

The Owens Community College Writing Center's Quick Guide to MLA Citation

Edited 25 July 2016

Uses MLA 8th edition**In-Text Citation Basics:**

Your parenthetical (or in-text) citations within your paper link back to the Works Cited entries at the end of your paper by giving **enough information to tell** your readers

- **which source** from your Works Cited page they are looking at **and**
- **where in the source** the information can be found

It is usually best to reference the source in text by whatever starts the Work Cited entry (usually the **author's last name**) and include the **page number** (if present) at the end of the citation in parentheses (a parenthetical citation). MLA also allows writers to include both types of information in the parenthetical citation.

Examples (Highlights added for clarity):

Model 1: Author named in a signal phrase:

Owen Grady, a notable dinosaur expert, states, "Dinosaurs have become popular lately" (5).

This example mentions the author's last name in the signal phrase and the page number in the parenthetical citation. Notice the location of the period.

Model 2: Author named in parentheses:

One notable dinosaur expert states, "Raptors do not think of people as Alphas, but food" (Grady 17).

This example references the author and the page number in parentheses.

A work with two authors:

Grant and Sattler shared the results of their archaeological digs in hopes of bringing dinosaurs to life for everyone, not just scientists (55).

List the last names of both authors, either in a signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation.

A work with three or more authors:

Bullock et al. state, "A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate" (254).

With three or more authors, list only the first author's name, followed by "et al." (Latin for "and others").

Author unknown:

An interesting new article explains how the idea of releasing dinosaurs into the wild first came about ("Born Free to Live Free" 2).

For works written by an anonymous author or authors, use the work's title or a shortened version of the title in the parentheses.

Organization or government as author:

State officials report that “Many world-famous paleontologists—geologists who study fossils—began their careers as youngsters collecting fossils in their native Ohio” (Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey 1).

Acknowledge the organization either in a signal phrase or in parentheses. When using parentheses, include all administrative units of the organization, separated by commas, and abbreviate commonly abbreviated terms.

Source quoted in another source (indirect source):

In the book, “Memoirs of the Jurassic World Catastrophe,” Owen Grady states, “Dinosaurs are clearly smarter than humans” (qtd. in Dearing 43).

When you are quoting text that you found quoted in another source, use the abbreviation “qtd. in” in the parenthetical reference. In this example, Dearing’s book is the source on the Works Cited page, not Owen Grady.

Work without page numbers:

Similarities in amino acid sequences provide evidence of the evolutionary relationship between dinosaurs and birds (“Dinosaurs and Chickens Look to Be Linked” par. 2).

Many online sources do not have page numbers; thus, you cannot report them. It is essential to cite the author (or, if the author is anonymous, the title) in a signal phrase or parenthetical citation. If the source has paragraph or section numbers, use them with the abbreviation “par.” or “sec.” to report the location.

Dictionary entry:

According to *dictionary.com*, a hierarchy is “any system of persons or things ranked one above another” (“Hierarchy”).

Because this definition did not have a specific author listed, we need to cite the title of the webpage, which is the word being defined. While the signal phrase, “According to *dictionary.com*” may not be strictly necessary, it starts the sentence to clarify for the reader that the definition is a dictionary definition, not a personally created definition.

Core Elements: The most commonly used elements within a source one will need to cite in new 8th edition MLA. 8th edition requires these elements to be recorded in a specific order. On the example to the left, the core elements are listed 1-9. Follow each element with punctuation shown, exception being the final element of the container which is always a period.

MLA Practice Template

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

From *MLA Handbook* (8th ed.), published by the Modern Language Association (style.mla.org).

Container: The concept of “container” is new to the 8th edition MLA. A container is the place (book, journal, website, etc) where the source was found.

In some instances, there may be a secondary container as shown in example 2 on the next page.

★ For more detailed instructions on different citation examples relating to the various core elements, see style.mla.org or *MLA Handbook 8th Edition*.

Example 1: An Essay in a Book Collection

1 Author: EDWARD COPELAND
Money

2 Title of source: *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*

3 Title of container: THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO JANE AUSTEN

4 Other contributors: EDWARD COPELAND, JULIET McMASTER

5 Publication date: 1997

6 Publisher: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

7 Location: 131

8 Title of container: THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO JANE AUSTEN

9 Location: 148

Copeland, Edward. "Money." *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, edited by Copeland and Juliet McMaster, Cambridge UP, 1997, pp. 131-48.

Example 2: A Journal Article Retrieved from a Database

1 Author: Jutta Lorenzen

2 Title of source: "Between Image and Word, Color and Time: Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*."

3 Title of container: AFRICAN AMERICAN REVIEW

4 Other contributors: Langston Hughes (qtd. in Sp...)

5 Publication date: 2006

6 Number: 40, Number 3

7 Location: 571

8 Publication date: 2006

9 Location: 586

Lorenzen, Julia. "Between Image and Word, Color, and Time: Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*." *African American Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 571-86. EBSCOHost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=24093790&site=ehost-live.