

## KOSMICKI'S BRIEF MLA CITATION STYLE GUIDE

Citation is a very important aspect of writing. When an author uses another author's ideas or information, credit must be given, whether the original author's words are used as a direct quote or not.

The older, more traditional styles of citation relied on the author listing the full citation of each source on the page where the information was actually used, usually in a footnote. Later, the footnotes were collected at the end of the paper or chapter and called endnotes. However, both of these formats were awkward and clumsy for the writer. Therefore, the MLA (Modern Language Association) decided to create a new system that was easier to use for the writer, and yet still gave the reader as much information as they needed to know.

The MLA style of citation is designed around two different, yet related functions: in-text parenthetical citation and the list of sources. Both are absolutely necessary in order for either one to work. The in-text citations make reference to the list of sources, and the list of sources tells you the necessary information about the sources cited in the text of the essay. In this guide, we will deal with both functions, but separately.

### IN-TEXT CITATIONS

In-text citations are used whenever a writer has used information from another source, whether that information is a direct quote or a paraphrase. The rule of thumb is that if the writer didn't know the information before beginning the research, it needs to be cited. The one exception to this rule is general knowledge. Any information found in a general encyclopedia or found in a majority of sources is not considered unique enough to need to be cited. The author CAN cite it, but they are not required to do so.

**FAILURE TO CITE INFORMATION FOUND IN A SPECIFIC SOURCE, WHETHER A DIRECT QUOTE OR NOT, IS PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARISM IS THEFT, AND WILL BE DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.**

MLA uses what is called parenthetical citation, because it puts the in-text citations inside parentheses whenever possible. The idea behind doing so is to keep the citation from interfering with the reader's perception of the information. Take, for example, the following sentence:

According to Jonathan Rowe, editor of *Washington Monthly* and Policy Director of Redefining Progress in San Francisco, on page 24 of his article "Down Among the Economists" in the Winter, 1996, issue of *Adbusters: Journal of the Mental Environment*, the study of economics gives a skewed view of the world because only events in which money changes hands are actually acknowledged as having happened and having value.

After reading that sentence, what do you remember? What grabs your attention? Odds are that it isn't the actual information, because it takes so long to get to the information. Parenthetical citation allows you to write the same sentence either of the following ways:

The study of economics gives a skewed view of the world because only events in which money changes hands are actually acknowledged as having happened and having value (Rowe 24).

Notice that the reader's attention is placed on the actual information being shared, not on the information about the source. That information has not disappeared, though. It is important information that needs to be available to the reader. In parenthetical citation, that information is available in an alphabetical list at the end of the paper. The information in the parentheses is ONLY the information that the reader needs to find the proper source on that alphabetical list.

The information is put in parentheses at the end of the sentence in order to be as out of the way as possible. The reader can now ignore the citation information if they wish, knowing that it is available should they desire it.

## MLA IN-TEXT CITATION EXAMPLES

MLA requires that the first piece of information in the parentheses be the main word or words used to alphabetize the source on the list of sources. Usually the source has been alphabetized by the author's last name, but that's not always the case.

MLA also requires the page number where that information was found in the original source. Listed below are several examples of variations on the basic MLA citation form:

**(Hargens 34)** - normal MLA citation

**(Hargens, R. 34)** - there were two authors named Smith alphabetized, so we need to know more information to find the right one.

**(Hargens, "AIDS" 34)** - this author had more than one work listed in the sources, so we need more information to know which one is being cited.

**("AIDS" 34)** – there is no author, so it is alphabetized by title, and needs to be cited the same.

**(Hargens and Swenson 58)** - this source has multiple authors

**(Hargens ¶ 8)** – this is an Internet source, and its page numbers are different based on each printer, so information is cited by the paragraph where it is found, not the page. If you can't make the ¶ symbol, use the abbreviation par

Please note that MLA **DOES NOT** use a comma before the page number

MLA allows the writer some leeway about citations. If the name from the parentheses has already been given in that sentence (and that sentence only, not several sentences before), then it does not need to be repeated in the parentheses.

In MLA, the page number should be given in parentheses after the information.

For example: According to sociologist George Smith, gangs have been a problem in American cities for as long as there have been American cities (435).

In the previous examples, the author's name, Smith, does not need to be repeated in the parentheses because it has already been given in the sentence. Note, however, that there still needs to be a citation for the rest of the required information.

## LIST OF SOURCES

The list of sources is what makes the in-text citations work. Without the list of sources, you would be citing a bunch of names and page numbers that didn't mean anything.

In MLA, the list of sources is called the Works Cited page.

Some rules concerning this page are:

- The list of sources should be the 1st page after the last page of your essay or report.
- Be sure to use hanging indentation. The first line is at the left margin, all additional lines for each citation are indented ½ inch, or 5 spaces.
- Do NOT start your list of sources on a page that contains any of your essay.
- The list of sources should be numbered along with the rest of your pages; thus if you have a 5 page essay, the Works Cited or References page would be numbered 6.
- The name of the page, Works Cited or References, should be on the first line at the top of the page, centered.
- Do NOT write the title in all caps or underline.
- DO capitalize each word.

The list of citations is the real key to how the citation system works. Each citation is simply a list of all the important information that a reader would need to know in order to find the version of the source that you used. All necessary information for a citation can be found on the title page of a book and the contents page of a magazine.

## BOOK CITATIONS

For a book, you always need the following information:

- ✓ author's name,
- ✓ book's complete title,
- ✓ publisher's name,
- ✓ place of publication, and
- ✓ the date that this version was published for the first time.

Additional information that is needed if available or pertinent: edition number, translator's name, name of anthology, editor of anthology, date of original publication if you are using a reprint, names of all authors if more than one, name of series if the book is part of a series, etc.

If your book has any of this extra information included on the title page, you **MUST** include it in your citation. Check your style manual or handbook for the proper format for these and other variations. Nobody is expected to remember every variation, but you should be comfortable with and able to use the basic format and know where to find any necessary variations.

### MLA Book Citation Format

The basic format of an MLA book citation is as follows:

Last name, First name. *Book's Complete Title*. Place of publication: Publisher name, Date.

For Example:

Morantz-Sanchez, Regina. *Conduct Unbecoming a Woman: Medicine on Trial in Turn-of-the-Century Brooklyn*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Some details to note:

- Citations are double spaced if more than one line.
- If there is more than one line, all additional lines are indented 5 spaces from the left margin.
- You must always tell the city of publication. If the city is not well known, you should also give the state abbreviation.
- You do NOT have to give the publisher's full name, just enough to identify them from other publishers: Norton for W.W. Norton, or Bedford for Bedford Books. Abbreviate University Press as UP.
- Title is underlined or *italicized* (underlining means to italicize when you print something)
- Any variations or deviations from this basic form such as edition, editors, translators, etc. are inserted between the title and the publisher's information.
- If you have a subtitle, it is included AFTER the title and a colon. It is capitalized just like the regular title, and italicized or underlined as well.

**On University Presses:** MLA uses a form of abbreviation when writing the name of a university press: The word University is shortened to the letter U, and the word Press is shortened to the letter P. Thus The University of Nebraska Press becomes **U of Nebraska P**; and Oxford University Press would be written as **Oxford UP**.

## PERIODICAL CITATIONS

A periodical is normally called a magazine or journal, but I prefer to use the term periodical, because it signifies why there is a separate citation form from that of the book: a periodical is published periodically, in other words on a regular schedule. Because of this, you can't just tell the reader that the information came from Time in 1997, as Time will publish anywhere from 50 to 52 issues in 1997. A book is generally only published once, but a periodical is changed and republished every month, week or season.

For a periodical, you always need the following information:

- ✓ author's name,
- ✓ article's complete title,
- ✓ periodical's name,
- ✓ complete date of the periodical (found on contents page),
- ✓ page numbers that the article was printed on.

### MLA Periodical Citation Format

The basic format for an MLA periodical citation is as follows:

Last name, first name. "Title of article." Periodical Name Date: page numbers for article.

For Example:

Lyall, Sarah. "The Royal Spin." Brill's Content Aug 2000: 61-63+.

Some details to note:

- A magazine article's title is in quotation marks, and the magazine's name is underlined or italicized.
- The page numbers are for the entire article, not just the pages that you used.
- If an article goes for several pages and then skips to the back of the magazine (see page xx, for example), then you list the consecutive page numbers followed by a + sign: 124-32+.
- Military dates are used (Date Month Year - 16 Jan. 1995) and
- Months should be abbreviated to 3 or 4 letters: Oct., Aug, Sep., Dec., July
- Always list the date as it is listed on the magazine's cover or contents page. Examples: May/June; Winter; July; 12 Aug. 1995

## ACADEMIC OR SPECIALIZED JOURNALS

One important variation to remember is for specialized magazines and journals. They tend to label their magazines by volume and year rather than by normal dates. You need to reflect this in the date given in the citation by using the volume and number instead of the more conventional calendar date.

Also, you need to check if the magazine numbers its pages starting from page 1 every issue, or if they number consecutively (every month numbered starting from the last page of the last issue).

### **If the magazine numbers the pages consecutively,**

then the date is indicated in MLA by putting the volume number after the magazine name and the year in parentheses after the volume number:

*College English* 56 (1994)

### **If the scholarly journal numbers each issue's pages starting over from page 1, then you **also** need to indicate which issue number you are using.**

In MLA, you give the magazine name, followed by the volume number, followed by a period, followed by the issue number, followed by the year in parentheses:

*College English* 56.8 (1994)

## ANTHOLOGY SELECTIONS

The anthology is a special type of citation, because it is a combination of the requirements for both a book and a periodical, because it has characteristics of each. The anthology is a collection of smaller articles, stories or essays like a periodical (usually, but not always, by a variety of authors), but it is published and looks like a book. In addition, the anthology also usually has an editor who needs to be identified, but NOT as the primary author, as the editor didn't usually write the selections in the anthology.

For an anthology citation, you will need to include the following:

- ✓ The name of the author of the anthology selection
- ✓ The name of the anthology selection (story, essay, article, poem)
- ✓ The name of the anthology itself
- ✓ The editor of the anthology
- ✓ The publisher and place of publication
- ✓ The date the anthology was published
- ✓ The page numbers of the selection

## MLA Anthology Selection Citation Format

The standard MLA citation **for an essay printed for the first time** in an anthology is as follows:

Last name, first name of author of selection. "Selection title." Anthology Title.

Editor's name in full. Place of publication: Publisher, Date. Page numbers for entire selection (not just pages cited).

For example:

Morrison, Mary Kay. " 'The Old Lady in the Student Lounge': Integrating the Adult Student into the College Classroom." *Two-Year College English: Essays for a New Century*. Ed. Mark Reynolds. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994. 26-36.

Some details to note:

- The anthology selection title is listed in quotation marks, not italicized or underlined like a book title
- The editor is **not** listed as the author of the selection:  
an in-text citation to this source would read (Morrison 30), **not** (Reynolds 30)
- Page numbers are for the entire selection, not just the section or pages that you used
- The editor is labeled with the abbreviation Ed. or Eds. **before** their name.

## ANTHOLOGY REPRINTS

Occasionally, you will want to cite sources **reprinted** in an anthology, like most composition textbooks, and need to give credit for where and when it was originally published.

### MLA Reprinted Anthology Selection Citation Format

Last name, first name of the selection's author. "Title of selection." Original source title.

Date of original publication: original page numbers. Rpt. in Anthology Title. Ed. editor's name(s). Place of publication: Publisher, Date of anthology. Page numbers for selection.

For example:

Bodett, Tom. "Dish Demeanor." *Small Comforts: More Comments and Comic Pieces*. 1987: 77-80. Rpt. in *The Compact Reader*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Jane Aaron. Boston: Bedford, 1996. 144-146.

Some details to note:

- The editor is not listed as the author of the selection, as they did not write the selection: an in-text citation to this source would read (Bodett 145), not (Aaron 145)
- The page numbers used in the citation are for the version you read, not the original, thus an in-text citation would be (Bodett 145), not (Bodett 79)
- I don't have the publisher's information on the original publication, thus I can't list it here

## ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Electronic sources of information are still fairly new, and so the citation forms for them are still being debated and fine-tuned. APA officially prefers (at this time) that print versions of material be used before any electronic version. However, APA also recognizes that the amount of material available only electronically is growing and will continue to grow, and has given some basic guidelines to follow.

### Internet Sources

Internet Sources can be found in any number of ways. Just because you use the Internet to find a source doesn't mean it's an Internet original source.

You need to know if :

- you got it from a database that requires a password for access,
- whether or not the source is a reprint of a "normal" print document, or
- whether it's a source that exists ONLY on the Internet.

Each of these variations will change the citation form slightly. These are the proper citation forms as of Summer 2001. They may change as the Internet and citation evolves. Check the MLA and APA web pages on a regular basis to determine if there have been any changes.

### Reprint Internet Sources from a Database :

The citation for this article, if you read it from the actual journal, would be:

Renard, Lisa. "Cut and Paste 101: Plagiarism and the Net." *Educational Leadership* Dec. 1999/Jan. 2000: 38-42.

If you downloaded the article from the WilsonWeb database, usually at a library, you would present it as:

Renard, Lisa. "Cut and Paste 101: Plagiarism and the Net." *Educational Leadership* Dec. 1999/Jan. 2000: 38-42. *WilsonWeb*. H.W. Wilson Company. 14 Jun. 2000 <<http://hwwilsonweb.com/>>

What you are adding here, in order, is

- 1) the name of the database
- 2) the name of the company or organization that creates and maintains the database
- 3) the date of access
- 4) the URL or address of the database's home page

**Reprint Internet Sources NOT from a Database** (available in regular print form)

Remember, these sources COULD be found in regular print form, but you are using them from the journal or magazine's website instead. You HAVE to cite it as being from the website, unless you want to go find it in the original publication.

The original citation would be:

Rogers, Joel, and Ruy Teixeira. "America's Forgotten Majority." *The Atlantic Monthly*  
June 2000: 66-75.

The same article downloaded from *The Atlantic Monthly's* website would be :

Rogers, Joel, and Ruy Teixeira. "America's Forgotten Majority." *The Atlantic Monthly*  
June 2000: 66-75. 14 June 2000  
<<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/06/rogers.htm>>

You add the date of access and the URL (web address) for the specific article. That's all. Normally you'd still have the page numbers, but since this website doesn't indicate what pages the original article is on, they can't be given.

**Internet Original Document** (not available in print form)

These are documents original to the web. They are not available in a published book, journal, or periodical.

Vetter, Rick. "Myth of the Brown Recluse." *Insect Information*. 26 Mar. 2001.  
University of California Riverside. 9 July 2001. <<http://spiders.ucr.edu/myth.html>>

Note that you should include, if known:

- ✓ The author of the specific page you are using
- ✓ The name of the specific page
- ✓ The name of the larger website the page is part of (if there is one)
- ✓ The date that the page was created
- ✓ The company or organization hosting the webpage
- ✓ The date that you accessed the webpage
- ✓ The address for that specific webpage (not the larger website)

**Not all of this information will be available, but if it is, it should be included.**

## Works Cited

- Dardess, George. "Review: Bringing Comic Books to Class." *College English* 57 (1995): 213-222.
- Freund, Charles Paul. "The Innocence of the Seducer: Anti-Pop Culture Crusader F. Wertham." *Reason* Dec. 2000: 74. *WilsonWeb*. H.W. Wilson Company. 17 Jul. 2001 <<http://hwwilsonweb.com/>>
- Harvey, Robert C. "Aesthetics of the Comics." *The Art of the Funnies: An Aesthetic History*. Ed. Robert C. Harvey. Jackson, MS: UP of Mississippi, 1994. 3-20.
- . "Joe Palooka and the Most Famous Food Fight of the Funnies." *The Comics Journal* May 1994: 101-110.
- Inge, M. Thomas. "The New Yorker Cartoon and Graphic Humor." *Studies in American Humor* 3 (Spring 1984): 61-72. Rpt. in *Comics as Culture*. M. Thomas Inge. Jackson, MS: UP of Mississippi, 1990, 109-116.
- Legman, Gershon. *Love and Death*. 1949. New York: Hacker Art, 1963.
- Mintz, Lawrence E. "Fantasy, Formula, Realism, and Propaganda in Milton Caniff's Comic Strips." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 12.4 (1979): 75-103.
- Noomin, Diane, ed. *Twisted Sisters: A Collection of Bad Girl Art*. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Reitberger, Reinhold, and Wolfgang Fuchs. *Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium*. Trans. Nadia Fowler. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.
- Urban, Hope. "Would You Buy Art From This Man?" *Juxtapoz* Winter 1994: 18-21.