

Citing references: MLA style

What is referencing?

When writing coursework, you may refer to work that has been written or produced by someone else. It is important that you acknowledge all the resources you have used and enable people who read your work to find these resources for themselves.

Failure to provide references may expose you to charges of plagiarism.

This guide will give you brief advice on how to reference commonly used resources using the MLA Handbook 8th Edition.

MLA

According to the MLA style, you need to acknowledge your sources by providing brief 'parenthetical citations' in your text (i.e. in brackets), and linking these to an alphabetical list of works at the end of your assignment.

Thus, there are two parts to referencing:

Firstly, referring to a resource within the text of your assignment and secondly, recording the material in your reference list or Works Cited.

General points on citing in your course work

When referring to someone else's ideas in the body of your assignment, the standard format is to include, in brackets, the author's surname followed by the page number, e.g.

A lot of fiction written today is neither modernist nor postmodernist (Hawthorn 56).

Alternatively, you can put the author's name in your text and the page number at the end of the sentence in brackets, e.g.

According to Hawthorn, a lot of the fiction written today is neither modernist nor postmodernist (56).

A citation should only contain enough information to enable readers to identify the source in the works-cited list.

Using direct quotations

Where a prose quotation runs to 4 lines or less, and doesn't require special emphasis, put it in double quotation marks and incorporate it into the text.

If the quotation comes at the end of your sentence, put the full stop at the end, after the page number which is in brackets, e.g.

For Charles Dickens the eighteenth century was both “the best of times” and “the worst of times” (35).

For a quotation of more than 4 lines, set it off from your text by starting a new line, indenting half an inch from the left margin, and do not use quotation marks, e.g.

At the conclusion of *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph is overcome by
great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole
body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning
wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little
boys began to shake and sob too. (186)

N.B. Use a colon to introduce a quotation when the grammatical connection between the preceding sentence and the quotation do not make sense, e.g.

In *A Tale of Two Cities* Dickens describes the eighteenth century:

It was the best of times,
it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom,
it was the age of foolishness ... (1)

When using a quotation from a source that has no pagination, such as an e-book, chapter numbers can be used instead, e.g. (ch.2).

Your reference list or Works Cited

When compiling your list of Works Cited ensure you follow the punctuation and abbreviations given in the following examples, as these form part of the referencing style.

Entries should be in alphabetical order by author’s surname. Detailed guidance on how to lay out your list of cited works can be found on pp. 111-116 of the MLA Handbook 8th Edition.

Examples

Book, single author

Author’s name followed by page number

In text: (Hawthorn 56)

In list of works cited:

Hawthorn, Jeremy. *Studying the Novel*. 5th ed., Hodder Arnold, 2005.

Book, two authors

In text: (Gilbert 21)

In list of works cited:

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. Yale UP, 1984.

Book, three of more authors

If there are three or more authors, abbreviate by using *et al.*

In text: (Smith et al. 29)

In list of works cited:

Smith, John, et al. *Tricky Citations for Beginners*. Invicta P, 2017.

Edited work

In text: (Richetti 43)

In list of works cited:

Richetti, John, editor. *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*.
Cambridge UP, 2005.

E-book

In text: (Rowley, 1662)

In list of works cited:

Rowley, William. *The Birth of Merlin, or, The Childe Hath Found His Father as it Hath
Been Several Times Acted with Great Applause*. Francis Kirkman and Henry
Marsh, 1662. *EEBO*, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>.

Chapter in book

Where books contain collections of chapters written by different authors you will need to reference the chapter you have read. Use double inverted commas around the title of the chapter.

In text: (Crackanthorpe 261)

In list of works cited:

Crackanthorpe, Brenda A. "The Revolt of the Daughters." *A New Woman
Reader: Fiction, Articles, and Drama of the 1890s*, edited by Carolyn Nelson,
Broadview Press, 2001, pp. 261-69.

Journal article

In text: (Vejvoda 241)

In list of works cited:

Vejvoda, Kathleen. "Idolatry in Jane Eyre." *Victorian Literature and Culture*,
vol. 31, no. 1, 2003, pp. 241-62.

Online journal article

If you find an article online, then use this form, quoting the URL of the journal:

In text: (Walsh 228)

In list of works cited:

Walsh, Marcus. "Form and Function in the English Eighteenth-Century Literary Edition: the Case of Edward Capell." *Studies in Bibliography*, vol. 54, 2001, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>.

If you found the full text article by using a database then use the following:

In text: (Fryckstedt 17)

In list of works cited:

Fryckstedt, Monica Correa. "Defining the Domestic Genre: English Women Novelists of the 1850s." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 6, no.1, 1987, *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/464157.pdf>.

Newspaper article

In text: (Hamilton 15)

N.B. if no author given, use a shortened form of the title, in double quotation marks within round brackets ("Rowling's Wizard Christmas")

In list of works cited:

Hamilton, Fiona. "Rowling's Wizard Christmas for the Bookshops." *Times* 1 Aug. 2008, Home News sec., p.15.

Online newspaper article

In text: (Guest 20)

In list of works cited:

Guest, Katy. "E-books Don't Furnish a Room." *Independent*, 5 Sept. 2008, Arts & Books Review sec., <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/ebooks-dont-furnish-a-room-919089.html>. Accessed 7 Sept. 2008.

Webpage

In text: (Eaves)

In list of works cited:

Eaves, Morris, et al., editors. *The William Blake Archive*. 1996-2014, www.blakearchive.org/blake/.

Blog post

In text: (Brown)

In list of works cited:

Brown, John. "The unbearable lightness of reading." *Literary Musings*, 25 June 2016, literarymusingsblog.com/2016/06/25/the-unbearable-lightness-of-reading/.

Television programme

In text: (Why the Novel Matters)

In list of works cited:

"Why the Novel Matters." *The South Bank Show*, Independent Television Company, 12 Mar. 2002.

Can't find the example you need?

For more information on using MLA, consult the handbook which is available in the library at classmark 808.02 MLA.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook*. 8th ed. New York, 2016.

You will also find a set of frequently asked questions on the MLA web site at <http://www.mla.org/>