field or discipline. Information literacy is a highly valued set of interrelated skills that you will want to cultivate throughout your college career and beyond. These topics extend far beyond what can be covered in this brief guide to MLA documentation. But we can outline a basic process that you can apply and adapt to your own workflow and writing style as you conduct research and document sources. This three-step process follows the model outlined by the MLA in the eighth edition of its handbook. Notice that, in this model, documenting sources is not something to be done at the end of the process, when formatting a final list of works cited; it is something to be kept in mind from the very beginning of any research process.

1. THINK: EVALUATING YOUR SOURCES

You can find many sources quickly on just about any topic imaginable, using search engines and databases. But how do you know if those sources are trustworthy? How can you assess their value as sources for an academic project?

Two criteria to apply when evaluating sources are *relevance* and *credibility*. A source is relevant if it is closely related to your topic, fits your approach, and helps to support your purpose. A source is credible if it meets standards of trustworthiness and reliability in the academic community.

To evaluate a source for relevance, you sometimes need to read at least a portion of the source first. The title and other information about the source will give you some indication and will help you eliminate sources that don't fit your aims. Scholarly journal articles often include abstracts, and those can help you assess relevance. An abstract is a one-paragraph summary or overview of the article. In most cases, reading the abstract will provide you enough information to make a preliminary judgment about a source's relevance. As you read more sources, you will develop a clearer picture of your own topic and approach; your improved focus will in turn help you to narrow a list of potentially relevant sources. Keep in mind that a source may be relevant to one topic or purpose but not to another. The goal is not to come up with a massive list of sources; the goal is to filter out a short list of sources that you can cite and use to support the specific thesis or idea you are presenting in your project.

To evaluate a source for credibility, you need to learn as much about the source as you can. Can you identify an author? What do you know about the author? What are the author's credentials or qualifications to speak on the topic? Where is the source published? Is the publication sponsored by a commercial entity? Is the source advocating a particular viewpoint? Selling a product?

Wikipedia provides a useful case study in credibility. As you may know, *Wikipedia* is "openly editable." This means that *Wikipedia* is collaboratively written by anonymous volunteers. While you can assume that *Wikipedia* entries are generally accurate and informative, you usually do not want to cite *Wikipedia* as a source in a college research project. Does this mean you should not use *Wikipedia* at all? Not necessarily. As the *MLA Handbook* notes, "Google and *Wikipedia* are reasonable places to begin your research but not good places to end it" (12). You may want to consult *Wikipedia* as a starting point, for general information or background on a topic. At the end of most *Wikipedia* entries, you will find a list of references. Many of the sources listed there will be credible, peer-reviewed, scholarly sources. *Wikipedia* can thus guide you to credible sources that are appropriate works to cite in a college project.

Library databases, scholarly journals, published books, and documents published by government agencies are usually the most preferable types of sources in terms of credibility. A peer-reviewed article found by searching

a database in your college library is almost always going to be more credible than a source you find through a quick *Google* search.

When evaluating online sources, pay special attention to the URL (the web address, visible in your browser, usually at the very top of the page). Website addresses that end in “.com” are commercial, which means they are tied to a company, product, or other commercial entity. Website addresses that end in “.edu” (educational or university sites) or “.org” (nonprofit associations) are often more credible than commercial sites. Government sources are usually identifiable by their “.gov” addresses. New domain names (like “.tv” or “.academy”) are appearing now, making this evaluation more difficult, but the lesson is similar: Pay attention to who is sponsoring or paying for the content that is published on a website. The American Medical Association is probably a more credible source for information about treatment for a specific disorder than a site sponsored by a pharmaceutical company. The Center for Disease Control (a U.S. government agency) is a far more credible source of information about vaccinations than the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC.org), an organization devoted to “advocating for the institution of vaccine safety.” Sometimes, sites with a clear political agenda, like NVIC.org, are designed to look like credible sources, even to the extent of presenting themselves as government agencies. Read very carefully, and do some research to learn as much as you can about an organization that sponsors a website. (As you would discover, the NVIC is one of the most powerful anti-vaccine organizations in the nation—not a credible source for a college paper, unless you were writing about the anti-vaccine movement and wanted to use NVIC as an example.)

Your instructor may ask you to provide a list of sources or an annotated bibliography for a research project. This is often an excellent way to explore and discuss your sources before drafting your project. For each source, think about how it is useful for the specific argument and purpose of your project, and how it is credible. Be prepared to write a few sentences or explain your thinking about why each source is relevant and credible.

2. SELECT: GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SOURCES

Once you have evaluated a source and determined that it is relevant and credible for your purposes, the next step is to collect information you can

use to create a citation. MLA specifies nine core elements that can be used to create a citation for any type of source.

1. author
2. title of source
3. title of container
4. other contributors
5. version
6. number
7. publisher
8. publication date
9. location

Chapter 4 of this guide will look at each of these core elements in more detail. Every category in this list may not always be relevant to a specific source. At this stage of the process, simply gather as much information as you can about the source, using these elements as a guide.

For books, most of the information you need to collect can be found on the title and copyright pages. For journals, consult the cover or title page, table of contents, and any copyright pages. You may also need to look at the first and last pages of an article for additional details needed to construct your citation.

For websites, you may need to look at the “about” page or other sections of the site to identify the publisher or sponsor of the site. If you found a source through a library database, be sure to record the information from the database as well as the other information listed here. Most databases have a “cite this” button of some kind that you can use to create a working citation (which you may have to revise later).

For any online sources, be sure to copy and save the URL (address) for the source so you can go back to it quickly if you need to gather more information about a source later. In most cases, you will also need to include the URL in your citation.

3. ORGANIZE: CREATING YOUR DOCUMENTATION

The purpose of citations is to credit other authors whenever you borrow their words or ideas, and to guide readers to the sources you have used in your project. As the *MLA Handbook* suggests, “a citation should provide a road map leading to the original source while interrupting the reader’s engagement with the text as little as possible” (19). This principle means that your citations should be guided by two goals: be as complete as necessary, and be as brief as possible. Your citations should include enough information so that readers can quickly understand the nature of the sources you are using, and can find them for themselves if they wish.

A citation in MLA style has two components. The first is an entry in a list of works cited that appears at the end of your paper or project.

Thompson, Clive. *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is
Changing Our Minds for the Better*. Penguin Press, 2013.

The second component is an in-text reference. Any quotation, paraphrase, or summary of words or ideas from a source needs to be noted in the body of your paper, as in this example.

Every time a new communication technology is invented,
people argue about whether it will bring about “a
technological apocalypse or a utopia” (Thompson 7).

The in-text reference in parentheses tells readers that the quoted words come from page 7 in the Thompson source. The works-cited entry provides complete information about the source, so readers can find it themselves.

Chapters 4 and 5 in this guide provide more details on creating works-cited entries and in-text citations for different types of sources.

4

Creating Your Works-Cited List

THE CORE ELEMENTS

The creation of a works-cited list can seem overwhelming at times. There are many nuances and details to attend to. Beneath the details, however, lies a simple pattern. Every works-cited entry in MLA style includes three main parts.

1. the author's name
2. the title of the source
3. information about where the source can be found

Everything else is just a variation on this basic pattern. If you collect these basic pieces of information, and arrange them in your works-cited list, you will have a good foundation for a complete and correct works-cited page for your project.

Here is a basic template for any works-cited entry.

1. Author.	Last name, first name, followed by a period.
2. Title of source.	Title in italics or quotation marks, followed by a period.
3. Container.	Information about where the source can be found, in print or online, and other details, followed by a period.

To account for many different types of sources, information about the “container” can be divided into smaller parts, for a total list of nine possible items that might be included in a works-cited entry.

1. Author.	Last name, first name, followed by a period.
2. Title of source.	Title in italics or quotation marks, followed by a period.
CONTAINER	
3. Title of container,	The title of the book, journal, website, or other larger work within which the source can be found, followed by a comma,
4. Other contributors,	The names of translators, editors, or others who worked with the author to create the source, followed by a comma,
5. Version,	Edition number; updated, revised, adapted, or other information about a specific version; followed by a comma,
6. Number,	Volume and issue numbers for journals, or similar information for multi-volume books, followed by a comma,
7. Publisher,	The name of the publisher or sponsoring organization, followed by a comma,
8. Publication date,	The date of publication or most recent update, followed by a comma,
9. Location.	A page number, URL, or other locator, followed by a period.

Template for works-cited entries

You do not need to include information for all nine elements for every source. Most sources will include some but not all of the items under “container” (numbers 3 through 9 in the template).

Example: Book

1. Author.	Thompson, Clive.
2. Title of source.	<i>Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better.</i>
CONTAINER	
3. Title of container,	
4. Other contributors,	
5. Version,	
6. Number,	
7. Publisher,	Penguin Press,
8. Publication date,	2013.
9. Location.	

Example: Article in a scholarly journal

1. Author.	Bunn, Michael.
2. Title of source.	“Motivation and Connection: Teaching Reading (and Writing) in the Composition Classroom.”
CONTAINER	
3. Title of container,	<i>College Composition and Communication,</i>
4. Other contributors,	
5. Version,	
6. Number,	vol. 64, no. 3,
7. Publisher,	
8. Publication date,	2013,
9. Location.	pp. 496-516.

Example: Article in an online newspaper

1. Author.	Kolata, Gina.
2. Title of source.	“It’s Not Cancer: Doctors Reclassify a Thyroid Tumor.”
CONTAINER	
3. Title of container,	<i>The New York Times</i> ,
4. Other contributors,	
5. Version,	
6. Number,	
7. Publisher,	
8. Publication date,	14 Apr. 2016,
9. Location.	nyti.ms/1SDc8Pj.

In some types of sources, a container may be located “inside” of another container. For example, an article in a journal (container 1) may be found in a database (container 2). The same template applies; include information about both containers using the same format.

Example: Article in a scholarly journal found in a database

1. Author.	Compton-Lilly, Catherine.
2. Title of source.	“What Can Video Games Teach Us about Teaching Reading?”
CONTAINER 1	
3. Title of container,	<i>The Reading Teacher,</i>
4. Other contributors,	
5. Version,	
6. Number,	vol. 60, no. 8,
7. Publisher,	
8. Publication date,	2007,
9. Location.	pp. 718-27.
CONTAINER 2	
3. Title of container,	<i>JSTOR,</i>
4. Other contributors,	
5. Version,	
6. Number,	
7. Publisher,	
8. Publication date,	
9. Location.	www.jstor.org/stable/20204532.

(*JSTOR* is the name of a popular database used by researchers in the humanities and social sciences.)

DETAILED GUIDELINES

Author

For sources with a **single author**, list the last name, followed by the first name.

Dean, Virgil W. *Opportunity Lost: The Truman Administration and the Farm Policy Debate*. U of Missouri P, 2006.

For sources with **two authors**, the second author's name is listed in standard order.

Apfelbaum, Sue, and Juliette Cezzar. *Designing the Editorial Experience: A Primer for Print, Web, and Mobile*. Rockport, 2014.

For sources with **three or more authors**, list only the first author's name, and add "et al." (an abbreviation for "and others").

Losh, Elizabeth, et al. *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014.

For **works that are edited**, such as anthologies and essay collections, add the word "editor" or "editors" following the name of the primary editor(s) for the work.

Walz, Steffen P., and Sebastian Deterding, editors. *The Gameful World: Approaches, Issues, Applications*. MIT P, 2014.

Documents produced by government agencies and other organizations are often published with no author names listed. You can treat sources like this as a **"corporate author,"** listing the name of the organization or agency in place of the author.

United States, National Institutes of Health. *Cancer and the Environment: What You Need to Know, What You Can Do*. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, 2003, www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/cancer_and_the_environment_508.pdf.

Government sources can be a challenge to cite because they are often published by agencies that are part of larger agencies. In this case, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences is part of the National Institutes of Health, which is in turn part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The citation in this example is designed to match most closely what appears on the title and copyright pages of the document. You could cite this source in other ways, depending on which agency you wanted to emphasize.

For sources that list **no author** of any kind, omit the author and cite the work by its title. (Do not use anonymous as an author name.)

Beowulf. Translated by Seamus Heaney, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000.

Note that if you were comparing different translations of *Beowulf*, and wanted to emphasize the role of the translators, you could also cite this source as

Heaney, Seamus, translator. *Beowulf*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000.

Films and videos often have directors and producers rather than authors or editors.

Miller, George, director. *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Warner Bros., 2015.

Title of Source

Titles of **works that are complete and self-contained**, like books, films, journals, and websites, are placed in italics.

Donaldson, Roger, director. *Species*. Performances by Ben Kingsley, Forest Whitaker, and Natasha Henstridge, MGM, 1995.

United States, Department of the Interior. *National Park Service*, www.nps.gov. Accessed 14 Apr. 2016.

Notice that in this example, an **access date** is included at the end of the citation. Access dates may be used for online sources that are updated frequently or that do not include a visible date of publication.

Titles of shorter **works that are part of larger works**, like articles in journals, chapters in books, or blog entries on a website, are placed in quotation marks.

Burcher, Chris L., et al. "Fish Assemblage Responses to Forest Cover." *Environmental Management*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2008, pp. 336-46.

Hausler, Jesse. "Seven Things Every Designer Needs to Know about Accessibility." *Medium*, 15 Apr. 2016, medium.com/salesforce-ux/7-things-every-designer-needs-to-know-about-accessibility.

Some titles may have unusual punctuation or capitalization. These titles should be standardized in a works-cited list. A website title that displays online as "medievalfragments" should be listed as *Medieval Fragments*.

For **social media sources** like *Facebook* and *Twitter*, you can use the first line of the post as the title for the source. For *Twitter*, use the entire tweet as the title.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Immerse yourself in this 360° video capturing dawn to dusk in the Temple of Dendur." *Facebook*, 31 Mar. 2016, 11:37 a.m., www.facebook.com/metmuseum/?fref=nf.

Smashing Magazine. "Emotional communication online is a mess. We really don't know what we're saying when we use emoji." *Twitter*, 15 Apr. 2016, 8:04 a.m., twitter.com/smashingmag/status/720975983319232512.

Title of Container

Sources that form part of a larger whole, like articles in a journal, essays in a book, and so forth, are said to be in a “container.” MLA uses the term “container” to refer to any print or digital work that includes, or “contains,” a number of other works. A database like *Project Muse* is a container that holds thousands of individual sources (mostly journal articles). A scholarly journal is a container holding many individual articles.

Titles of containers are usually italicized.

Rae, James R., et al. “Do Motivations for Using Facebook Moderate the Association between *Facebook* Use and Psychological Well-Being?” *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 771, 2015, pp. 1-9. *Academic Search Complete*, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00771.

In this example, you will find two containers. *Frontiers in Psychology* is the name of a journal, and *Academic Search Complete* is the name of a database. The article is contained inside the journal, which is contained by the database.

McGonigal, Jane. “I’m Not Playful, I’m Gameful.” *The Gameful World: Approaches, Issues, Applications*, edited by Steffen P. Walz and Sebastian Deterding, MIT P, 2014, pp. 653-57.

In this example, *The Gameful World* is a book that is a container for the essay by Jane McGonigal.

Other Contributors

Other contributors may include people who worked as translators, narrators, directors, performers, illustrators, editors, or **other roles different from author**.

Gladstone, Brooke. *The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media*. Illustrated by Josh Neufeld, W.W. Norton, 2011.

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Zone Books, 1995.

Version

A version may include a **revised or updated edition of a book**, or a **special version** of a work, such as a director's cut of a film, or a special edition of a video game.

Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. 4th ed., Peachpit, 2015.

Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Legendary Edition, Bethesda Game Studios, 2013.

Software and mobile applications (“apps”) are often released in numbered versions.

Ulysses for Mac. Version 2.5.1, The Soulmen, 2016.

Number

Some books are published in multi-volume sets; include the volume number in a citation.

Gaiman, Neil. *The Absolute Sandman*. Illustrated by Jill Thompson et al., vol. 3, DC Comics, 2008.

Scholarly journals are typically numbered by volume and issue or number. Include both the volume and issue numbers in a citation.

Ritson, Sophie, and Kristian Camilleri. “Contested Boundaries: The String Theory Debates and Ideologies of Science.” *Perspectives on Science*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2015, pp. 192-227. Project MUSE, muse.jhu.edu/article/579404.

Television series are usually numbered by season and episode.

“The Illustrated Woman.” *The Man in the High Castle*, created by Frank Spotnitz, season 1, episode 3, Amazon Studios, 2015.

Publisher

The name of the **publisher of a book** can usually be found on the title page or copyright page. When listing publisher names, abbreviate University Press as “UP” and omit words like “Company,” “Inc.,” and “Ltd.”

Carr, Nicholas. *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. W.W. Norton, 2010.

Jenkins, Henry. *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York UP, 2006.

The name of the **publisher of a website** may be found on a home page or “about” page, in most cases. Look for the name of a publisher, sponsoring organization, or university.

“Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.” *The Met*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016, www.metmuseum.org/toah/chronology/.

You do not need to include the name of a publisher for journals and newspapers, for works like blogs that are published by the author, or for websites with titles that are identical to the name of the publisher.

Publication Date

Include the most recent relevant date in your citation. If you are citing a newspaper or magazine published both in print and online, cite the date of the version you consulted.

Sims, David. "Why All Movie Theaters Should Ban Cell Phones."
The Atlantic, 14 Apr. 2016, [www.theatlantic.com/
entertainment/archive/2016/04/
why-movie-theaters-should-ban-cellphones/478287/](http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/04/why-movie-theaters-should-ban-cellphones/478287/).

Note the format for dates in MLA style: 14 Apr. 2016.

Names of months are shortened as follows: Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

Comments on blogs or web pages sometimes include a time as well as a date of posting.

Gielow, Virginia. Comment on "The Key Book Publishing Paths: 2016." *Jane Friedman*, 14 Apr. 2016, 10:15 a.m., janefriedman.com/key-book-publishing-path/#comments.

Location

For print sources, include a page number or a range of page numbers. For one-page sources, use "p." and for multiple pages use "pp."

Goett, Pamela. "Houston, We Have a Problem." Editorial. *Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2002, p. 2.

For a range of page numbers, include only two digits for the second number, unless more are needed for clarity.

1-27

115-36

256-307

1412-15

For **e-books**, it is generally not possible to cite a location that is useful across different devices and file types. E-books are generally cited like print books. You do not need to include "Kindle" or "Nook file" but you do need to include the same information you would in a citation for a printed book.

Because locations and numbering systems vary from device to device, do not cite a location number or percentage indicator for an e-book in place of a page number. If you need to refer to a specific location in an e-book, cite a stable chapter number or part number that would be consistent for users of different devices: (ch. 2), or (part 3), for example.

For online sources, include a URL or DOI in most cases. Many scholarly articles use digital object identifiers, or **DOIs**. These are the preferred way to cite a location for an online source, because they are stable, consistent, and relatively short.

Rae, James R., et al. "Do Motivations for Using Facebook Moderate the Association between *Facebook* Use and Psychological Well-Being?" *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 771, 2015, pp. 1-9. *Academic Search Complete*, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00771.

If you cannot find a DOI, look for a stable link or a "**permalink**." Look for a "cite this" or "share" button on the website. These will often generate a stable or permanent link that you can copy into your citation.

Ritson, Sophie, and Kristian Camilleri. "Contested Boundaries: The String Theory Debates and Ideologies of Science." *Perspectives on Science*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2015, pp. 192-227. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/579404.

Johnson, Steven. "Yes, People Still Read, but Now It's Social." *The New York Times*, 19 June 2010, nyti.ms/1Blxg2o.

If you cannot find a stable or permanent link, copy the URL (web address) from your browser and include that as the location. Do not use URLs from link shortening sites like *Bitly*, because these may change or disappear. Omit "http://" from all web addresses, and be sure to end the citation with a period.

Sims, David. "Why All Movie Theaters Should Ban Cell Phones." *The Atlantic*, 14 Apr. 2016, www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/04/why-movie-theaters-should-ban-cellphones/478287/.

5

Creating In-Text Citations

In MLA style, a works-cited list and in-text citations work together to guide readers to your sources. An in-text citation, usually the author's name and a page number, is placed in parentheses in the body of your text, often next to the quoted words or ideas used from a source. The in-text citation points readers to the corresponding entry in your works-cited list where readers can find complete information about the source.

The following example shows how the in-text citation and works-cited entry for the same source work together.

IN-TEXT CITATION

Every time a new communication technology is invented, people argue about whether it will bring about “a technological apocalypse or a utopia” (Thompson 7).

WORKS-CITED ENTRY

Thompson, Clive. *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better*. Penguin Press, 2013.

MLA style allows for flexibility in your in-text citations. If the author is named in your sentence, you do not need to repeat the author's name in the citation. Here are several options you can use to create in text citations.

- Adding an introductory signal phrase and parenthetical citation:

Technology writer Clive Thompson argues that every time a new technology appears, pundits argue about whether it will bring about the end of civilization or the beginning of a wonderful new era (7).

- Incorporating a direct quotation and a signal phrase:

Clive Thompson, a well-known technology writer, argues that every time a new technology has appeared, “cultural prophets” have debated “whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia” (7).

- Incorporating a longer direct quotation and naming the author in a parenthetical citation:

The printing press, newspapers, and the telegraph have each generated controversy as they appeared in daily life. One historian of technology argues that this controversy happens every time a new communication technology is introduced: “With every innovation, cultural prophets bickered over whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia” (Thompson 7).

For quotations longer than four lines, use what is called a “**block quotation.**” Indent the entire quoted passage one-half inch, and do not enclose it in quotation marks. Include a parenthetical citation after the ending period.

Technology writer Clive Thompson argues that every time a new technology appears, pundits argue about whether it will bring about the end of civilization or the beginning of a wonderful new era:

Every new tool shapes the way we think, as well as what we think about. The printed word helped

make our cognition linear and abstract, along with vastly enlarging our stores of knowledge. Newspapers shrank the world; then the telegraph shrank it even more dramatically. With every innovation, cultural prophets bickered over whether we were facing a technological apocalypse or a utopia. (7)

The basic pattern for in-text citations is relatively simple: (author page number). Note that there is no punctuation between the author's name and the page number. But there are a few situations in which you may need to include additional information to avoid confusion.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

TWO OR MORE SOURCES BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Include a short form of the source's title in the citation.

(Thompson, *Smarter* 7)

(Thompson, "Minecraft" 12)

TWO OR MORE AUTHORS WITH THE SAME LAST NAME

Add the first initial to your citation.

(C.Thompson 7)

(N.Thompson 65)

SOURCES WITH TWO AUTHORS

Include both author's last names, separated by and, plus a page number.

(Apfelbaum and Cezzar 54)

SOURCES WITH THREE OR MORE AUTHORS

Include the first author's name followed by "et al." and the page number. There is no comma between the author's name and "et al."

(Losh et al. 64)

SOURCES WITH NO AUTHOR LISTED

Identify the source by a short version of the title that appears in the work-cited list.

IN-TEXT CITATION

(*Beowulf* 134)

WORK-CITED ENTRY

Beowulf. Translated by Seamus Heaney, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000.

SOURCES WITHOUT PAGE NUMBERS

Many websites and online sources do not include page numbers. If the source includes numbered paragraphs, use the abbreviation *par.* or *pars.* If the source includes numbered chapters or sections, use the abbreviations *sec.* (*secs.*) or *ch.* (*chs.*) to refer to those. If the citation begins with an author's name, place a comma after the name.

(De Landa, par. 5)

(Brookings, pars. 6-7)

(Lovelace, ch. 17)

(Davidson, secs. 3-5)

If a source has no page numbers or other numbered parts or chapters, do not count paragraphs or create your own numbering system. Simply refer to

the source as a whole and describe in the body of your text as much as you can about the specific location within the source you are citing.

AUDIO AND VIDEO SOURCES

For audio and video sources, cite a specific location using a time code, which will usually be displayed in a media player. Use the format hour:minute:seconds with colons separating each element.

(Fly Plugins 00:03:15-17)

6

Researching Online: Special Cases and Examples

MLA documentation style is designed to provide flexible guidelines for citing many types of sources, in both print and digital forms. Using the basic template for works-cited entries, you can construct a citation for any type of source.

Finding sources that are relevant and credible for a college research project requires time and thought. A basic *Google* keyword search may provide a long list of potential sources, but it is often not the best strategy for finding appropriate scholarly sources. This chapter introduces a few useful strategies for searching and citing online sources.

GOOGLE SCHOLAR

Google Scholar is a specialized search engine that allows you to search for scholarly literature in many disciplines. Searching *Google Scholar* will provide you very different results than a similar search in an open Google query. *Google Scholar* focuses on peer-reviewed and academic sources, and provides credible sources for a college research project. To learn more about *Google Scholar*, go to scholar.google.com/intl/us/scholar/about.html.

In many cases, a *Google Scholar* search will deliver results from another database, as in this example.

Moreno, Megan A., et al. "Feeling Bad on Facebook: Depression Disclosures by College Students on a Social Networking Site." *Depression and Anxiety*, vol. 28, no. 6, 2011, pp. 447-55. *Wiley Online Library*, doi:10.1002/da.20805.

LIBRARY DATABASES

At many colleges and universities, students pay a technology fee as part of their tuition bill, and a portion of this fee goes to provide subscriptions to library databases. Your school's library provides a gateway to specialized sources in many academic disciplines that go far beyond what you can find through an open *Google* search.

Your library probably offers tutorials and consultation sessions to help you learn to use specialized databases. In many cases, you can make an appointment to work with a librarian to get started on a research project. Your writing class may also be invited to a special workshop or training session at the library. It's a good idea to take advantage of these opportunities. Library databases can be a little intimidating at first, but with practice you will be able to find high-quality sources for research projects on academic topics.

On your library website, look for a link to "Articles and Databases." You can usually search by discipline, by topic, or use a specific database. You may find dozens or even hundreds of individual databases, each focusing on a specific field or topic. Some good databases to start with for general searches include:

- *Academic Search Complete*. Provides access to full-text magazines and scholarly journals in multiple subjects.
- *CQ Researcher*. Provides full-text reports and analysis of current events and controversial issues.
- *MLA International Bibliography*. Indexes journal articles, books, and dissertations on language, literature, folklore, linguistics, and related topics.
- *Project MUSE*. Provides full-text access to scholarly journals in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
- *PsycINFO*. Indexes journals, dissertations, book chapters, and technical reports in psychology, psychiatry, and related disciplines.

Consult your library's list of databases to learn more and identify specific databases to use in your projects.

IMAGES AND MEDIA

Images, photographs, maps, advertisements, video, and audio sources need to be documented using the same basic guidelines for citing print sources in MLA style. Include as much descriptive information as necessary to help readers understand the type and nature of the source you are citing. You can include a descriptive phrase in place of (or following) a title, or you can add a descriptive term (like “Transcript” or “Address”) at the end of the citation.

PAINTING

Mechau, Frank. *Rodeo Pick-Up Man*. 1930. Denver Art Museum, denverartmuseum.org/collections/western-american-art.

PHOTOGRAPH

Highsmith, Carol M. “Magnolia Cemetery, Mobile, Alabama.” *Highsmith Archive*, 2010, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010637019/.

MAP

“Lansing, Michigan.” Map. *Google Maps*, 2016, www.google.com/maps/@42.7088481,-84.6994643,11z.

VIDEO

McGonigal, Jane. “Gaming and Productivity.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Big Think, 3 July 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E.

ADVERTISEMENT

“Nike – Better for It.” Advertisement. American Broadcasting Company, 5 May 2015.

CITATIONS IN MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS

You may be asked to deliver your research project in a form other than a printed essay or research paper. Slide presentations, oral reports, websites, and videos are common forms you may use to deliver a research presentation. How do you cite sources in these multimedia projects? The *MLA Handbook* offers a few suggestions.

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS (POWERPOINT OR KEYNOTE)

Include brief citations on each slide that incorporates text, images, or data from another source, and add a works-cited list on a slide at the end.

VIDEOS

Include overlay text at the bottom of the screen to provide information about source material, and include complete citations in the closing credits.

WEB PAGES AND SITES

Link citations to online sources, and include a works-cited list as an appendix or linked page to provide complete citations.

7

Sample Works-Cited List

Works Cited

- Johnson, Steven. *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*. Riverhead Books, 2010.
- . "Yes, People Still Read, but Now It's Social." *The New York Times*, 19 June 2010, nyti.ms/1Blxg2o.
- McGonigal, Jane. "Gaming and Productivity." *YouTube*, uploaded by Big Think, 3 July 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E.
- Moreno, Megan A., et al. "Feeling Bad on Facebook: Depression Disclosures by College Students on a Social Networking Site." *Depression and Anxiety*, vol. 28, no. 6, 2011, pp. 447-55. *Wiley Online Library*, doi:10.1002/da.20805.
- Rae, James R., et al. "Do Motivations for Using Facebook Moderate the Association between Facebook Use and Psychological Well-Being?" *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 771, 2015, pp. 1-9. *Academic Search Complete*, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00771.
- Thompson, Clive. *Smarter Than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better*. Penguin Press, 2013.
- Walz, Steffen P., and Sebastian Deterding, editors. *The Gameful World: Approaches, Issues, Applications*. MIT P, 2014.

- Entries in the works-cited list are arranged in alphabetical order, by author's last name (or by title, for works with no author).
- When an entry flows onto a second line (or more), indent second and subsequent lines one-half inch from the left margin ("hanging indent").
- To list more than one work by the same author, list the author's name for the first entry and then replace the name in the second and following citations with three hyphens followed by a period ("---"). Arrange works by the same author alphabetically, by title.

