

Works Cited

After the body of your paper comes the works cited page, and it features the reference sources used in your essay. When you create your works cited page, list the sources alphabetically by last name, or list them by title if the author is not known as is often the case of web-based articles. In MLA style, all the sources you cite throughout the text of your paper are listed together with all bibliographic information in the Works Cited section, which comes after the main text of your paper.

MLA is now in its eighth edition; this new version included significant changes to the way works cited pages are formatted. The sections below detail what is the same and what's different in MLA.

Formatting the Works Cited Section

The basic look of the works cited page is the same. The top of the page, as the rest of your paper, should still include the right-justified header of your last name and the page number.

On the first line, the title of the page—Works Cited—should appear centered, and not italicized or bolded. Like the rest of your paper, this page should be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins (don't skip an extra line between citations).

Starting on the next line after the page title, your references should be listed in alphabetical order by author. Multiple sources by the same author should be listed chronologically by year within the same group.

Each reference should be formatted with what is called a hanging indent. This means the first line of each reference should be flush with the left margin (i.e., not indented), but the rest of that reference should be indented 0.5 inches further. Any word-processing program will let you format this automatically, so you don't have to do it by hand.

Tip

In Microsoft Word, you simply highlight your citations, click on the small arrow right next to the word "Paragraph" on the home tab, and in the popup box choose "hanging indent" under the "Special" section. Click OK, and you're done.

Constructing a Citation

What has changed in MLA is how to construct your citations. The first step to building each citation is understanding the new changes to MLA format. Understanding the new guidelines for MLA requires **critical thinking**. For this reason, you may have to read this section more than once. There's a lot to consider. You might even have to read it five or ten times to fully understand the way in which MLA now adheres to **principles of citing** rather than strict rules.

MLA 8 responds to the changes in how information is disseminated and published. The way we research has changed significantly since the birth of the Internet and social media. The changes in MLA respond to the way writers and researchers gather much research, online—writers can visit libraries without ever leaving the house. To cite correctly with this format, it is important to understand the principles of MLA documentation. With MLA 8, writers must consider the commonalities among sources, items like authors, titles, dates, as opposed to memorizing strict guidelines created specifically for each method of disseminating information.

The video below explains the changes in a slightly different way.

Bonus Video

Understanding MLA Style (8th edition, 2016 updates)

With this new MLA format, two writers could cite the same source differently, depending on which parts of that source were most important to their paper. But whether a writer focuses on the director of a movie as opposed to the actors, that writer still needs to consider the important core elements of a citation, and the succession of core elements in a citation, along with these core elements' required punctuation, doesn't change.

Below, you will find the nine core elements of a Works Cited entry:

1. Author
2. Title of source
3. Title of container
4. Other contributors
5. Version
6. Number
7. Publisher
8. Publication date
9. Location

Each element is followed by a comma or a period, though the final element in a Works Cited entry is always followed by a period. Only the elements relevant to a particular source should be included in its Works Cited entry.

Consult the *MLA Handbook*, 8th Edition for more information. The MLA website also contains a helpful guide, including a practice template:

[Works Cited: A Quick Guide](#)

A brief explanation of each of the nine elements follows.

Breaking Down Core Elements

Author

If the source is written by one author, the citation should begin with the author's last name, a comma, the rest of the author's name, and then a period. For example, if you're citing a source written by Zadie Smith, the citation should begin:

Smith, Zadie.

If the source is written by two authors, the citation should begin with the first author's last name, a comma, the rest of the first author's name, a comma, the second author's full name (in the normal order), and then a period. For example, if you're citing a source written by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, the citation should begin:

Twain, Mark, and Charles Dudley Warner.

If the source is written by three or more authors, the citation should begin with the first author's last name, a comma, the rest of the first author's name, a comma, and then et. al., which means "and others." For example, if you're citing a source written by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, the citation should begin:

Booth, Wayne C., et al.

Title of Source

If the source is what the MLA Handbook describes as "self-contained and independent," such as a book or a collection of essays, stories, or poems by multiple authors, include the title in italics, followed by a period. For example, if you're citing Zadie Smith's novel *Swing Time*, the citation should begin:

Smith, Zadie. *Swing Time*.

If the source, on the other hand, is a work that appears within a larger work, such as a poem that appears with an anthology, include the title in quotation marks instead. (Make sure that the period following the title appears inside the closing quotation mark.) For example, if you're citing Seamus Heaney's poem "Digging" from his collection *Death of a Naturalist*, the citation should begin:

Heaney, Seamus. "Digging."

Title of Container,

A container, in this context, is the larger work that contains the shorter work being cited. Seamus Heaney's poetry collection *Death of a Naturalist*, for example, is the container for his poem "Digging."

If the source you're citing appears within a container, continue the citation by including the title of the container in italics, followed by a comma:

Heaney, Seamus. "Digging." *Death of a Naturalist*,

Here's another example. In this case, the website *Slate* is the container for the article "Hackers Breached San Francisco's Transit System and Demanded a Ransom":

Grabar, Henry. "Hackers Breached San Francisco's Transit System and Demanded a Ransom" *Slate*,

Other Contributors,

Sometimes there are other contributors to a work—in addition to the author or authors—who should be included in the Works Cited entry.

Include a contributor if their contribution helps further identify the work or if their contribution is particularly relevant to your research.

If you include a contributor in your work cited entry, add a description of the contribution (“adapted by,” “directed by,” “edited by,” “illustrated by,” etc.), followed by the full name of the contributor and a comma.

For example, if you’re citing a work that has been translated from another language, continue the citation by including the phrase “translated by” followed by the full name of the translator and a comma:

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Translated by William Weaver,

Or, for example, if your research relates to the illustrations contained within a work, continue the citation by including the phrase “Illustrated by” followed by the full name of the illustrator and a comma:

Bloom, Amy Beth. *Little Sweet Potato*. Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones,

Version,

Some works are published in different versions or editions. If you’re citing a particular version of a work, continue the citation by including the version followed by a comma. Here are two examples:

Nelson, Philip. *Biological Physics: Energy, Information, Life*. Updated Version,

King, Laura A. *The Science of Psychology: An Appreciative Review*. 3rd ed.,

Number,

Similarly, some works are published in multiple numbers, volumes, issues, episodes, or seasons. If you’re citing a particular number of a work, continue the citation by including the number followed by a comma. Here are a few examples:

“Indigenous Rights in Canada: Contested Wilderness.” *The Economist*, Vol. 421, Number 9017,

Kirkman, Rodman. *The Walking Dead*. Illustrated by Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn, Vol. 4: The Heart’s Desire,

“Airport 2010.” *Modern Family*. Written by Dan O’Shannon and Bill Wrubel, season 1, episode 22,

Publisher,

If the source is distributed by a publisher, blog network, or other organization, continue the citation by including the publisher, followed by a comma. Here are two examples:

McMillan, Robert. “Her Code Got Humans on the Moon—and Invented Software Itself.” *Wired*, Condé Nast,

Miranda, Lin-Manuel, and Jeremy McCarter. *Hamilton: The Revolution*. Grand Central Publishing,

Publication Date,

Continue the citation by including the available publication date information most relevant to your source, followed by a comma. If you're citing a book, for example, a copyright year will suffice:

Fish, Stanley. *How Milton Works*. Belknap Press, 2001,

If you're citing a tweet, on the other hand, provide the day, month, year, and time, as some people and organizations tweet more than once a day:

@POTUS. "This Thanksgiving, we give thanks for our blessings, and work to fulfill the timeless responsibility we have as Americans to serve others." *Twitter*, 24 Nov. 2016, 2:05 p.m.,

Location.

Location, in this context, refers to the location (e.g. page number(s), DOI, URL, etc.) of a source within a container or the physical location of a live performance, lecture, or presentation. If applicable, continue the citation by including the location information, followed by a period. Here are a few examples:

Heaney, Seamus. "Casualty." *Field Work: Poems*, Farrar, Straux, and Giroux, 2009, pp. 13-16.

Grabar, Henry. "Hackers Breached San Francisco's Transit System and Demanded a Ransom," *Slate*, TheSlateGroup, 28 Nov. 2016, slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2016/11/28/san_francisco_muni_hacked_for_a_ransom_payment.html.

Ernst, Steve, and Liza Neustaetter. "Empowering Faculty and Students with High Quality Modular Courseware." *OLC Accelerate*, 18 Nov. 2016, Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, Orlando.

Formatting the Works Cited Page

Your Works Cited entries should be listed in alphabetical order. Each reference should be formatted with what is called a hanging indent. This means the first line of each citation should be flush with the left margin (i.e., not indented), but the rest of that citation should be indented a half an inch from the left margin.

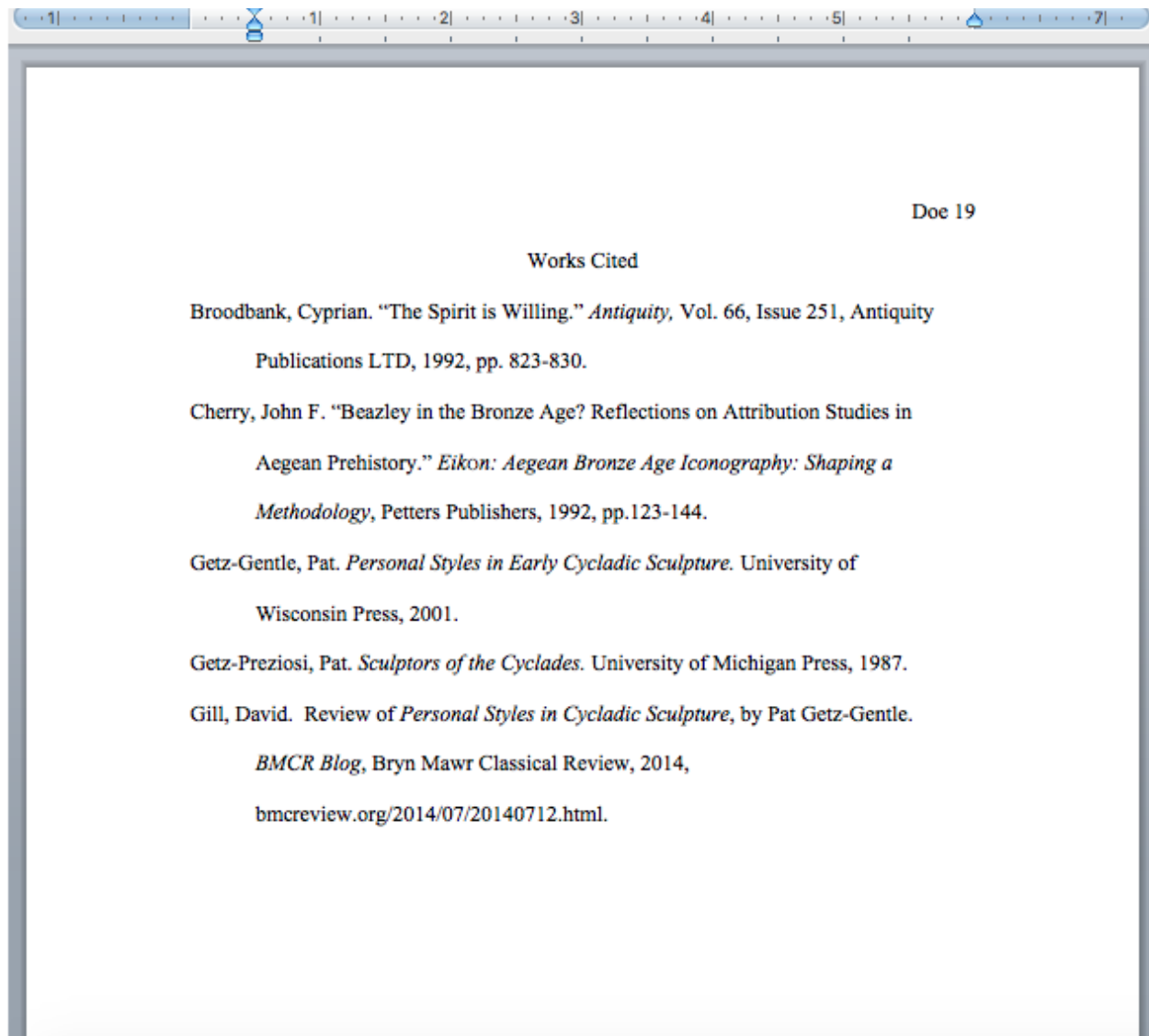
Any word-processing program will let you format this automatically, so you don't have to do it by hand. (In Microsoft Word, for example, you simply highlight your citations, click on the small arrow right next to the word "Paragraph" on the home tab, and in the popup box choose "hanging indent" under the "Special" section. Click OK, and you're done.)

Multiple Publications by the Same Author

If you are referencing multiple publications by the same author (or group of authors), there is a special rule for denoting this. You should first order those articles alphabetically by source title in the Works Cited section. Then, replace the author's name (or list of names) with three hyphens, followed by a period, for all but the first entry by that author:

Achenbach, Thomas M. "Bibliography of....

—. "School-Age...



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