

MLA Format for Citing Electronic Sources

The Modern Language Association (MLA) handbook addresses the issue of citing electronic sources in the MLA handbook, 7th edition, section 5.6. Below are examples of commonly used electronic sources.

2009 Updates

There are six changes to MLA format that affect the way you cite electronic sources.

1. MLA, generally, no longer requires you to cite the URLs of your electronic sources. The only instance in which writers are encouraged to include the URL is if the citation information will not allow the reader to locate the source easily. Writers are encouraged to record the URL for their own research purposes so that documents are easy to retrieve if necessary during the writing process.
2. MLA requires that every Works Cited entry include the “medium of publication,” that is, the type of document it is. The majority of your citations will either be “Print” or “Web” while some may be “TV,” “Film,” “Performance,” etc.
3. MLA requires a “date of access”, that is, the date when the document was consulted. This should always follow the publication medium “Web.”
4. If you are citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics. You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.
5. MLA no longer requires any information pertaining to the library where you conducted research or accessed databases.
6. MLA requires specific abbreviations to indicate that certain information could not be retrieved for the works cited entry. Those abbreviations are as follows:
 - Add “n.p.” when no publisher name appears on the website you are citing.
 - Add “n.d.” when no date of publication appears on the website you are citing
 - Add “n.pag.” when you are citing a journal that only appears online (i.e. there is no print version) and doesn’t provide pagination (i.e. no page numbers) or on databases that provide no pagination.

General Citation Format

The following list of common features, as noted by the Perdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), that you should try to locate for each document before you prepare your citation are as follows:

- Author and/or editor names (if available)
- Article name in quotation marks (if applicable)
- Title of the Website, project, or book in italics. (Remember that some print publications have web publications with slightly different names. They may, for example, include the additional information or otherwise modified information, like domain names [e.g. .com or .net].)
- Any version numbers available, including revisions, posting dates, volumes, or issue numbers.
- Publisher information, including the publisher name and publishing date.
- Take note of any page numbers (if available).
- Date you accessed the material.
- URL (if required, or for your own personal reference).

Common Citation Examples

Article in an Online Scholarly Journal

William, Andrew P. "The Center of Attention: Theatricality and the Restoration Fop." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 4.3 (January, 1999). Web. 10 July 1999.

Article from an online Scholarly Database

Wilkins, Johanna M. "The Myths of the Only Child." *Psychology Update* 12 Dec. 1999: 16-20. *ProQuest Direct*. Web. 20 Dec. 1999.

Online Book

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Twice-Told Tales*. Ed. George Parsons Lathrop. Boston: Houghton, 1883. Web. 16 May 2002.

Online Newspaper

Coates, Steve. "A Dead Language Comes to Life on the Internet." *New York Times*. Web. 28 Oct. 1996. 20 Apr. 1997

A Personal or Professional Website

Dawe, James. *Jane Austen Page*. 15 Sept. 1997.

Scholarly Project

The Cinderella Project. Ed. Michale N. Salda. Vers. 1.0. Feb. 1995. *De Grummond Children's Lit. Research Collection*. 18 Mar. 1997.

Citing Electronic Sources "In-text"

- Your in-text citation for a source should correspond to the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry for that source (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).
- You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser's print preview function.
- Unless you must list the website name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, do not include URLs in-text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like *CNN.com* or *Forbes.com* as opposed to writing out <http://www.cnn.com> or <http://www.forbes.com>.

As with print sources, information you access electronically is attributed in your text to its author. However, because page numbers are usually not used with Internet sources, the usual format for MLA parenthetical citations (author's last name page number) does not work very well. The MLA handbook recommends citing all sources without pagination in your text rather than in parenthetical citations. Examples:

Stephen Hall Clark points out that while increased use of the railways in Britain promoted leisure travel for all classes, train cars, divided into first, second and third class, also were "steel barriers" between classes.

Jere Longman suggests that the women's World Cup team is sending "a message around the world that women can be both athletic and feminine in an endeavor that in many countries, still carries the stigma that women who play are somehow unwomanly."

Note that no parenthetical citation is used, and the web address does not appear in the text. Readers will reference the authors' names in your Works Cited page and find out where these citations came from.