

MLA Citation Style: In-Text Citations and Bibliography

Last updated: September 10, 2010

The Politics Department has adopted the MLA citation format for in-text or parenthetical citations, in which an abbreviated source citation is placed within the text of the paper in parentheses. The MLA citation style is the method established by the Modern Language Association for documenting sources used in a research paper. It is perhaps the most commonly used form of in-text or parenthetical citations. Below are instructions for using this format to cite most of the sources encountered in undergraduate research. It is a good idea to read through these instructions before beginning to write your paper.

For additional information or for instructions on proper citing of sources not covered below, please see one of these books, or a more recent edition:

Modern Language Association. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. Print.

For an online version, see the Ohio State University Library website:

<http://library.osu.edu/help/research-strategies/cite-references/mla>

General Guidelines:

There are two ways that you will include each source in your research paper using MLA style — a brief, in-text parenthetical citation and a detailed reference list (bibliography) at the end of your paper. The in-text citation should provide the minimum information required for the reader to find the full citation in your reference list (which is usually titled “Works Cited”). The bibliography should be alphabetized by author’s last name or, if no author, the first word of the listing.

- When using in-text citations, always put punctuation after the parentheses.
- Cite anonymous references by title.
- Abbreviate the names of all months except for May, June, and July.
- At the end of each entry, indicate the medium. (Print, Web, Film, Radio, CD, LP, etc.)
- Never abbreviate an author’s name unless the title page of the text cited does so.
- Double-space entries on the reference list.

Books: Single Author

In-Text Citation

1. If using a direct quote, always include the author's last name and the page number of the quote:

Others argue that the black power movement was "a product of liberalism and its failures," not a break from earlier civil rights efforts (Self 218).

Note: There are no commas or other separating punctuation marks between the author's last name and the page number.

2. If your reference list includes more than one entry by the same author (or authors), include a comma after the author's name and an abbreviated form of the book title, in italics, in the parenthetical citation. If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, it is not necessary to include it in the parenthetical citation.

Others argue that the black power movement was "a product of liberalism and its failures," not a break from earlier civil rights efforts (Self, *American Babylon* 218).

Or:

Robert Self argues that the black power movement was "a product of liberalism and its failures," not a break from earlier civil rights efforts (*American Babylon* 218).

3. If citing a particular idea from a book without a direct quote, you should still include page numbers if the ideas you are referencing appear in a particular part of the book. If you are citing an entire work, only include the author's last name. The author's name can either be in your text or inside the parentheses. If the author's name is included in the sentence, and as long as the reader is able to find the text in your reference list, no parenthetical citation is necessary.

Others have argued that the rise of the black power movement must be understood as a direct response to the failure of liberalism and the Great Society to adequately address poverty among African Americans (Self).

Or:

Robert Self argues that the rise of the black power movement must be understood as a direct response to the failure of liberalism and the Great Society to adequately address poverty among African Americans.

Reference List

Every author that you cite in your paper needs to be included in your alphabetized bibliography. Every important word in the title should be capitalized. The format should be as follows:

Last name, First name. *Title with Every Important Word Capitalized*. City: Publisher, Date.
Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

Portney, Kent. *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003. Print.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. New York: Blackwell, 1989. Print.

———. *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989. Print.

———. *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000. Print.

Self, Robert O. *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003. Print.

Note: If including two or more works by the same author, list in order of publication date. In every listing after the first, the author's name should be replaced by three dashes. (In the above example, *The Urban Experience* and *Spaces of Hope* are by David Harvey.)

Books: Multiple Authors

In-Text Citation

Same as above. If a book has two or three authors, include all authors' last names. If more than three authors, the citation should include only the last name of the first author, followed by "et al."

1. Two or three authors:

Cities are important players in efforts to address global climate change (Bulkeley and Betsill).

Or:

Bulkeley and Betsill argue that cities are important players in efforts to address global climate change.

2. More than three authors:

Arendt et al. argue that although progress is being made, local governments can do more to include conservation into their development plans.

Or:

Though progress is being made, local governments can do more to include conservation into their development plans (Arendt et al.).

3. If referring to an idea or making an argument that is supported by multiple authors, include references to all of the authors in one set of parentheses, separated by semicolons:

Local governments are coming to be seen as increasingly important sites of environmental policy (Arendt et al.; Bulkeley and Betsill).

Reference List

In your bibliography list the full name of the first author, last name first, and then the full names of each consecutive author, first name first, in the order given in the book and separated by commas as follows:

Last name, First name, First name Last name, and First name Last name. *Title*. City: Publisher, Year. Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

Arendt, Randall, Holly Harper, Stephen Kuter, and Diane Rosencrance. *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999. Print.

Bulkeley, Harriet, and Michele M. Betsill. *Cities and Climate Change: Urban Sustainability and Global Environmental Governance*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Books: Multiple Editions

In-Text Citation

Same as above.

Reference List

Include the edition number after the title. Do not italicize or underline:

Kraft, Michael E. *Environmental Policy and Politics*. 4th ed. New York: Pearson, 2007. Print.

Note: If the entry includes an editor, translator, or compiler, list the edition after this person's name.

Books: Edited Volumes or a Section of an Edited Book

In-Text Citation

Occasionally you will need to cite an edited book containing chapters by various authors. If citing the overarching idea of the entire book, use the editors' names as you would the names of authors:

Recent work has challenged intellectual and theoretical separation of the global and the local (Magnusson and Shaw).

More frequently, you will cite a particular essay or chapter in an edited book. In this case your in-text citation is the same as for an authored book but the reference in your bibliography is different (see below):

Luke argues that changes in the economy of the region need to be understood as a "response to other extensive changes in commodity production, urban growth, and the quality of life all over the world" (92).

Or:

Another way to understand the changes in the economy of the region is as a "response to other extensive changes in commodity production, urban growth, and the quality of life all over the world" (Luke 92).

Reference List

If referring to the entire book, list the book by editors' names as you would for an authored book. If referring to a particular essay, list by author's last name. The name of the editors, however, should also be part of the listing:

Author's last name, First name. "Chapter Title." *Book Title*. Ed. First name Last name. City:

Press, Year. Page numbers. Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

Luke, Timothy W. "On the Political Economy of Clayoquot Sound." *A Political Space: Reading the Global Through Clayoquot Sound*. Ed. Warren Magnusson and Karena Shaw.

Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003. 91-112. Print.

Magnusson, Warren, and Karena Shaw, eds. *A Political Space: Reading the Global through*

Clayoquot Sound. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003. Print.

Note: If you are referencing the Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterword of a book, use the description as the title but do not include italics or underlining.

Note: Similar to editors, translators and compilers should also be included in the citation. The appropriate designations for translators and compilers are “trans.” and “comp.”

Journal Articles

In-Text Citation

Same as above.

Reference List

Basic format:

Author's last name, First name. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume number.Issue number
(Year): page numbers. Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

Alberti, Marina. "Measuring Urban Sustainability." *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*
16 (1996): 381-424. Print.

Dowding, Keith. "Explaining Urban Regimes." *International Journal of Urban and Regional
Research* 25.1 (2001): 7-19. Print.

Keil, Roger. "Globalization Makes States: Perspectives of Local Governance in the Age of the
World City." *Review of International Political Economy* 5.4 (1998): 616–646. Print.

Note: As in the Alberti example above, if a journal has just a volume or just an issue number, simply leave out the other. As in the Dowding and Keil examples, if the journal has a volume and an issue number, place a period after the volume number followed by the issue number.

Magazine Articles

In-Text Citation

Same as for books and journals.

Reference List

Basic format:

Author's last name, first name. "Title." *Magazine Name* Day Month Year: Page numbers.
Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

"Dubious Venture." *Time* 3 Jan. 1994: 64-65. Print.

Fallows, James. "The Early-Decision Racket," *Atlantic Monthly* Sept. 2001, 37-52. Print.

Weintraub, Arlene, and Laura Cohen. "A Thousand-Year Plan for Nuclear Waste." *Business Week* 6 May 2002: 94-96. Print.

Note: Magazines published weekly or biweekly should include the day.
For monthly or bi-monthly magazines, only the month is included. Do not
include the issue volume and number, if it is provided.

Newspaper Articles

In-Text Citation

Include the name of the newspaper and the publication date in your citation.

Despite concerted efforts to encourage young people to vote, over a third of primary voters in this year's elections have been people over 60 (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 April 2008).

Reference List

Basic format:

Author's last name, First name. "Article Title." *Name of Newspaper* Day Month Year, edition:
pages. Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

Sack, Kevin. "In Partisan Battle, Governors Clash with Attorneys General over Lawsuits." *New York Times* 28 Mar. 2010, late ed.: A25. Print.

Schneider, Keith. "Salt Lake City is Finding a Payoff in Conservation." *New York Times*, 7 Nov. 2007, late ed.: H10. Print.

Note: If the article spans more than one page but the pages of the article are not printed consecutively, list the first page and a plus sign (“+”).

Web Sources

Note: Not all information available on the internet should be considered a valid source for academic research. Use common sense in deciding what internet sites to include in your research. For example, wikipedia.org is generally not considered an appropriate source of information for an academic paper. If you are unsure if a site is appropriate, check with your professor or TA.

In-Text Citation

Same as above. In other words, cite by author’s last name or, if no author is provided, cite by the title of the article or of the website. If the website does not include a publication date, simply leave it out. The date you accessed the article will be in your Works Cited list.

In hopes of spurring the already lucrative tourist industry, the Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau has invented the term “metronatural” and is promoting it as Seattle’s new brand name on tourist brochures, websites, and other advertising materials (Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau).

Reference List

Basic format:

Author’s Last name, First name. “Title of the document.” *Name of Web site*. Site publisher,
Date of publication. Medium. Access date.

Example:

Works Cited

“Santa Cruz, California.” Map. *Google Maps*. Google, 23 Aug. 2010. Web. 23 Aug. 2010.

Cohen, Patricia. “Scholars Test Web Alternative to Peer Review.” *New York Times*. New York Times, 23 Aug. 2010. Web. 23 Aug. 2010.

Pollack, Kenneth M. “Five Myths About the Iraq Troop Withdrawal.” *Brookings*. Brookings Institution, 22 Aug. 2010. Web. 23 Aug. 2010.

Note: If there is no title for the document, you can use a description like “Home Page,” or “Online Posting” where appropriate. If there is no site publisher or date of publication listed, use n.p. (no publisher) or n.d. (no date), respectively.

Class Lectures

Class lectures should only be cited in papers written for the course in which that lecture was given. Do not include lectures in your bibliography; just list them parenthetically:

The relative powers of Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court have changed dramatically over the course of U.S history (Lecture, Sept. 26).

Course Readers

Most material in your course readers was originally published as a journal article, newspaper article, or book chapter. It should therefore be cited as such.

Television or Radio Programs

In-Text Citation

Cite by author or by title.

Reference List

Basic information needed, to the extent available:

"Title of the episode or segment." *Title of the program*. Title of series. Name of the network.

Call letters and city of the local station (if any). Broadcast date.

Note: There can be considerable variability in references to TV and radio programs. Use common sense, be consistent, and try to provide as much information as possible.

Example:

Works Cited

"Frederick Douglas." *Civil War Journal*. Narr. Danny Glover. Dir. Craig Haffner. Arts and Entertainment Network. 6 Apr. 1993.

"Death and Society." Narr. Joanne Silberner. *Weekend Edition Sunday*. Natl. Public Radio. WUWM, Milwaukee. 25 Jan. 1998.

"Yes...but Is It Art?" Narr. Morley Safer. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS. WCBS, New York. 19 Sept. 1993.

Interviews

In-Text Citation

Published or broadcast interviews: Whether using a direct quote or paraphrasing, put the interviewee's name and the date of the interview in parentheses at the end of the phrase or in your text as you would with a book or journal:

After years of resistance, many of the largest energy companies in the country have accepted that steps need to be taken to address climate change (Felsing 2008).

Interviews conducted by the researcher (you): Use the term "personal communication" (or pers. comm.) after the names of the person you interviewed yourself:

Sacramento insiders, however, assert that developers have played a key role in stalling state efforts to restrict the building of new homes in flood-prone areas (Smith, pers. comm.).

Reference List

Published or broadcast interviews should be treated like an article in a periodical or a chapter in a book.

Example:

Works Cited

Fellini, Federico. "The long interview." *Juliet of the Spirits*. Ed. Tullio Kezich. Trans. Howard Greenfield. New York: Ballantine, 1966. 17-64. Print.

Felsing, Donald E. "Turning Energy Uncertainty into Opportunity." Interview with Clifford Krauss. *New York Times*. 3 May 2008: C2. Print.

Gordimer, Nadine. Interview. *New York Times*. 10 Oct. 1991, late ed.: C25. Print.

For interviews you conducted:

Interviewee's First name Last name. Personal Interview. Date.

Example:

Works Cited

Mark G. Yudof. Personal Interview. 1 Aug. 2010.

Legal Sources

In-Text Citation

Citing constitutions: Familiar historical documents (e.g. the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States) do not need to be included in your bibliography. The section of the document you are referencing should be included in your in-text citation. For example: (US Const., art. 1, sec. 1).

Citing an act (law): In most cases you will refer to an act in the body of your text, not in a parenthetical citation:

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001 increased national requirements for airport security checks.

You will not need to include the law in your reference list.

Citing a legal case: As with laws, legal cases should usually be referred to in the text of your essay, not in parenthetical citations. Names of cases are abbreviated by the name of each party involved. The year the case was decided is put in parentheses just after the name of the case:

In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) the Supreme Court rejected the segregation of public schools by race.

Government Publications

In-Text Citation

As government documents usually do not have authors, cite them by the name of the agency. Otherwise, follow the same rules as for books and journals.

In 2001, almost 5 percent of all people who were in the labor force for at least 27 weeks of the year had incomes that qualified them as working poor (U.S. Dept. of Labor).

Reference List

Basic format:

Name of Government. Government Agency. Subsidiary division/regional office/etc. *Title of the Publication*. Publication number, report number, or Congressional session (if available or relevant). Place of Publication: Publisher, Date. Medium.

Example:

Works Cited

United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service. *1978 Statistics of Income, Individual Income Tax Returns*. Pub. 79 (3-81). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981. Print.

———. Cong. Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack. *Hearings*. 79th Cong., 1st and 2nd sess. 32 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946. Print.

———. Dept. of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *A Profile of the Working Poor, 2001*. Report 968. Washington, 2003. Print.