This handout provides a summary of rules established by the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for documenting the original source of an idea or quotation. There are two steps in MLA documentation: (1) provide a brief citation to the original source in the text of your paper and (2) make a full citation on the Works Cited page at the end of your paper. For the most authoritative and complete set of rules for MLA style, see the *MLA Handbook*, Chapters 5-6.

**Documenting Sources in the Text**

Use parenthetical references in the text of your paper to show the original source of an idea or quotation. A parenthetical reference has brief information, usually the author’s last name and the page numbers of the section you are quoting or paraphrasing – just enough to help a reader find the source in the works cited list at the end of your paper. You have the option to include some information, such as the author’s last name, in the text itself, or you can put everything in a parenthetical reference. The parenthetical reference should be placed where a pause would naturally occur, such as at the end of a sentence.

**One author in text**

Marcuse made this claim (148-49).

**One author in reference**

This claim has been made (Marcuse 148-49).

**Two or three authors in text**

Hunt and Wilkins dispute this point (45-47). Hunt, Mao, and Wilkins dispute this point (45-47).

**Two or three authors in reference**

This point is disputed (Hunt and Wilkins 45-47). This point is disputed (Hunt, Mao, and Wilkins 45-47).

**Four or more authors in text**

Baxter and her co-authors...this proposal (203-05)

**Four or more authors in reference**

...made this proposal (Baxter, et al. 203-05).

**Multivolume works in text**

In volume 2, Williams notes... (30-34).

**Multivolume works in reference**

(Williams 2: 30-34). (Schlesinger, vol. 4).

**Work with no author**


**Work by a Corporate Author**

(National Research Council 15).

**Two works by same author**

The Works Cited Page

The Works Cited page at the end of your paper provides a complete citation to every source used in the text. Start with a new page. One-half inch from the top of the page, continue the page number from the text. Use double-spacing for the entire page. Center the title, Works Cited, one inch from the top of the page. Begin your list of works cited on the next line. Arrange the cited works in alphabetical order by author. For works that have no author, use the title. Start the first line of each citation flush with the left margin. Indent subsequent lines of each citation one-half inch from the margin (hanging indent).

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Author(s) or editor(s). Title. Place of publication: Publisher, date of publication. Format.

Book with No Author

Book with One Author/Editor

Book with Two or Three Authors/Editors

Book with Four or More Authors/Editors

Editions and Multivolume Works

Article in a Reference Book

Translation of Works
Chapter or Work in an Anthology
Add the author, title, translator (if relevant) and page numbers of the chapter or work. For an essay, story, or poem, use quotation marks for the title. If the work was originally published independently (for example, a novel, autobiography, or play), italicize the title.


Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers

Journal Article
Use the author, article title (quotes), journal title (italicized), series number, volume, issue number, year, page numbers, and format.


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Start with the rules for books, journals, magazines, and newspapers (see above). Then add the database name (italicized), medium of publication (Web), and date of access (day, month, and year).

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**Web Sites**

Use the author(s)/compiler/editor/narrator/performer/translator, title of the work, Web site title (italicized), version or edition, publisher/sponsor (use *N.p.* if not available), date of publication (use *n.d.* if unavailable), medium of publication (Web) and date of access. The URL is optional. It may be included when the instructor requires it or when the website cannot be easily located without it. The URL should follow the date of access and be enclosed in angle brackets.

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