MLA CITATION GUIDELINES

MLA now recommends creating a citation for a source by presenting, in a particular order, at least nine core elements of information about the source.

CORE ELEMENTS

1. Author / Responsible Party
   - Present the last name of an author or editor, followed by first name and middle initial.
   - If there are two authors or editors, order them the same way as in the source, but for the second name present the first name first, followed by middle initial and last name.
   - If a source has three or more authors or editors, use et al. after the first name.
   - If no name is listed for author or editor, use instead the name of any corporation, institution, association, or government agency responsible for the content.
   - If the information was authored by the same entity that published it, start the citation with the title of the source and list the entity only as the publisher.
   - For government sources with no byline, begin with government’s name, then list other organizational units, arranged from largest entity to smallest (e.g., United States, Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics...).
   - If no author’s name is provided, title appears first.
   - If citing information from other media, like film or television, begin the entry with the name of the contributor most important to your discussion of the work, followed by a descriptive label (like performer, producer, screenwriter, host, creator, etc.); if not focused on a particular contributor, begin the citation with the title and later list key contributors’ names.

2. Title of Source
   - Use title case (capitalizing first and last words in titles and subtitles, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions, but not articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, or the to in infinitives).
   - If a source is part of a larger work, use quotation marks around the title (e.g., short story, poem, essay, article, song, television show episode, etc.).
   - Italicize the title if the work is self-contained (e.g., book, play, album, movie, television show, periodical, Website, etc.).
   - For an untitled source, provide a description (e.g., Introduction, Preface, etc.), capitalizing only the first word and any proper nouns.
   - Use the subject line of an email; enclose it in quotation marks.
   - Provide the full text of a short message, like a tweet, as the title, enclosed in quotation marks.

3. Title(s) of Container(s)
   - If the source is part of a larger whole (or container), the title of any larger work is italicized.
   - If one container is nested in another container (e.g., an article published in a journal that’s accessed through a library database, or a television episode accessed through a streaming service), present information about each container, from smallest to largest, for any core elements 3 through 9.

4. Other Contributors
   - Include descriptions for any other relevant contributors (e.g., edited by, illustrated by, narrated by, performance by, translated by, directed by, adapted by, etc.).
   - For other kinds of contributors, like guest editors and general editors, follow description with a comma and name(s).

5. Version
   - Include information about the edition or version (e.g., rev. ed., 8th ed., expanded ed., unabridged version, authorized version, director’s cut, etc.).
   - Write ordinal numbers with Arabic numerals (8th, 23rd, etc.).

6. Number
   - Include volume and issue numbers for periodicals.
   - Include the volume number if your source appeared in a particular volume of a multivolume book set.
   - If a source is part of any numbered sequence, include a description and the number (e.g., season and episode numbers for a television show).

7. Publisher
   - Abbreviate UP for university presses (i.e., Oxford UP, U of Chicago P, etc.).
   - Omit business words like Incorporated (Inc.), Company (Co.), Corporation (Corp.), or Limited (Ltd.).
   - If more than one independent publisher is listed, present them as they appear in the source, separated by a forward slash.
   - Even if a title page provides the name of a parent company or imprint, include only the division name.

8. Publication Date/Time
   - Use this general format for dates: day month year.
   - Include the full date and time provided by the source for when the source was published, posted, or last modified.
   - When a source presents more than one date (more than one copyright, updates, revisions, online vs. print, etc.), use the one most in keeping with your use of the source.
   - Include descriptions for periodicals published seasonally (e.g., Spring 2016).

9. Location
   - For a print source, use a page number or range (for a range, give the second number in full for numbers up to 99; for larger numbers, only the last two digits of the second number).
   - If the work is not printed on consecutive pages, use + after the first page number.
   - When possible, include an item’s DOI (digital object identifier); to see if an article, book, or book chapter has a DOI assigned to it, use www.crossref.org/guestquery.
   - If a source accessed online has no DOI, include the web address (or URL), without http://, and format the web address so that it is not underlined, not a different color than the rest of the citation, and fits on the fewest number of lines.
   - Avoid URLs provided by truncating services, like bit.ly.
   - For live presentations, include a description (e.g., lecture, address, reading, performance, etc.) and the venue and city, unless the city’s name is part of the venue’s name.
   - For a physical object experienced firsthand, like a piece of art (not a reproduction), provide the name of the repository and city, unless the city name is part of the repository’s name.
   - Use archival numbers or codes when available.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

- If the source has been re-published, especially in a different form, include citation information for its previous publication.
- Identify with descriptive language an address, lecture, reading, performance, transcript, or other type of source.
- For books published before 1900, provide the city of publication instead of the publisher’s name.
- If a book is part of a series, include the series name and the book’s number.
- Use archival numbers and codes, when available.

© Andrew G. Truxal Library – Revised: 08/30/2016

Anne Arundel Community College
Andrew G. Truxal Library
General Information (410) 777-2211
Sample Works Cited


