MLA Style
Footnotes & Bibliography

What is a Reference Citation?

All research is based on research preceding it, and writers are required to reference, or document, the original sources of information used. **Any directly quoted or paraphrased ideas, words or facts taken from another must be referenced.** Failure to credit the work of others is plagiarism, or literary theft.

What is MLA Style Reference Citation?

The Modern Language Association's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* provides detailed information on referencing authors and their works. It is a widely accepted style in the humanities disciplines. The MLA Handbook provides instructions for using both an in-text and note oriented referencing format. Consult your instructor on their preference.

Using This Guide

In-text and note references will be described. Following these descriptions, sample references of each type will be provided. Some of the examples are taken directly from the *MLA Handbook*. Detailed information on direct quotations, use of quotation marks, abbreviations, or formatting issues such as spacing and margins within the paper itself is not provided (spacing and margin information is provided as it relates to references). Consult the *MLA Handbook* on these topics.

In-Text References

The *MLA Handbook* advocates in-text referencing. The two main features of in-text referencing are parenthetical references and the Works Cited page. Instead of the traditional endnotes or footnotes, the writer uses references enclosed in parentheses within the text. These references refer to a list of works arranged alphabetically at the end of the paper. Notes, described in the Endnotes and Footnotes section below, can still be used with in-text references for comments and explanations that cannot be accommodated in the main text of the paper.

Provide only the information necessary to clearly and accurately identify the source of information. Do not allow references to interrupt the flow of the text. Place them at the end of the phrase, clause, sentence, or paragraph being referenced. Follow the reference with the appropriate punctuation placed outside the parentheses. References should be placed outside quotation marks. If, however, the reference is set off from the text, as with a long block quote, type a space and place the reference after the punctuation. Compile the Works Cited page before the actual writing of the paper, so that you will know what to reference.

Note: Parentheses are not required when referencing an entire source. Instead, include the name of the author(s) or the title in the body of the text. For example: "Mouly gives a comprehensive description of...", or "Winger and Ziske argue that...", or "*Exposed* provides an intriguing...."

Rules and Examples of Parenthetical Reference to Specific Parts of a Work

The following rules and examples pertain to situations in which you have to reference a specific part of a work. Note: basic rules carry over from one referencing situation to another, even if no specific sample is provided below. For example, you reference multiple authors with more than one work cited just like a single author with multiple works cited. Consult the latest edition of the MLA Handbook if you are unsure of how to reference something.

1a. Single Author- Name in Reference: Enclose the name and page number in parentheses and insert it in the text. For example:

Research is best conceived as a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through systematic retrieval and interpretation of data (Mouly 12).

(Mouly 12) indicates that the information in the sentence was found on page 12 of Mouly's work. Complete information about this source is provided on the Works Cited list under the author's name. Note: Use a first initial to distinguish between authors with the same last name. For example: (J.Smith) or (L. Smith 142).

1b. Single Author- Name in Text: Enclose only the page number. For example:

As Mouly states, research is a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems (12).

2. Single Author- Multiple Works Cited: When citing multiple works by an author, include a short version of the title. Place a comma after the author's name if it is included in the reference. For example:

Research is best conceived as a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Mouly, Educational 12).

or

Mouly states that, research is best conceived as a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Educational 12).

3. Multiple Authors: For up to three authors, include them all. If more than three, use "et al." after the first author's name. For Example:

Chen, Johnson and Hickman emphatically support this interpretation (23).

or

This interpretation has strong detractors, too. (Parnall et al. 98-100).

4. Corporate authors: Same rules as individual authors. For example:

A 1995 University of Toledo report supports this conclusion (14).

or

A report completed in 1995 supports this conclusion (University of Toledo 14).

5. Works Referenced by Title: Short titles are completely enclosed in parentheses. Long titles are shortened beginning with the word by which they are alphabetized, excluding initial articles (A, An, The). Underline or italicized book titles, and enclose article titles in quotation marks. Follow the title with a page number when applicable. For example:

Serious disagreements surround the results (Guidelines). [Full title: Guidelines for TV Violence]

or

The current level of television violence disturbs many parents ("Television Violence" 42).

6a Multivolume Work- Entire Volume: Include a comma after the authors name, write "vol." followed by the volume number. For example:

Profound changes shook the very foundation of their belief system (Winger, vol. 6).

6b. Multivolume Work- Specific Page(s): Include the volume number, add a colon and then the page number(s). For example:

The entire situation was out of control between 1960 and 1962 (Hulka 6: 111-113)

or

Hulka writes that the entire situation was out of control between 1960 and 1962 (6: 111-113).

7a. Literary Works- Novels and Plays: Because these works often appear in different editions, provide additional location information after the page number, such as chapter or act. Place a semi-colon after the page number and abbreviate the additional location, such as ch. (chapter) or sec. (section). Separate multiple divisions with a comma. For example:

Sastre's version has William Tell's sons urging him to shoot (315; sc. 6).

or

In Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov is the victim of contradictory emotions (Dostoevsky 1; pt. 1, ch. 1).

7b. Literary Works- Poems and Classic Verse Plays: Omit page numbers and refer directly to divisions (acts, scenes, cantos, etc.) and lines. Separate the various numbers with periods, e.g., Iliad 9.19 refers to book 9, line 19. Precede numbers with the title if it is not already included in the text. If using line numbers only, include the word "line" or "lines" in the first reference and use only the number thereafter. Note: use Arabic numerals unless instructed otherwise. For example:

In Hamlet, the prince declares confidently, "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King" (2.2.633-34).

or

The Dean and Chapter manuscript version of Octovian ends more formally: "And thus endis Octouean / That in his tym was a doghety man..." (Lines 1629-30).

Note: See chapter six of the Handbook for general literary abbreviations, and those for specific famous literary works and title of the books of the Bible.

8. Indirect Sources: If an indirect, i.e., second hand, source is the only one available, precede it with "qtd. in". You may document the original source in a note. For example:

He admitted freely that Burke was the better man (qtd. in Oxenberger 46).

9. Multiple Works in One Reference: Refer to each work as before and use a semi-colon to separate them. For example:

Some scholars take exception to this view (Mouly 23; Winger 149-150; Guidelines 29).

Creating a Works Cited Page

Entries, called citations, usually have three significant divisions- author's name in reverse order, title and publication information, each followed by a period. For citations longer than one line, indent subsequent lines five spaces (1/2 inch). Italicize or underline titles. For example:

Mouly, George J. *Educational Research: The Art and Science of Investigation.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1978.

This book entry states that the author's name is George J. Mouly and that its title is Educational Research: The Art and Science of Investigation. The rest of the information refers to the place of publication which is Boston, the publisher, which is Allyn and Bacon, and the year of publication, 1978.

Place the list of citations at the end of the paper on their own page, which is numbered sequentially with the rest of the paper. Place the page number one-half inch from the top, flush with the right margin. Leave one inch margins. Label the page, "Works Cited", indicating that what follows was cited within the text. Center the heading one inch from the top of the page. Begin entries two spaces below the heading flush with the left margin. Double space within and between entries. Use as many pages as necessary to continue the list.

Arrange the list alphabetically by the author's last name or the first important word in title. Ignore the articles "A", "An", and "The" when they begin a title. Use the letter-by-letter alphabetizing system, which calls for the following:

    Alphabetize on the letters of the last name, ignoring spaces and punctuation. For example:
        Descartes, Rene
        De Sica, Vittorio
    Consider the first name or initial when two or more last names are identical. For example:
        Morris, Robert
        Morris, William
    When two or more co-authored citations begin with the same last names, alphabetize on the last name of the second author listed. For example:
        Winger, John, and Albert Hulka
        Winger, John, and Ray Ziske

List multiple works by one author alphabetically by title, preceded by three dashes, after giving the author's name in the first citation. This rule does not apply when multiple authors are involved. For example:

Winger, John. The New Model Army. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968.

---. Our Army at War. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1973.

Sample Works Cited Page

Works Cited

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957

---. Language and Meaning in Criticism. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1971.

"Six Elements of Modern Literary Criticism." PMLA 109 (1994): 34-45.

Wallace, Ronald, and Sheryl Pratt-Wallace. A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1970. New Haven:
    Yale UP, 1992.