What is the MLA Referencing Style?

The Modern Languages Association of America (MLA) style is one of the most popular ‘Harvard-type’ referencing styles (*MLA is also known as inline citations or parenthetical referencing style*). MLA citation style is based on the 7th edition of the “MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers” published by the Modern Language Association of America in 2009.

This style is generally used in humanities subjects including languages, literature, art and philosophy.

NOTE: When you are asked to use MLA style when referencing, always follow your department’s specific recommendations.

How to create MLA ‘in-text’ citations

The MLA referencing style uses the author’s family name and page details for general in-text citation. When an author’s name is mentioned in the text, the page number should be cited.

Citing more than one reference in a sentence

When you need to cite more than one reference in the same sentence, they should be separated with a semicolon. If two authors have the same surname, their initials should be used before

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Variation in language with age may be due partly to the inevitable biological effects of ageing (Cook 169).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cook concluded that… (225).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Described by Cashdan philosophies of learning (5-8) indicate that….</td>
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</table>

Citing a book with more than two authors

When referencing a book with more than two authors they all need to be cited. If a source has four or more authors then you can use *et al.* after first author’s name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<td>- Language development is … (Cook 225; Cashdan 8).</td>
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Examples:

- There is a high degree of linguistic reinforcement … (Maley and Duff 229).
- It is probably true that assimilatory phenomena are greater in casual than in precise formal speech (Graddol, Cheshire and Swann 46).
- Research suggests that college completion is tied to institutional revenues (Braxton et al. 16).
How to create your MLA Bibliography or Cited Works List

- According to the MLA Handbook, references within your text must clearly point to specific sources in the *Cited Works List or Bibliography* that appears at the end of your assignment.
- All sources are listed alphabetically according to the Author’s name. If there is more than one author, their names must begin with full forenames. If the cited source has no author just an editor or compiler, a comma has to be placed after the final name and abbreviation *ed.* or *comp.* added.
- The title of a reference also needs to be italicised and the first word of the title or subtitle, all nouns, verbs and adjectives need to be capitalized.
- Chapters of edited books, the title of journal articles or titles of poems from collected editions should be enclosed in quotation marks and not italicised.
- All sources listed in Cited Works must include the medium in which they were published i.e. Print, Web, Film, CD-ROM, or DVD.

A book with a single author should be referenced in the following way.

- **Author/Editor Surname, Forename. Title.** Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Medium of publication

  Examples:

A book with up to three authors should be referenced in the following way.

- **Author Surname, Forename, Author Forename, Surname, and Author Forename, Surname. Title.** Place of publication: Publisher, Year. Medium.

  Examples:

**NOTE:** MLA requires using shortened forms of the publishers’ name (e.g. Oxford UP instead of Oxford University Press) while omitting articles and business abbreviations e.g. Co., Corp., Ltd.
A book with more than three authors should be referenced in the following way.
- First Author Surname, Forename, et al. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher, Year. Medium.

Example:

A book chapter in an edited book should be referenced in the following way.

Example:

An eBook should be referenced in the following way.
- Author/Editor Surname, Forename. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher, Year. *Online Library or Retrieval Service*. Web. Date of access.

Example:

A Print journal article should be referenced in the following way.

Example:
An E-journal article should be referenced in the following way.


Example:

A Website should be referenced in the following way.

- Authors Surname, Forename. *Name of internet site*. Year of creation. Web. Date of access. <URL> of website.

Example:

**NOTE:** When referencing a journal article from an online database or other electronic source, the particular name of this source needs to be included in italics i.e. Web as the medium of publication and date of access. The latest revision of MLA no longer requires inclusion of the URL of the website at the end of the reference. However you should check with your lecturer to see if they require this to be listed. When including the URL, it should be placed immediately after date of access and a full stop within a set of angle brackets <>.

A Musical score should be referenced in the following way.

- Composer’s Surname, Forename. *Title*. Date of composition. Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Medium of publication. Series.

Example:

**NOTE:** Published musical scores or librettos need to be treated like a book, abbreviations no. and op. should be capitalised. If the score is part of a series, this information needs to be included after the medium of publication. When citing a musical score, the names of the composer need to appear first but for libretto an entry starts with name of librettist and the composer names follows the title.
A Poem in an anthology or collection should be referenced in the following way.

- Author of poem Surname, Forename. “Title of poem”. *Title of anthology/collection*. Ed. or Comp. First Name Surname. Place of publication: Publisher, Year. Page numbers. Medium.

Example:

A Film or DVD should be referenced in the following way.

- *Title of film*. Dir. Director’s name. Name of distributor, Year of release. Medium.

Example:

Example of an MLA Bibliography (Cited Works List) in Alphabetical order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Publication Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>