While working on your research projects you will seek out sources of information. When discussing the data from the sources you consulted, you have to document them in your paper. According to the MLA format, you need to document your sources parenthetically. The following guidelines and examples are taken from the 8th edition of the Modern Language Association’s MLA Handbook.

What Should Be Documented?

The standards of scholarship require that any source of information (statement or concept) that is not your own should be documented. This includes facts, ideas, opinions, direct quotations, paraphrased material, as well as other information. However, common knowledge—information which any adult ought to know (e.g. the sun rises in the east) should not be documented. Conscientious documentation gives credit to another's ideas or opinions and indicates your integrity as an author. When you fail to document passages that are not your own, you are plagiarizing, i.e., stealing the ideas or writings of another.

Rules for the 8th edition

- **Italics are now used** everywhere instead of underlining. Do not underline titles, but use *italics* instead.
- Every entry has a **container** designation. The medium of publication is no longer stated, except when it is needed for clarity.
- When a source has three or more authors, only the first one shown in the source is normally given.

For books:
- Page numbers in the works-cited list (but not in in-text citations) are **now preceded by p. or pp**.
- For books, the **city of publication is no longer given**, except in special situations.

For journal articles:
- Issues of scholarly journals are now identified with, for instance, “**vol. 64, no. 1**” rather than “64.1”.

For online sources:
- The URL (without http:// or https://) is **now normally given for a Web source**. Angle brackets are not used around it.
The citing of DOIs (digital object identifiers) is encouraged.

Citing the date when an online work was consulted is now optional.

Placeholders for unknown information like n.d. (“no date”) are no longer used. If facts missing from a work are available in a reliable external resource, they are cited in square brackets. Otherwise, they are simply omitted.

Publishers:

When an organization is both author and publisher of a work, the organization’s name is now given only once, usually as the publisher.

In the list of Works Cited, every entry must contain the Core Elements as listed below. Each entry in the list is made up of core elements, and there are optional elements that may be included when the situation warrants. These elements are given below in the order in which they should appear.

Basic Format (core elements)

Author’s Last Name, First Name. Title of Source. Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.

*NOTE: Depending on the source you are using, you may not need to include all of the elements, but the elements you do include must appear in the same order as the list above.

More detailed examples will be given further in this document.
Parenthetical Documentation

The most practical way is to indicate within the body of your paper the sources or parts of sources you have used by enclosing your citations in parentheses within the text itself. Parenthetical citation replaces endnotes or footnotes, but it does not replace the List of Works Cited or Selected Bibliography at the end of the paper. As you'll see later in this section, you'll still need this.

Sample Parenthetical Citations

Basic format

Reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (Baron 194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

Author's name given in text

Travis Bogard makes the following claim for Desire Under The Elms: "The narrative's stress on murder and incest is potentially lurid and melodramatic, yet it also moves the work toward the special concerns of all tragic drama" (212).

Smart states that, yoga - the “harnessing of mental and physical capabilities” - is similar to the meditation experienced by mystics in other religious traditions (67).

More than one work by the same author is cited

"Mourning Becomes Electra gave one hundred and fifty performances on Broadway" (Sheaffer, Son and Artist 390).

[Complete title: O'Neill: Son and Artist as distinguished from O'Neill: Son and Playwright by the same author, Louis Sheaffer.]

Bible

Ezekiel saw “what seemed to be four living creatures,” each with the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Ezek. 1.5-10).
List of Works Cited

At the end of the paper, as previously mentioned, you must provide a list of Works Cited, an alphabetical list of all the works you have referenced in your paper.

The following rules should be followed in setting up the Works Cited section of your paper.

1. Arrange the entries alphabetically according to the authors’ last names. If you use several works by one author, list these alphabetically by title.
2. Start the entry at the left margin; all lines after the first in each entry should be indented 5 spaces.
3. Double space between and within entries.
4. Use the same format if the instructor requires a Selected Bibliography that may indicate works not actually cited in the text.

Should I use underlining or italics?

You should always use italics. All word-processing programs and computer printers permit the reproduction of italic type.

Sample Entries for List of Works Cited

Basic Format

Author’s Last Name, First Name.  *Title of Source.*  Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.


Book with one author


Book with two authors


Book with three or more authors

Work in more than one volume


Work with an editor


Work in a book with selections by various authors


Bible


Translation


Article in encyclopedia


Article in a periodical


Periodicals that do not have volume or issue numbers


Article in newspaper


Book review

Broadcast interview


When you include more than one work by an author in your list of works cited, list these alphabetically by title; instead of repeating the author's name, use three hyphens followed by a period, e.g.:


Citing Web Pages

The MLA guidelines on documenting online sources are the same as all other sources. Although no single entry will contain all information, cite what is available. Any information that is not available should be omitted. When a source does not indicate necessary facts about its publication, such as the name of the publisher or date of publication, supply as much of the missing information as possible, enclosing it in square brackets to show that it did not come from the source. Examples of this could include the publication date, page numbers or other clarifying information.

Sometimes works are created by corporate authors – an institution, an association, a government agency, or another kind of organization. The name of the corporate author is places first in the entry. When the work is published by the same organization that is the also the corporate author, skip the author element and list the organization only as publisher. When a work is published without an author’s name, do not list the author as “Anonymous.” Instead, skip the author’s element and begin with the work’s title.

Dates on web pages will sometimes conflict. Or be non-existent. Try to find a date that indicates the date of publication, the date the item was posted, or the date range of the entire web project. If there are multiple dates, use the date for the version that you consulted. As in the case of an online periodical, use the date that the article was posted online and not the date it was produced in another format. If no dates are available, leave that element blank.

Page numbers should not be included in a works-cited-list entry for an online publication. Provide only a URL or a DOI. When citing an article found in a research database, the page number information will be available, so that information should be included in the citation.
All Works Cited entries for Web sources contain the following basic information:

**Basic citation format**

Author’s Last Name, First Name. *Title of Source*. Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.

**Examples of Web Citations**

**Personal site**


**Professional site**


**E-Book**

An online book may be the electronic text of part or all of a printed book, or a book-length document available only on the Internet (e.g., a work of hyperfiction).


Bryant, Peter J. *Biodiversity and Conservation*. School of Biological Sciences, University of California, 2003. darwin.bio.uci.edu/sustain/bio65/Titlpage.htm


If you know the type of e-book consulted (e.g., Kindle, EPUB), specify it instead of “e-book”. When citing an e-book in your text, avoid using device-specific numbering systems. An e-book may include a numbering system that tells users their location in the work. Because such
numbering may vary from one device to another, do not cite it unless you know that it appears consistently to other users.

**E-Book from a subscription service such as EbscoHost or from Google Books**


**Article in an electronic journal (ejournal)**


**Article in an electronic magazine (ezine)**


**Newspaper article**


**Review**


**Editorial**

Government publication


Full text in a compiled subscription database (i.e. EbscoHost, Proquest, etc)


**Please note** that if citing an article from an article database, in pdf format, the page numbers are indicated ON THE PAGE of the document. Do not use the page numbering from the Adobe Reader software.

The examples in this STUDY GUIDE are based on the eighth edition of the Modern Language Association’s MLA Handbook. The MLA format is only one of many formats available to writers. If you need another format or writers’ manual, please consult with a Reference Librarian if you require additional assistance.

Go to: http://asbury.libguides.com/style-guides for more citation formats.