

MLA citation quick reference

The nine core elements, patterns for print and screen sources, and the in-text forms. Checked against the MLA Handbook, 9th edition.

THE NINE CORE ELEMENTS

1. Author	Last, First.
2. Title of source	"Title of Article."
3. Title of container	<i>Journal Name</i> ,
4. Other contributors	edited by First Last,
5. Version	3rd ed.,
6. Number	vol. 12, no. 3,
7. Publisher	Publisher,
8. Publication date	YYYY,
9. Location	pp. 100–25.

REFERENCE PATTERNS

Book	Last, First. <i>Title of Book</i> . Publisher, YYYY.
Chapter	Last, First. "Title of Chapter." <i>Title of Book</i> , edited by First Last, Publisher, YYYY, pp. 100–25.
Journal article	Last, First. "Title of Article." <i>Journal Name</i> , vol. 12, no. 3, YYYY, pp. 100–25.
Article in a database	Last, First. "Title of Article." <i>Journal Name</i> , vol. 12, no. 3, YYYY, pp. 100–25. <i>JSTOR</i> , https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxx .
Website	Last, First. "Title of Page." <i>Site Name</i> , DD Mon. YYYY, example.com/page .
Film	<i>Title of Film</i> . Directed by First Last, Studio, YYYY.
Television episode	"Title of Episode." <i>Title of Series</i> , season 2, episode 5, Studio, YYYY.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

One author	(Said 24)
Two authors	(Gilbert and Gubar 112)
Three or more	(Booth et al. 45)
Author named in the sentence	Said argues ... (24).
No author	("Short Title" 12)
No page numbers	(Said)
Two works by one author	(Said, <i>Orientalism</i> 24)

AUTHOR NAMES

One author	Last, First.
Two authors	Last, First, and First Last.
Three or more	Last, First, et al. MLA cuts off earlier than any other style.
Organisation	Printed in full, and alphabetised by the first significant word.

CONTAINERS

- A container is whatever holds the source: a journal, a book, a series, a site.
- A database is a second container and follows the first.
- Each container repeats elements 3 to 9 as needed.
- Only include the elements that actually apply.

SIX MISTAKES THAT COST MARKS

- Putting a comma before the page number.
- Including the year in the parenthetical.
- Using et al. with two authors.
- Keeping https:// in the URL.
- Calling the list a bibliography instead of Works Cited.
- Leaving out the second container for a database.