General guidelines for the works cited list

In the list of works cited, include only sources that you have quoted, summarized, or paraphrased in your paper. MLA's guidelines are applicable to a wide variety of sources. At times you may find that you have to adapt the guidelines and models in this section to source types you encounter in your research.

Organization of the list

The elements, or pieces of information, needed for a works cited entry are the following:

- The author (if a work has one)
- The title
- The title of the larger work in which the source is located (MLA calls this a “container”)—a collection, a journal, a magazine, a Web site, and so on
- As much of the following information as is available about the source and the container:
  - Editor, translator, director, performer
  - Version
  - Volume and issue numbers
  - Publisher or sponsor
  - Date of publication
  - Location of the source: page numbers, URL, DOI, and so on

Not all sources will require every element. See specific models in this section for more details.

Authors

- Arrange the list alphabetically by authors’ last names or by titles for works with no authors.
- For the first author, place the last name first, a comma, and the first name. Put a second author’s name in normal order (first name followed by last name). For three or more authors, use “et al.” after the first author’s name.
- Spell out “editor,” “translator,” “edited by,” and so on.

Titles

- In titles of works, capitalize all words except articles (a, an, the), prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, and the to in infinitives — unless the word is first or last in the title or subtitle.
- Use quotation marks for titles of articles and other short works.
- Italicize titles of books and other long works.

Publication information

- MLA no longer requires the place of publication for a book publisher.
- Use the complete version of publishers’ names, except for terms such as “Inc.” and “Co.”; retain terms such as “Books” and “Press.” For university publishers, use “U” and “P” for “University” and “Press.”
- For a book, take the name of the publisher from the title page (or from the copyright page if it is not on the title page). For a Web site, the publisher might be at the bottom of a page or on the “About” page. If a work has two or more publishers, separate the names with slashes.
- If the title of a Web site and the publisher are the same or similar, use the title of the site but omit the publisher.

Dates

- For a book, give the most recent year on the title page or the copyright page. For a Web source, use the copyright date or the most recent update date. Use the complete date as listed in the source. (See item 13a.)
- Abbreviate all months except May, June, and July and give the date in inverted form: 13 Mar. 2016.
- If the source has no date, give your date of access at the end: Accessed 24 Feb. 2016.

Page numbers

- For most articles and other short works, give page numbers when they are available, preceded by “p.” (or “pp.” for more than one page).
- Do not use the page numbers from a printout of a Web source.
- If an article does not appear on consecutive pages, give the number of the first page followed by a plus sign: 35+.

URLs and DOIs

- Give a permalink or a DOI (digital object identifier) if a source has one. (See item 14c.)
- If a source does not have a permalink or a DOI, include a URL (omitting the protocol, such as http://).
- For a library’s subscription database, such as Academic ASAP or JSTOR, include only the basic URL for the database home page. (See item 15d.)
- For open databases and archives, such as Google Books, give the complete URL for the source. (See item 30c.)