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MLA Referencing Style

What is it?

Academic writing requires the author to support their arguments with reference to other published work or experimental results/findings. A reference system will perform three essential tasks:

- Enable you to acknowledge other authors ideas (avoid plagiarism).
- Enable a reader to quickly locate the source of the material you refer to so they can consult it if they wish.
- Indicate to the reader the scope and depth of your research.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) style is a widely used referencing system to help you achieve these objectives.

How do I use the Style?

The MLA system involves two tasks:

- How you compile a list of reference sources at the end of your text (Reference list).
- How you refer to other authors in the body of your text (In Text Citation).

What does it look like?

Here is an extract showing what In-text Citations look like in the MLA Style:

Adams (377) argues that in her 2005 novel, On Beauty, Smith portrays more the battle within the opposing sides of a liberal campus consciousness, rather than the clash of liberal and conservative.

Here is an example of what a Works Cited (Reference List) looks like in the MLA Style. Note the hanging indent and double spacing.

Works Cited

Adams, Ann Marie. "A Passage to Forster: Zadie Smith's Attempt to 'Only Connect' to Howard's End."

*Critique*, vol.52,4, 2011, pp. 377- 399.

For more information on creating a Works Cited list using the MLA style, please consult section p. 20 - 54 of the MLA Handbook, 8th Edition.

Quotation

The use of quotations enables the reproduction of original material by another author in the research paper. It is important that accuracy is maintained when using quotations. MLA style suggests that all quotations should be kept as brief as possible. The student should ensure that the original meaning is not altered if integrating quotations into the text.

Short Quotations

For a quotation that is four lines in length or shorter, use quotation marks and incorporate it into the text. If the quotation is formally introduced it should be preceded by a colon. The parenthetical reference for short quotations should be placed in brackets before the full stop.

Shelley thought poets "the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Shelley held a bold view: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Long Quotations

For quotations that exceed four lines in length, the quotation should be set off from the text. It should be typed double spaced on a new line using an indent of one inch from the margin. A colon is generally used to introduce the quotation. The parenthetical reference is placed in brackets after the full stop.

At the conclusion of Lord of the Flies, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions:

    The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. (186)

A reference for each of these direct quotes would be included in the ‘Works Cited’ section.

For more detailed examples of quotations in poetry, drama etc. see section pp. 54 - 58 of the MLA Handbook, 8th Edition.
Below is a list of some common citation types along with examples of how they are laid out within the MLA Style guidelines.

**Book with one author**

Reference: Author last name, First name. Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:

- (Author Last name page)
- (Page no)

Example

- In another study (McDonagh 80)....
- McDonagh has discussed (80)....

**Book with two authors**

Reference: First author Last name, First name and next author(s) First name Last name. Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:

- (First author Last name and last author Last name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example

- Others highlight a different factor (McLean and Elkind 122)....
- Bethany and McLean (122) highlight....

**Book with more than three authors**

Reference: First Author Last name, First name et al. Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:
• (First author Last name et al. Page no)
• (Page no)

Example

• It has been suggested (McGeady et al. 155)....
• McGeady (155) suggests....

Book with a corporate author
Reference: Organisation name. Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:

• (Organisation name Page no)
• (Page no)

Example

• Figures released (Dept. of Agriculture 25) at the time....
• Figures from the Department of Agriculture (25)....

Book with an editor
Reference: First editor’s Last name, First name and next editor(s) First name Last name, ed(s). Title. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:

• (Editor(s) Last name Page no)
• (Page no)

Example

• Another approach (Booth 55) shows....
• Booth (55) argues....
Book with two editors

Reference: Last name, First name of first editor, and First name Last name of second editor, editors. Title. Publisher, Year of Publication.


In-Text-Citation:

(First editor Last name and second editor Last name Page no)

(Page no)

Example:

Another approach (Kelly and Walsh 55) shows....
Kelly and Walsh (55) argue....

Book with three or more editors

Reference: Last name, First name of first editor, et al., editors. Title. Publisher, Year of Publication.


In-Text-Citation:

(Editor Last name et al. Page no)

(Page no)

Example:

Another approach (Mildrum et al. 55) shows....
Mildrum et al. (55) argue....
**eBook**

As a general rule an eBook should be cited as you would a print source but additional information such as the date accessed should be included. The format will differ depending on the file used. Ebooks include digital file such as Kindle and electronic versions of books available through the library databases. The bibliographic information should be used for the relevant entry.

Reference: Author’s Last name, First name. Title of eBook. Publisher, Year of Publication. Name of container/access platform, location/link.


In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name)

(ch.)

Example:

It is suggested that Boston would have been a very different city had there been no fire (Rawson).

Michael Rawson suggests that Boston was a city that could have had a very different form, if the fire had not occurred (ch.2).

**eReader**

If page numbers are not available, avoid markers such as Kindle file location as these may not be consistent on all devices. Instead, use stable numbered sections such as chapters. If the eBook does not have any form of sections then the work must be cited as a whole within the text.

Reference: Author Last name, First name. Title. Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Format.


In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name, ch.)

(ch.)

Example:

The Roosevelts enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle but they were not ostentatious (Rowley, ch. 6).
Hazel Rowley notes that although the Roosevelts enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle, they were not ostentatious (ch.6).

**Chapter in an edited book**

Reference: Author(s) Last name, First name. "Title of chapter." Title of Collection, edited by Editor(s) First name Last name, Edition, Publisher, Year of publication. Page range.


In-Text-Citation:

- (Author(s) Last name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example

- Another approach (Jonson 239)....
- Jonson (239) writes....

**Play**

Reference: Author Last name, First name. Title. Publisher, Year of Publication.


In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name Page no)

(Page no)

Example:

In this section of the play gender is addressed (Shakespeare and Thompson 80)....

Shakespeare has portrayed (80)....

Note: In the full reference/Works Cited section, list the author's name as it appears in the work, i.e. last name and full first name or last name and initials.
Poem from an Anthology

Reference: Poem Author’s Last name, First name. “Title of Poem.” Title of Collection, edited by Editor(s) First name, Last name, Edition, Publisher, Year of Publication. Page range. Line numbers (if available)


In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name Page no)

(Page no)

Example:

In this poem (Jonson 239)....

Jonson declares his admiration for Shakespeare (239)....

Note: In the full reference/Works Cited section, list the author’s name as it appears in the work, i.e. last name and full first name or last name and initials.

Print Journal article

Reference: First author’s Last name, First name and next author(s) First name Last name. "Title of Article." Title of Journal, vol. Volume, no., Year, pp. page range.


In-Text-Citation:

• (Author(s) Last name Page no)
• (Page no)

Example

• Another author (Mann 850) argues....
• Mann (850) argues....

E-journal article


In-Text-Citation:

- (Author(s) Last name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example

- Exploring this topic (Faris 440)....
- Faris (440) highlights the role....

**Print Newspaper article**

Reference: Author(s) last name, First name. “Article title”. *Newspaper title* Day Month Year of publication, pp. Page number(s).


In-Text-Citation:

- (Author(s) last name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example:

- Others (Gleeson 16) argue....
- Gleeson (16) argues....

**Online Newspaper article**

Reference: Author’s Last name, First name. “Article title”. *Newspaper title*. Publisher. Day Month Year of publication, pp. Page number(s). *Platform/Container*, Location/Link.


In-Text-Citation:

(Author's Last name Page no)
Example:

Others (Parker 2) argue....

Parker (2) argues....

**Page on a website**

Reference: Author's Last name, First name (if available). "Article Title." Website Title. Publisher of Website, Day Month Year of Publication. Location/Link.


In-Text-Citation:

Use first few words of the page title.

Example:

The introspective nature of poetry may also... (The super secret weapons).

**Website**

Reference: Author's Last name, First name (if available). Name of Site, Day Month Year of resource creation (if available), Link/Location.

Example: Willett, Perry. Victorian Women's Writers Project, 16 May 2000, webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/vwwp/welcome.do;jsessionid=8202171627546D086A23F5A0FDB3D508.

In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name /Name of Site)

Example:

According to another source (Willett)....

**Blog**

Reference: Author's Last name, First name (if available). “Posting Title.” Website/Blog Title, Day Month Year of Publication, Location/Link.

In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name)

Example:

According to another source (Lonergan)....

**Twitter**

Reference: Twitter handle."Entire text of tweet." Twitter, Day Month Year, time, Location/link.

Example: @alaindebotton. "One kind of good book should leave you asking: how did the author know that about me?" Twitter, 27 Apr 2015, 5:51 p.m., twitter.com/alaindebotton/status/582270329835393025.

In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name)

Example:

In a recent tweet, Alain de Botton suggests that certain good books should prompt one to ask: "How did the author know that about me?"

Often a good book will make the reader wonder: "How did the author know that about me?" (De Botton)

**Facebook**

Reference: Poster Last Name, First Name (or User name). "Title of Post." Type of Post. Facebook Page Owner. Facebook, Date Posted, Location/Link.

Example: UCD Students' Union. "We support the call tonight to #Take200 vulnerable young people from devastating scenes in an at breaking-point Calais camp. This is happening, we have to act - #NotOnOurWatch." Facebook Students' Union of Ireland. Facebook, 3rd Nov. 2016, www.facebook.com/plugins/2F10153784831161910.

In-Text-Citation:

(Poster Last Name)

Example:

Students lobby to help children stranded in the infamous Zoo camp at Calais (UCD Students' Union).
Email communication

Reference: Sender Last name, First name. "Subject Title of Email." Message to Recipient First Name Last Name, Day Month Year.


In-Text-Citation:

• (Sender Last name)

Example:

• Recent figures provided suggest that ... (Scott).
• In an email sent to the author, Graham Scott suggests that the figures....

Personal Interview

Reference: Interviewee(s) Last Name, First name. Personal Interview. Day Month Year of interview.


In-Text-Citation:

• (Interviewee(s) Last name)

Example: Additional figures provided (Higgins) prove....

Published Interview

If the interview is part of a publication, recording or programme, enclose the title of the interview, if any, in quotation marks; if the interview was published independently, italicize the title. If the interview is untitled use the descriptive label Interview, neither italicized nor enclosed in quotation marks. The interviewer’s name may be added if known and pertinent to your paper. Conclude with the appropriate bibliographic information and format.

Reference: Interviewee Last name, First name. “Title of interview” (if any). See REF for relevant format (book, film, newspaper etc.)


In-Text-Citation:

- (Interviewee Last name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example:

- Kazuo Ishiguro has been described as viewing English subjects through a non-English lens (Hollinghurst 73).
- Alan Hollinghurst suggests that Ishiguro views English subjects through a non-English lens (73).

Government agency publication

Reference: Organisation name. Title. Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:

- (Organisation name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example:

- Figures released (Dept. of Health & Children 25) at the time....
- Figures from the Department of Health & Children (25)....

Parliamentary and legal material

Example: Legislation introduced at the time (Equality, Integration, Disability 2011)....

Reference: Jurisdiction. Title. Publisher, Year. Series no./Article.


In-Text-Citation:

(Short form of title)

Example:

Legislation introduced at the time (Equality, Integration, Disability 2011)....
EU publications

Reference: EU agency name. Title. Publisher, Year of publication.


In-Text-Citation:

- (EU agency name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example

- Figures released (European Commission 11) at the time....
- European Commission figures (11) show....

Conferences

Reference: Author last name, First name. "Title of paper." Title of published proceedings: Proceedings of Title of conference, Location, Date, edited by First name, Last name. Publisher, Date of publication, Type of Talk.


In-Text-Citation:

(Author(s) Last name Page no)

(Page no)

Example:

By separating Danish customary law from Canon law, a chronological progression in the organisation of agricultural practices can be determined (Hoff 433).

Annette Hoff suggests that by separating Danish customary law...(433).

Theses

Reference: Author Last name, First name. “Title.” Degree statement, Degree-awarding body, Year.

In-Text-Citation:

- (Author Last name Page no)
- (Page no)

Example:

- As argued elsewhere (Allen 55)....
- Allen (55) disagrees with this....

Film

Reference: Title. Directed by First name Last name of director, Performance by Key Performers' First Name Last Name, Distributor, Release date.


In-Text-Citation:

(Title of film)

Example:

Spottiswoode's 2016 film (A Street Cat Named Bob) displayed how....

Note: If you want to highlight a key particular performer, start the citation with their name, then their title.


Television or Radio

Reference: “Title” episode or segment. Title of programme or series. Additional info. e.g. director/narrator/performer etc. Name of network. Call letters and city of local station (if any). Broadcast date.


In-Text-Citation:

(“Title”)

Example:
Faulks traces a trajectory from Richardson’s Lovelace to recent examples such as Barbara Covett ("The Villain").

Note: If you want to highlight a particular contributors’ work to the production, then start the reference with their name.


**Group Assignment**

Note: Form refers here to either hand-written material (MS for manuscript) or typed material (TS for typescript). Give the name and location of the library, research institution, or personal collection housing the material. The recommendations outlined below are based on the MLA guidelines for unpublished work.

Reference: First author Last name, First name, next author(s)First name Last name and Last author First name Last name. Title or description of the material. Date of composition. Form of the material. Location.


In-Text-Citation:

- (First author Last name et al. Page No)
- (Page No)

Example:

- The coverage of the 1888 Whitechapel murders in the “Penny Press” may have inspired Stoker’s gothic creation (O’Neill et al. 3).
- As part of our group assignment we examined newspaper coverage of the infamous 1888 Whitechapel murders as a source for Stoker’s Dracula (3).

**Image, online only (painting, sculpture, photograph, etc)**

Reference: Creator Last name, First name. "Title of image/work." Title of webpage/website. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher if different from website name), date of website/page creation (if available), URL, DOI or permalink. Date of access.

In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name)

Example:

Ophelia hit Ireland in October 2017, pounding the coast with terrific force (Luke)

In his photograph, Luke captures the force of the waves pounding the Irish coast during storm Ophelia.....

**Image (painting, sculpture, photograph)**

Reference: Creator last name, First name. Title. Date of composition, medium, Name of holding institution, location of that institution.

Example: Yeats, Jack B. *The Liffey Swim*. 1923, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name)

Example:

This painting marks the artist’s interest in expressionism (Yeats)....

Yeats shows his interest in expressionism....

**Image (painting, sculpture, photograph, etc)**

Reference: Creator last name, First name. Title. Date of composition, medium, Name of holding institution, location of that institution. Name of website, URL/DOI of website. Date Accessed Day Month Year.


In-Text-Citation:

(Author Last name)

Example:

This painting marks the artist's interest in expressionism (Yeats)....

Yeats shows his interest in expressionism....
Note: If you wanted to provide more information for your reader you could refer to the website in your text, for example "on the nationalgallery.ie site..."

Secondary sources (indirect sources)

MLA recommends taking material from an original source. Where this is not possible you may use an indirect source; a source that refers to the work of someone else.

List the full details of the secondary source in the reference listing. In your in-text citation if what you are quoting, or paraphrasing is a direct quote use the abbreviation qtd. in (“quoted in”) before the secondary source and provide page numbers where the secondary source quoted the original work. In the reference list format the secondary reference as you would any reference of that type. For example a journal article is shown below:


In-Text-Citation:

Original Author Last name (qtd. in Secondary source Author Last name Page no)

Example:

According to Rushdie myths are "the waking dreams our societies permit" (qtd. in Mann 835)

EndNote is a software application that allows researchers store and manage all references in one place. It is available via Software for U and the Library runs regular introductory and advanced training sessions.

- Users can record, store and manage references in hundreds of citation styles.
- Users can add references manually or search and download directly from online databases and library catalogues.
- EndNote Cite While You Write features allows users to insert citations easily and creates bibliographies automatically in Microsoft Word (and Apple's Pages '09 with EndNote version X2).
See our guide for more information about Library support for Endnote.

1 http://libguides.ucd.ie/endnote