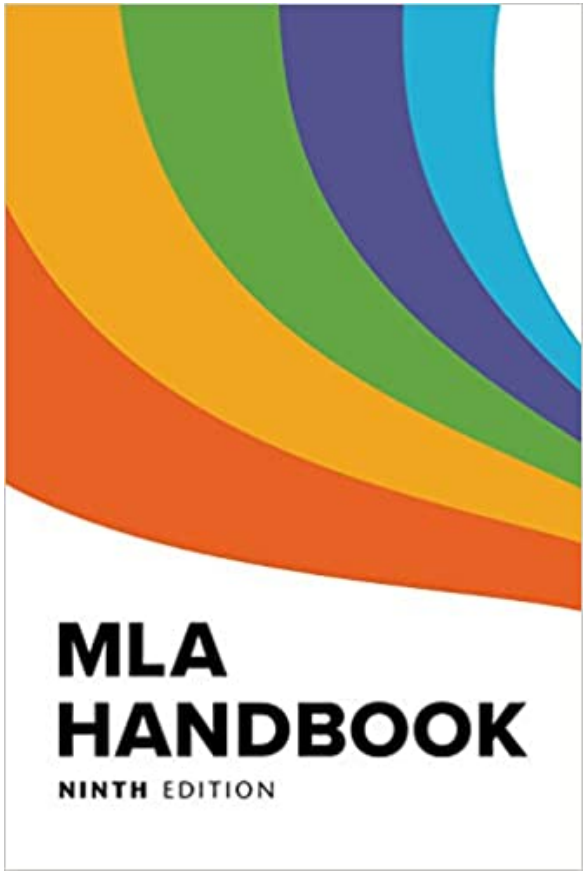
MLA 9th Edition Formatting and Style Guide

Purdue OWL Staff
Brought to you in cooperation with the Purdue Online Writing Lab

What is MLA?

MLA (Modern Language Association) Style formatting is often used in various humanities disciplines.

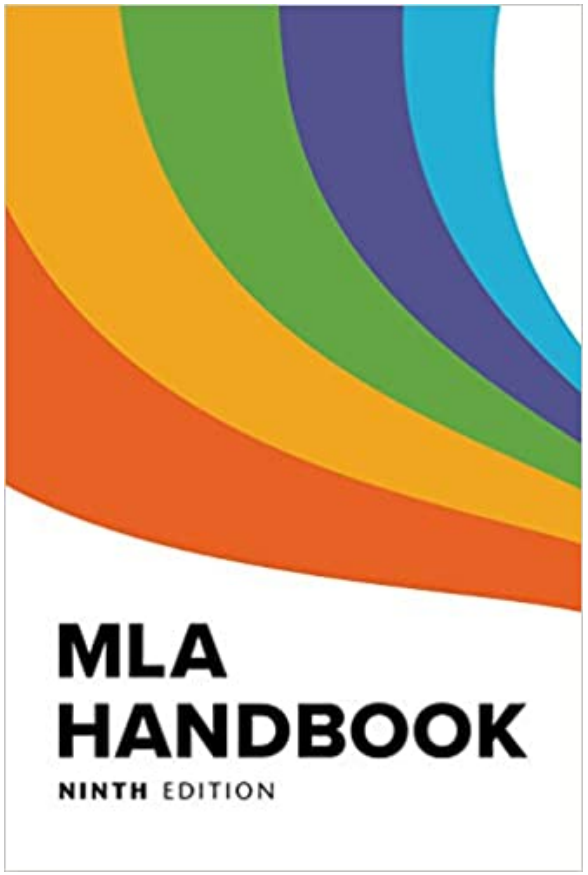
In addition to the handbook, MLA also offers **The MLA Style Center**, a website that provides additional instruction and resources for writing and formatting academic papers. https://style.mla.org/



What does MLA regulate?

MLA regulates:

- document format
- in-text citations
- works-cited list



The **9th edition handbook** focuses on clarification, guidance, and expansion on MLA 8's introduction of core elements for Works Cited through calcification and expansion and meaning of the categories.

The three guiding principles:

1. Cite simple traits shared by most works.
2. Remember that there is more than one way to cite the same source.
3. Make your documentation useful to readers.

Overview

This presentation will cover:

- How to format a paper in MLA style (9th ed.)
  - General guidelines
  - First page format
  - Section headings
- In-text citations
  - Formatting quotations
- Documenting sources in MLA style (9th ed.)
  - Core elements
  - List of works cited

Your Instructor Knows Best

Basic rule for any formatting style:

Always
Follow your instructor's guidelines

Format: General Guidelines

An MLA Style paper should:

- Be typed on white 8.5“ x 11“ paper
- Double-space everything
- Use 12 pt. Times New Roman (or similar) font
- Leave only one space after punctuation
- Set all margins to 1 inch on all sides
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch

Format: General Guidelines (cont.)

An MLA Style paper should:

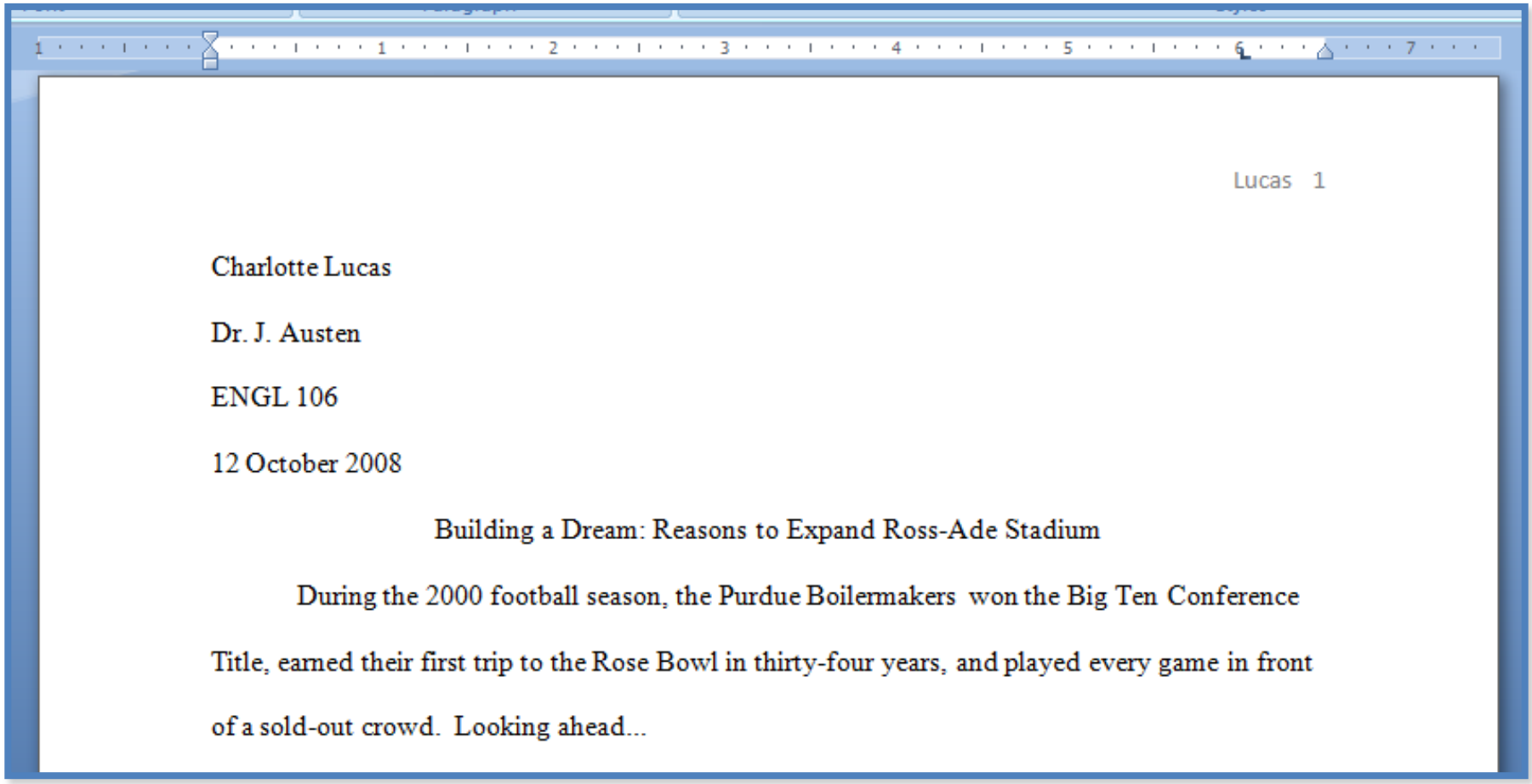
- Have a header with page numbers located in the upper right-hand corner
- Use italics for titles of container works (e.g., books) and quotation marks for sources within containers (e.g., chapters within books)
- Place endnotes on a separate page before the list of works cited

Formatting the 1st Page

The first page of an individually-written MLA Style paper will:

- Have **no title page unless it is a group project**
  - For a group project, list all names of contributors in their own line, followed by the remainder of the MLA 9 header described below
- **Double space** everything
- **List your name, your instructor's name, the course, and date** in the **upper left-hand corner**
- **Center the paper title** (use standard caps but no underlining, italics, quote marks, or bold typeface)
- **Create a header** in the upper right corner at half inch from the top and one inch from the right of the page (list **your last name and page number** here)

Sample 1st Page



Lucas 1

Charlotte Lucas

Dr. J. Austen

ENGL 106

12 October 2008

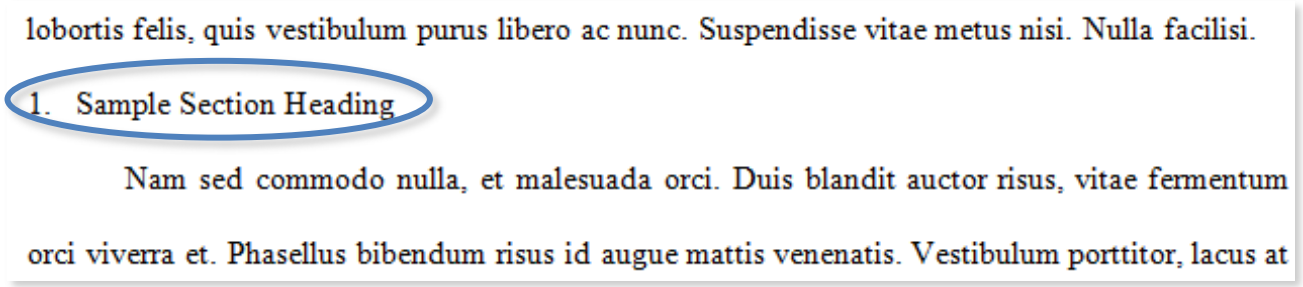
Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand Ross-Ade Stadium

During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten Conference Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years, and played every game in front of a sold-out crowd. Looking ahead...

Formatting Section Headings

Section Headings are generally optional:

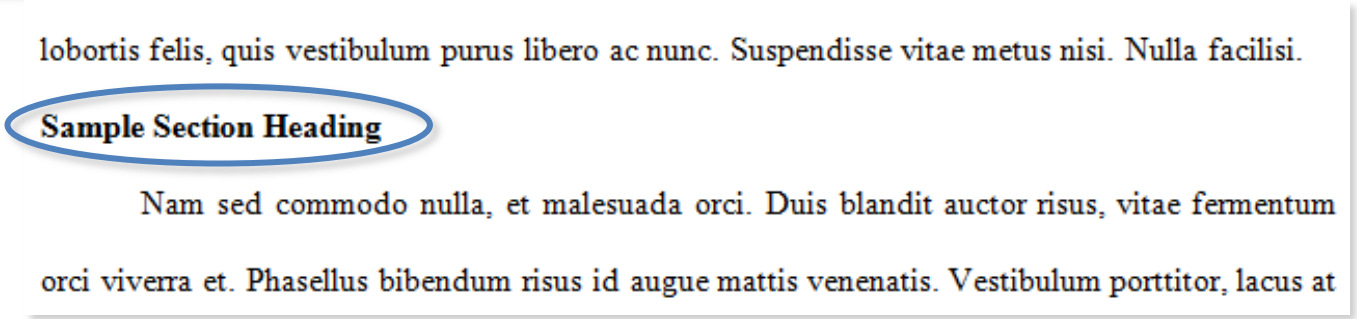
- Headings in an essay should usually be numbered
- Headings should be consistent in grammar and formatting but, otherwise, are up to you


lobortis felis, quis vestibulum purus libero ac nunc. Suspendisse vitae metus nisi. Nulla facilisi.

1. Sample Section Heading

Nam sed commodo nulla, et malesuada orci. Duis blandit auctor risus, vitae fermentum orci viverra et. Phasellus bibendum risus id augue mattis venenatis. Vestibulum porttitor, lacus at

OR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Sample Section Heading

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Sample Section Headings

Numbered (all flush left with no underlining, bold, or italics):

Example:

1. Soil Conservation

1.1 Erosion

1.2 Terracing

2. Water Conservation

3. Energy Conservation

Unnumbered (by level):

Example:

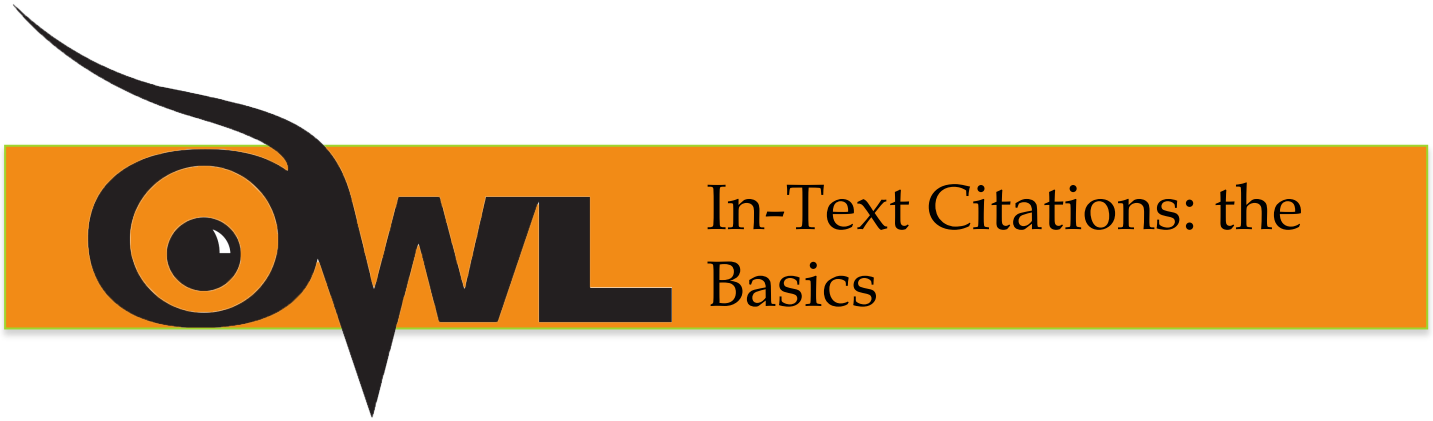
Level 1: bold, flush left

Level 2: italics, flush left

Level 3: centered, bold

Level 4: centered, italics

Level 5: underlined, flush left



An **in-text citation** is a brief reference in your text that indicates the source you consulted.

•It should direct readers to the entry in your works-cited list for that source.

•It should be unobtrusive: provide the citation information without interrupting your own text.

•In general, the in-text citation will be the author's last name (or abbreviated title) with a page number, enclosed in parentheses.

Author-Page Style

In-text Example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263). Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263). Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. Oxford UP, 1967.

Print Source with Author

For the following print source

Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. U of California P, 1966.

If the essay provides a signal word or phrase—usually the author's last name—the citation does not need to also include that information.

Examples:

Humans have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3).

Humans have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

How to cite a work with no known author:

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has “more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change…” (“Impact of Global Warming” 6).

When author and title are not enough:

If two or more works by the same author have the same title, more information is needed to clearly references a specific item on your works cited in square brackets after the title.

Example: The first illustrated version (Milton, *Paradise Lost* [Tonson]) does not name the suspected four illustrators that contributed.

Corresponding Entry in the List of Works Cited:

"The Impact of Global Warming in North America." *Global Warming: Early Signs*. 1999. Accessed 23 Mar. 2009.

Authors with Same Last Names

In-text example:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

Work by Multiple Authors

In-text Examples:

Smith et al. argues that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state: “Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights” (Smith et al. 76).

A 2016 study suggests that stricter gun control in the United States will significantly prevent accidental shootings (Strong and Ellis 23).

Multiple Works by the Same Author

In-text examples:

Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children ("Too Soon" 38), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child's second and third year ("Hand-Eye Development" 17).

Visual studies, because it is such a new discipline, may be "too easy" (Elkins, "Visual Studies" 63).

Other In-Text Citations 4

Citing Multivolume Works

In-text example:

… as Quintilian wrote in *Institutio Oratoria* (1: 14-17).

Citing the Bible

In-text example:

Ezekiel saw “what seemed to be four living creatures,” each with the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Ezek. 1:5-10).

Citing Indirect Sources

In-text example:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as “social service centers, and they don't do that well” (qtd. in Weisman 259).

Multiple Citations

In-text example:

Romeo and Juliet presents an opposition between two worlds: “the world of the everyday… and the world of romance.” Although the two lovers are part of the world of romance, their language of love nevertheless becomes “fully responsive to the tang of actuality” (Zender 138, 141).

Works in time-based media

In-text example:

Buffy's promise that "there's not going to be any incidents like at my old school" is obviously not one on which she can follow through ("Hush" 00:03:16-17).

Works-cited entry:

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Sources without page numbers

In-text example:

Disability activism should work toward “creating a habitable space for all beings” (Garland-Thomson).

Corresponding works-cited entry:

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. “Habitable Worlds.” Critical Disability Studies Symposium. Feb. 2016, Purdue University, Indiana. Address.

Short prose quotations

In-text example:

According to some, dreams express “profound aspects of personality” (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express “profound aspects of personality” (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express “profound aspects of personality” (Foulkes 184)?

Quoting more than four lines of prose

In-text example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

> They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

Quoting 1-3 lines of poetry

Examples:

Properzia Rossi tells the statue that it will be a container for her feelings: "The bright work grows / Beneath my hand, unfolding, as a rose" (lines 31-32).

In "The Thorn," Wordsworth's narrator locates feelings of horror in the landscape: "The little babe was buried there, / Beneath that hill of moss so fair. // I've heard the scarlet moss is red" (stanzas xx-xxi).

- Use block quotations for three or more lines of poetry.

- If the poem is formatted in an unusual way, reproduce the unique formatting as accurately as possible.

Adding/Omitting Words

In-text example for Adding Words:

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).

In-text example for Omitting Words:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale . . . and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

Works Cited: The Basics

Each entry in the list of works cited is made up of core elements given in a specific order.

The core elements should be listed in the order in which they appear here. Each element is followed by the punctuation mark shown here.

Works-cited List: Author

Author – the primary creator of the work

Begin the entry with the author's last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work. End this element with a period.

Examples:

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

Works-cited List: Title of Source

Title of source – the title of the work

Books and websites should be in italics:

Hollmichel, Stefanie. *So Many Books*. 2003-13, somanybooksblog.com.

Linett, Maren Tova. *Modernism, Feminism, and Jewishness*. Cambridge UP, 2007.

Periodicals (journal, magazine, newspaper article), television episodes, and songs should be in quotation marks:

Beyoncé. "Pretty Hurts." Beyoncé, Parkwood Entertainment, 2013, www.beyonce.com/album/beyonce/?media_view=songs.

Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88.

Title of container – a work that contains another work

Examples:

Bazin, Patrick. “Toward Metareading.” The Future of the Book, edited by Geoffrey Nunberg, U of California P, 1996, pp. 153-68.

Hollmichel, Stefanie. “The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print.” So Many Books, 25 Apr. 2013, somanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print/.

“Under the Gun.” Pretty Little Liars, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013. Hulu, hulu.com/watch/511318.

Works-cited List: Title of Container

Title of container

	Not a container	A container
Blackboard	When it links you to another website	When something, like a lecture, is published on it
Amazon	When you download an e-book from it	When a customer review is published on the site
Google	When it displays snippets of text in the results page of a search	When it publishes an original artwork, such as a Google Doodle
Facebook	When you click on a link (e.g., a link to a news story) that takes you to another website	When a user publishes or comments on a link or post

Fig. 5.31. MLA, *MLA Handbook Ninth Edition,* 2021, p. 137

Works-cited List: Other Contributors

Contributor – people, groups, or organizations that contribute without being its primary creator.

Examples:

Chartier, Roger. The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane, Stanford UP, 1994.

"Hush." Buffy the Vampire Slayer, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Woolf, Virginia. Jacob's Room. Annotated and with an introduction by Vara Neverow, Harcourt, Inc., 2008.

Works-cited List: Version

Version – notation indicating which of multiple versions of a work released in multiple forms

If a source is listed as an edition or version of a work, include it in your citation.

Examples:

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

Newcomb, Horace, editor. *Television: The Critical View*. 7th ed., Oxford UP, 2007.

Scott, Ridley, director. *Blade Runner*. 1982. Performance by Harrison Ford, director's cut, Warner Bros., 1992.

Works-cited List: Number

Number – indicates position in sequence

If a source is part of a numbered sequence, such as a multi-volume book, or journal with both volume and issue numbers, those numbers must be listed in your citation.

Examples:

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Wellek, René. *A History of Modern Criticism*, 1750-1950. Vol. 5, Yale UP, 1986.

Works-cited List: Publisher

Publisher – primarily responsible entity for producing the work or making it available to the public.

The publisher produces or distributes the source to the public. If there is more than one publisher, and they are all are relevant to your research, list them in your citation, separated by a forward slash (/).

Examples:

Harris, Charles "Teenie." *Woman in a Paisley Shirt behind Counter in Record Store*. *Teenie Harris Archive*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, teenie.cmoa.org/interactive/index.html#date08.

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction.* Oxford UP, 2011.

Kuzui, Fran Rubel, director. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Twentieth Century Fox, 1992.

Works-cited List: Publication Date

Publication date –tells when the version of work was published

The same source may have been published on more than one date, such as an online version of an original source. When the source has more than one date, use the date that is most relevant to your use of it.

Examples:

Belton, John. "Painting by the Numbers: The Digital Intermediate." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 3, Spring 2008, pp. 58-65.

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Works-cited List: Location

Location – specifies work's location, such as page range

Be as specific as possible in identifying a work's location.

Examples:

Adiche, Chimamanda Ngozi. "On Monday of Last Week." *The Thing around Your Neck,* Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, pp. 74-94.

Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur." *The Atlantic*, 28 Dec. 2014, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the-birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/. Bearden, Romare. *The Train*. 1975, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Optional elements:

- **Date of original publication:**

Franklin, Benjamin. "Emigration to America." 1782. *The Faber Book of America*, edited by Christopher Ricks and William L. Vance, Faber and Faber, 1992, pp. 24-26.

- **City of publication:**

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret.* Translated by John Oxenford, new ed., London, 1875.

Works-cited List: Optional Elements

Optional elements:

- **URLs**

- **DOIs (digital object identifier)**

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10, no. 3, May 2000. *Project Muse*, doi: 10.1353/pmc.2000.0021.

- **Date of access**

"Under the Gun." *Pretty Little Liars*, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013. *Hulu*, www.hulu.com/watch/511318. Accessed 23 July 2013.

Works-cited List: Optional Elements

Annotated Bibliography

Annotations:

- **Are succinct descriptions or evaluations of a source.**
- **Are at the end of an entry, with a one-inch indentation from where the entry begins.**
- **Can be concise phrases or complete sentences, but not exceed a single paragraph.**

Spinoza, Benedict de. *Ethnics Proved in Geometrical Order.* Edited by Matthew J. Kisner. Translated by Michael Silverhorne and Matthew J. Kisner. Cambridge UP, 2018.

A comprehensive work that systemically lays out Spinoza's rationalist philosophy, explaining the nature of God, humanity's place in the universe, human psychology, our freedom, and the best ethical life.

Purdue University Writing Lab
Heavilon 226

Web: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
Phone: (765) 494-3723
Email: owl@owl.english.purdue.edu

The End

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