MLA Citation

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What is MLA Citation?

Modern Language Association (MLA) citation style is a cross reference system that requires in-text citations and a works cited page listing the works (sources) cited within the text. This handout follows the new 2016 Eighth Edition rules and format. Students should always defer to their professors' preferred formatting style.

In-Text Citations

Whenever you use or refer to information you found in an outside source, you must cite it within your paper. This includes quotes, paraphrase, summary, or argument structure. In-text citations always refer to sources listed on your works cited page, and any source on your works cited page must have in-text citations. Generally, in-text citations include the author's last name and the page number from the source you are citing. Here are some example in-text citations:

- **Author stated in the sentence:** In this line, Rushdie establishes Hashim as being representative of humanity by Hashim's insistence on being "of this world" (1519).

- **Author not stated in a sentence with a quote:** Ironically, Lily, too, is fated "to be dingy" at the end of the novel - dying in a dingy boarding house (Wharton 30).

- **Author not stated in a sentence with a paraphrase:** Wharton extensively explored the role and desires of women (McDowell 1).

- **Internet source, no page numbers:** Bosworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (Wordsworth).

- **Internet source, no author, no page numbers:** Bosworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process ("Wordsworth's Poetry").

The Core Elements

1. Author.
2. Title of Source.
3. Title of Container,
4. Other Contributors,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication Date,
9. Location.

What are the Core Elements:

On the left, you'll find the core elements you'll need to build an MLA citation. The back of this handout contains more detailed descriptions about each of the core elements.

How to Use the Core Elements:

Follow the order in which each element is listed, filling in the information from your source. Use the appropriate punctuation, as shown here. If an element is not applicable to the source, skip to the next element.

What is a Container?

The 8th edition of MLA introduces the idea of the container to citation. A container is the larger whole containing the source. For example, this could be a book containing poems or short stories; or a database containing journal articles; or a website.

MLA Format, *Cont'd*

1. Author.

The creator of the source you are citing.

> Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Edited by Glennis Byron, Broadview Press, 2000.

If there are two authors, the second author's name is in standard format (First then Last Name). If there are three or more authors, put the first author's name (Last Name, First Name) followed by a comma then et al.

> Gaiman, Neil, and Terry Pratchett. *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*. HarperTorch, 28 Nov. 2006.

If the role of the person you are citing is different than writer, indicate their relation to the source. For example, editors, translators, performers, and directors would be indicated in the citation.

> Streep, Meryl, performer. *The Devil Wears Prada*. Fox 2000 Pictures, 2006.

2. Title of Source.

The name of the contained work. The titles of poems, short stories, plays, and articles contained in a larger source are put in quotation marks. For example, you might find a short story inside an anthology, database, or on a website. Italicize long whole works included in larger source (container).

> Gray, Thomas. "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*.
> Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 9th ed.,vol. 1, W. W. Norton, 2013, pp. 1395-6.

3. Title of Container,

The container of your source. For example, this could an anthology, a database, or a website. Italicize the container.

> Gray, Thomas. "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*.
> Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 9th ed.,vol. 1, W. W. Norton, 2013, pp. 1395-6.

4. Other Contributors,

Enter the names of any other important contributors, if necessary. Write the name in standard format, preceded by their relation to the source.

> Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Edited by Glennis Byron, Broadview Press, 2000.

5. Version,

If the source has been released in more than one form, note the version in your citation. An example of this is a revised version. Simply write "Revised edition" for the notation. Same for abridged versions, etc.

> Gray, Thomas. "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*.
> Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 9th ed.,vol. 1, W. W. Norton, 2013, pp. 1395-6.

MLA Format, *Cont'd*

6. Number**,**

If the source you are citing was released as part of a numbered sequence, such as volumes or issues, cite this here. For example, a journal article might be the first article in the fifth volume, so write "vol. 5, no. 1" in your entry.

> Jones, Casey. "The relationship between writing centers and improvement in writing ability: an assessment of the literature." *Education*, vol. 122, no. 1, 2001, p. 3+. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, GALE|A80856249, Accessed 1 Nov. 2016.

7. Publisher**,**

The organization that produced the source. For a book, this might be the publishing company, omitting words like "company" and "Inc." (example: W. W. Norton & Company would be W. W. Norton).

> Gray, Thomas. "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*.
>
> Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 9th ed.,vol. 1, W. W. Norton, 2013, pp. 1395-6.

8. Publication Date**,**

The date that the source was published. Use as much information as you are given. If there is a full date, put that; if only the publication year is available, enter that.

> Díaz, Junot. "The Cheater's Guide to Love." *The New Yorker,* 23 Jul. 2012, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/07/23/
>
> the-cheaters-guide-to-love

9. Location**.**

In printed works, the location refers to the page or page range within a container. Use *p.* and *pp.* preceded by the page number or page range, respectively.

> Gray, Thomas. "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*.
>
> Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 9th ed.,vol. 1, W. W. Norton, 2013, pp. 1395-6.

If it is an online source, provide the URL (unless instructed otherwise by your professor). If the source has been given a DOI, or digital object identifier, you should cite that rather than the URL.

> Díaz, Junot. "The Cheater's Guide to Love." *The New Yorker,* 23 Jul. 2012, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/07/23/
>
> the-cheaters-guide-to-love

Works Cited

MLA Handbook Eighth Edition. The Modern Language Association of America. 2016.

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl. Accessed 16 Nov. 2016.

Managing Information

MLA Sample Paper

Header: Last Name + Page #

Morris 1

Suzanne Morris

Professor Goleman

ENGL 200

16 May 2011

Your name

Professor's name

Class

Date (Day Month Year)

Center the title.

Balancing on the Tightrope of Life

In his book *Ethics,* Aristotle explains that happiness depends upon ourselves. This achievable goal relates to the way one perceives life, and the strength that lives in the limitless capacity to adapt to any given environment. Through the title character in his novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* Thomas Hardy addresses the conflict between societal laws and natural laws, and the struggle to find a happy medium between them. Throughout the novel, Tess is subjected to situations that address the emotional fluctuations of the human condition and its influences. Critics Lionel Johnson and Irving Howe have different views on the character of Tess. In his essay, "The Argument," Johnson suggests that readers must pity Tess because her life is "fated and determined" by "inherited impulses" and ancestral ties shadowing her (396). Tess is, as Johnson contends, "at the mercy of her inherited nature" (396).   In contrast, Howe suggests in "At the Center of Hardy's Achievement" that "though subjected to endless indignities…Tess remains a figure of harmony…she is Hardy's greatest tribute to the possibilities of human existence" (421). In Howe's perspective, Tess is a "natural girl," and her inherent "nature" of adaptability is her strength (421). Tess's "inherited impulses" actually help her to find balance in her life, and she is to be admired for it, not pitied. Tess is an admirable character because she is able to persevere through many situations by means of her natural gift of adaptability. In order to survive in an unbalanced, socially conflicted society, Tess finds strength through her nature and creates a balance within herself.

Thesis

Tess' admirable resilience is displayed repeatedly throughout the novel. When denied a socially acceptable baptism for her dying infant son Sorrow, Tess adapts by constructing a make-shift religious ceremony for him. Hopeful, Tess cries "Ah, perhaps the baby can be saved. Perhaps it will be just the same" (Hardy 73)! Tess' adaptability illustrates strength and . . .

In text citations: Give author's last name and page number in parentheses. Insert punctuation after the parentheses.

Formatting tips:

- **12 point font. Many professors prefer Times New Roman font.**

- **Everything double-spaced.**

- **1" margins on all sides.**

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Managing Information

MLA Sample
Works Cited Page
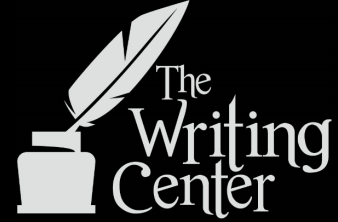
The Writing Center
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writingcenter@massasoit.mass.edu

Morris 3

Works Cited ← **Center the title.**

Alphabetize the citation list by each author's last name.

Aristotle. *Ethics. Project Gutenburg*, 10th ed., 2005, http://www.gutenberg.org/

cache/epub/8438/pg8438.html.

Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.* Edited by Scott Elledge. 3rd ed., W.W.

Norton & Company, Inc., 1991.

Howe, Irving. "*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*—At the Center of Hardy's Achievement."

Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Edited by Scott Elledge. 3rd ed. W.W. Norton &

Company, Inc., 1991, pp. 406-422.

In each citation, all lines after the first are indented.

Like the rest of the essay, the Works Cited page is double-spaced.

If you are citing a single work title the page, "Work Cited."

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