

MLA STYLE GUIDE



bcit.ca/library



Introduction

When writing a research paper, it is important to cite any sources that you have consulted in your research. You must acknowledge when you are using the ideas, information or arguments of others, whether they are directly quoted or not. Failure to do so may be construed as plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of the ideas of others as one's own and is a serious offence.

Citation information must appear in two places.

- First, it must appear in the text of your paper at the point where the borrowed fact or idea appears. See **Parenthetical References** section.
- Secondly, you are required to include a complete list of sources at the end of the paper. See **Works Cited** section.

PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES

Parenthetical references should be as brief as possible while making it clear to the reader which source is being referred to in the Works Cited list. Most require only the author's last name and the relevant page number(s). The author's name can also be used in the text, in which case it can be omitted from the parenthetical reference. **Unless otherwise noted, electronic sources follow the same pattern as printed ones.**

EXAMPLES

SINGLE AUTHOR

A new way of taking a person's pulse was discovered (Hess 16-18).

Hess notes that a new way of taking a person's pulse was discovered (16-18).

Note: If using more than one title by the same author, give the author's last name, the title of the work and page numbers in the parenthetical reference. Abbreviate the title if it is longer than a few words (but do not change the first word):

(McLuhan, *Global Village* 88)

(McLuhan, *Medium* 26)

Multiple Authors

This method has been criticized (Reynolds, Jeris, and Theodore 844).

Note: If the work has more than three authors, give the first author's last name followed by **et al.** then the page numbers:

Others have disagreed with this concept (Roby et al. 806).

No Author

Note: If there is no author, use the title (or an abbreviation if it is longer than a few words), followed by the page number(s). When using an abbreviation, make sure not to change the first word of the title.

This is stated in a recent article ("Soldering" 58).

Cite only the title of the entry for an unsigned dictionary definition.

The *Gage Canadian Dictionary* defines a keener as "a very enthusiastic or eager participant in something" ("Keener").

Corporate Author (e.g. government agencies, associations, etc.)

These were described in a recent report (Canadian Institute for Health Information 6).

Web Site

Note: Internet citations follow the style of printed works. Name the personal or corporate author(s) if they are mentioned. (On web pages, look for the author's name in a variety of places, such as the bottom of the page or elsewhere on the website.) Provide page numbers or, if the website has no numbered pages, use any other description of sections that exists on the website (e.g. numbered paragraphs). If no sections are explicitly labeled, cite the entire source (i.e. omit page or paragraph numbers).

The Iceman's last meal consisted of bread, meat and some sort of herb or greens (Fowler).

Note: Include the title if the document has no author.

Melatonin is effective in controlling jet lag, but studies examining the effects of melatonin in alleviating Seasonal Affective Disorder have not produced conclusive results ("Melatonin" par. 4).

Email Message

The city is exploring new ways of sharing data (Kleppinger).

QUOTATIONS

Short Quotations

Note: If a quotation is less than 4 lines, put it in quotation marks and incorporate it into the text. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical reference.

EXAMPLE

Dreyfus concluded “The symptoms of depression may be the cause of nursing care problems and decreased functional ability for the elderly patient” (35).

Long Quotations

Note: Quotations that are longer than 4 lines should be set off from the text by beginning a new line. It should be indented and it should be double-spaced. Quotation marks are not used. Periods come before the parenthetical reference.

EXAMPLE

Dreyfus concluded that

Depression is a very common syndrome in the medically ill elderly. The symptoms of depression may be the cause of the nursing care problems and decreased functional ability for the elderly patient. The first step in preventing these problems is early nursing assessment of his complex and often hidden problem.

(35)

Works Cited

The list of Works Cited appears on a separate page at the end of a research paper. It is a list of all the sources used in your research. List entries in alphabetical order by author’s name. If there is no author, alphabetize by title. Chapter and article titles, as well as web pages within a website, should be in double quotation marks. Italicize book and journal titles. Indicate the medium of publication at the end of every entry (e.g. Print). Double space the entire Works Cited page and indent all but the first line of each citation.

PRINT BOOKS

Basic Format

Author’s name. “Chapter Title” [if applicable]. *Book Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication.

Print.

EXAMPLES

Single Author

Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Making Globalization Work*. New York: Norton, 2007. Print.

Multiple Authors

Longhorn, Roger A., and Michael Blakemore. *Geographic Information: Value, Pricing, Production, and Consumption*. Boca Raton: CRC, 2008. Print.

Note: When a work has **more than three authors**, give the first author's name followed by **et al.**

Fleming, Carole, et al. *An Introduction to Journalism*. London: Sage, 2006. Print.

Corporate Author (e.g. government agencies, associations, etc.)

Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia. *Primary Health Care: A Nursing Perspective*. Vancouver: Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia, 2003. Print.

No Author

"Keener." *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Vancouver: Gage, 2000. Print.

Chapter in a Book

Power, Michael. "Assessing Fish Population Responses to Stress." *Biological Indicators of Aquatic Ecosystem Stress*. Ed. S. Marshall Adams. Bethesda: American Fisheries Society, 2002. Print.

Entry in an Encyclopedia

Metcalf, J. "Intuition." *Encyclopedia of Psychology*. Ed. Alan E. Kazdin. 4 vols. Washington: American Psychological Association, 2000. Print.

PRINT ARTICLES

Basic Format

Author's name. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume Number. Issue Number [omit volume and issue numbers for magazines] (Year of Publication): Page Numbers. Print.

EXAMPLES

From Printed Journals

Dreyfus, Joan K. "Depression Assessment and Interventions in the Medically Ill Frail Elderly." *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* 14.9 (1988): 27-36. Print.

Roby, Daniel D. et al. "Effects of Colony Relocation on Diet and Productivity of Caspian Terns." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 66.3 (2002): 662-673. Print.

"Soldering: Tin-Lead Solders." *Welding Journal* 81.10 (2002): 58. Print.

From Printed Magazines

Roberts, Rachel. "Keeping Fitness Fun." *Parks & Recreation* Oct. 2009: 44-47. Print.

From Printed Newspapers

Priest, Lisa. "Chemotherapy's Link to Hearing Loss Found." *Globe and Mail* 9 Nov. 2009, British Columbia ed.: A8. Print.

McMullen, Alia. "Health Reform '2 Steps Away.'" *National Post* 9 Nov. 2009, A1+. Print.

Note: For articles that are not printed on consecutive pages, write the first page number and a plus sign. Your parenthetical reference should direct the reader to the exact page on which the information is found.

ELECTRONIC BOOKS (E-BOOKS)

Web publications can be challenging to cite because they come in a growing variety of formats (e.g. an entire web site, a self-contained web-page, a pdf hosted on a web site, an e-book, a blog, a tweet, etc). Some pieces of information may be missing (e.g. date of publication). Some information about the publication may be given elsewhere (e.g. the name of the author could appear only on the hosting website's homepage). In general, be as complete as possible in order to help the reader of your paper identify your sources, but realize you may have to omit elements that are simply not available.

Basic Format

Author's name [if available]. *Title of Book*. Version or Edition [if applicable]. Place: Name of Publisher, Year of Publication. *Title of Overall Website or Database*. Web. Date of access.

EXAMPLES

E-Book from a Web Site

Kelly, Charles M. *The Destructive Achiever: Power and Ethics in the American Corporation*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1988. *Google Books*. Web. 9 Nov. 2009.

Note: MLA does not **require** that a url be included in the citation to a website. However, if your instructor asks that it be included, or if the web page is difficult to find using a search engine like Google, it can be added to the end of the citation between angle brackets:

Kelly, Charles M. *The Destructive Achiever: Power and Ethics in the American Corporation*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1988. *Google Book Search*. Web. 9 Nov. 2009. <http://books.google.ca/books?id=L5ktCYt-a1EC&lpg=PA199&dq=ethics&lr=&as_drrb_is=b&as_minm_is=1&as_miny_is=1900&as_maxm_is=1&as_maxy_is=2000&as_brr=1&as_pt=BOOKS&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>.

E-Book from a Database

Epstein, Gene. *Econospinning: How to Read between the Lines When the Media Manipulates the Numbers*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2006. *Books24x7*. Web. 19 Nov. 2009.

An Entry in an Online Reference Book

"Albania." *The World Factbook*. Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 2008. *Bartelby.com*. Web. 19 Nov. 2009.

Santos, Neide, Flavia Maria Santoro, and Marcos R.S. Borges. "Collaborative Writing in E-Learning Environments." *Encyclopedia of E-Collaboration*. Ed. Ned Nock. Hershey: Information Science Reference, 2008. *Books24x7*. Web. 19 Nov. 2009.

ELECTRONIC ARTICLES

Cite online articles in much the same way as print articles, including such information as journal title and volume number. Provide page numbers when possible. However, there may be no page numbers, or the journal may use page numbers in a new sequence for each article rather than numbering them continuously across the issue (e.g. every article in the issue begins with page 1). In both of these cases, use "n. pag." instead.

Basic Format

Author's name. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume Number. Issue Number [if available] (Year of Publication):

Page Numbers [if available and continuous with rest of journal issue; otherwise use "n.pag."]. Name of

Database [Omit if citing an article retrieved directly from the web]. Web. Date of Access.

EXAMPLES

Article from the Web

Lind, Steven J. "Reading *Peanuts*: The Secular and the Sacred." *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies* 4.2

(2008): n. pag. Web. 21 Nov. 2009.

Note: MLA does not **require** that a url be included in the citation to a website. However, if your instructor asks that it be included, or if the web page is difficult to find using a search engine like Google, it can be added to the end of the citation between angle brackets: e.g.

<http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v4_2/lind/>

Article from a Library Database

Osteen, Mark. "Noir's Cars: Automobility and Amoral Space in American Film Noir." *Journal of Popular Film &*

Television 35.4 (2008): 183-192. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 21 Nov. 2009.

OTHER WEB PUBLICATIONS AND ONLINE SOURCES

Basic Format

Name of author, compiler, director, editor, etc. [Note that this may be a corporate author]. Title of the Work [italized if the work is independent; or in quotation marks if it is part of a larger work]. Title of the Overall Website in italics [if distinct from title of the work]. Version or edition. Publisher or sponsor of the site [if not available, use "N.p."], Date of publication [if not available, use "n.d."]. Web. Date of Access.

EXAMPLES

Web Page

Farid, Hany. "Photo Tampering Throughout History." *Dartmouth Computer Science*. Dartmouth College Computer Science Department, n.d. Web. 4 Nov. 2009.

Note: MLA does not **require** that a url be included in the citation to a website. However, if your instructor asks that it be included, or if the web page is difficult to find using a search engine such as Google, it can be added to the end of the citation between angle brackets (<>): e.g. <<http://www.cs.dartmouth.edu/farid/research/digitaltampering/>>

Web Site

BCIT Library. *BCIT Library*. British Columbia Institute of Technology, n.d. Web. 21 Nov. 2009.

Government Report

Note: In most cases, the author of a government report is the government agency. For clarity, you may wish to provide the name of the government (e.g. Canada) followed by the name of the department and agency (if any). Then follow the basic format for web documents, but be prepared to improvise when you need to document unique features. For example, if there is also a personal author, you may wish to insert this information with "By," "Ed." etc. after the document title.

Canada. Industry Canada. Office of Consumer Affairs. *Canadian Consumer Handbook 2008-2009: Being a Wise Consumer Means Being Informed*. Industry Canada, n.d. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

British Columbia. Ministry of Environment. Environmental Stewardship Division. *Wetland Ways: Interim Guidelines for Wetland Protection and Conservation in British Columbia*. By Robert K. Cox and Judith Cullington. Ministry of Environment, Mar. 2009. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

Entry in a Weblog (Blog)

Sullivan, Andrew. "The Morning After." *The Daily Dish*. Atlantic Monthly, 2 Dec. 2009. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

Message Posted to an Online Discussion List or Comment Section

Lanier, Chris. "Ben Katchor." *Comics Journal Message Board*. Comics Journal, 1 Oct. 2006. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

Bryce. Comment. "Is an 'Educated' Person a Healthy Person?" "A Different Kind of Test." By Jennifer Epstein. *Inside Higher Ed* 20 Nov. 2009. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

Email Message

Kleppinger, Eugene. "How to Cite Information from the Web." Message to Andrew Harnack. 10 Jan. 2009. E-mail.

VIDEOS

Basic Format

Title. "Dir." Followed by Name of Director [if available]. "Prod." Followed by Name of Producer [optional]. "Screenplay by" Followed by Name of Writer [optional]. Perf." Followed by Name of Performers [optional]. Distributor, Year of release. Medium.

EXAMPLES

Video on DVD or VHS

The Corporation. Dir. March Achbar and Jennifer Abbott. Prod. Mark Achbar and Bart Simpson. Filmwest Associates, 2003. DVD.

The Biology of Bacteria. BioMEDIA Associates, 1999. Videocassette.

Online Streaming Video

Clay Shirky: How Cellphones, Twitter, Facebook Can Make History. 16 June 2009. YouTube. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

For Further Information

For more information on MLA style, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, available in the Library (Reference LB 2369 G53 2009), or try the following websites:

BCIT Library Citation Style

<http://www.bcit.ca/library/citations.shtml>

Hacker, Diana. *Research and Documentation Online*.

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/> (or simply Google: diana hacker)

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

A growing number of websites offer examples and explanations of MLA style. To find examples of types of citations not covered in this guide or in the *MLA Handbook*, Google “mla citation” and keywords for the type of document you want to cite. Remember to choose reliable websites, such as those produced by a university, university library, or university writing centre.

CITATION BUILDERS

Online citation tools can save a lot of time. **Citation builders** help you create a formatted works cited list after you input information such as author and title. For example, try:

North Carolina State University Libraries - Citation Builder

<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/lobo2/citationbuilder/index.php>

BibMe

<http://www.bibme.org/>

To further automate the citation process, you may wish to learn to use **reference management software**. A popular choice is the free Firefox add-on **Zotero**: http://www.zotero.org/support/quick_start_guide

You can use software like **Zotero** to organize your sources as you research, and you can even install it as a plugin for your word processor, allowing you to automatically cite sources as you write. Note that Microsoft Word 2007 also has built-in reference management features—click the References tab to access them.

However, please be aware that online citation tools are not perfect. There will sometimes be mistakes. You should **always proofread**, and if necessary edit, your citations to make sure they meet the current requirements of MLA style.

February 2010