

Writing and Tutorial Center

Citation Style: MLA

Important to note that MLA is not just about the citations, but the formatting of the whole paper. Professors are primarily concerned with your sources, but more professional publications can be very strict. The basic layout will have:

New Times Roman (or similarly clear typeface)

Size 12 font

Double-spaced

1 inch margins

Page numbers in the top left corners

Every paragraph is indented

Block quotes have additional indent

There are more specific rules for formatting headers, title pages, and so on, but this covers the necessary basics.

IN-TEXT CITATION

In addition to a works cited page, MLA has an expectation of using in-text parenthetical citations. This works by referencing the author and page for specific information with an accompanying full citation on your works cited page. The author can be mentioned in the sentence itself or in the parenthetical. Here's an example:

EXAMPLE

Jamison defines empathy as being made of multiple parts, one of which being imagining another person's experience (5).

The essay explores how empathy is partially about expression, but more importantly about building an internal understanding of another's experience (Jamison 5).

In addition to the in-text citation there's the citation for a works cited page. Below is the citation for the above, as well as the general format for books.

EXAMPLE

Jamison, Leslie. *Empathy Exams*. Graywolf Press, 2014.

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Publication Date.

Remember that if the book was published before 1900 or is relatively unknown in North America, MLA requires you to put the city of publication. Of course books are only one of the many things you may need to cite...

	Citation	Example
Book with Multiple Authors	Last Name, First Name, and First Name Last Name. <i>Title</i> . Publisher, Year. or for 3+ authors: Last Name, First Name, et al. <i>Title</i> . Publisher, Year.	Graeber, David, and David Wengrow. <i>The Dawn of Everything</i> . Allen Lane, 2021. Pollard, Elizabeth, et al. <i>Worlds Together, Worlds Apart</i> . W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.
Translated Book	Last Name, First Name, translator. <i>Title</i> . By Original Author. Publisher, Year.	Wilson, Emily, translator. <i>The Odyssey</i> . By Homer. W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.
Article / Magazine	Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." <i>Title of Periodical</i> , Volume Number (issue number), Publication Date, Page Number(s).	Harris, Dianne. "Case Study Utopia and Architectural Photography." <i>American Art</i> , vol. 25, no. 2, 2011, pp. 18-21.
Web Source	Last Name, First Name. "Title of Page." <i>Title of Container</i> , Other Contributors, Publisher, Publication Date, Location (URL, DOI, or permalink). Date of Access.	"About the Soil & Water Conservation Committee." <i>Department of Agriculture and Markets</i> , https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/about-soil-water-conservation-committee . May 27, 2025.
Art Piece	Last Name, First Name. <i>Title</i> . Year, Institute, Location. (Materials if relevant.)	Sargent, John Singer. <i>Madam X</i> . 1884, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Photograph	Last Name, First Name. "Image Title." <i>Website Name</i> , Publication Date, URL .	Adams, Ansel. "Canyon de Chelly." <i>National Archives</i> , 1942, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/519852 .
Movie	<i>Film Title</i> . Directed by First Name Last Name, Production Company, Year Released. <i>Streaming Platform / Website Name</i> (if applicable), URL .	<i>Sinners</i> . Directed by Ryan Coogler, Proximity Media, 2025.

ABOUT THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

This citation style first came to be formalized in 1931, but the Modern Language Association is actually even older than that! It was founded in 1883 to give academics a place to share their work and discuss scholarly trends. The organization today consists of more than 20,000 members and frequently hosts seminars and larger conventions. It also still publishes updates to MLA citation guidelines, the 9th and most recent edition came out in 2021. As the 'language' in MLA might imply, the style is favored in the humanities, and is often the system most Americans learn in high school.

For more information we suggest visiting the [OWL Purdue MLA Guide](#).

Additionally, [Easybib's Citation Tool](#) can sometimes have clear breakdowns of more niche uses.