MLA Citations

Research strengthens argumentative writing. **When you make a claim, support it with details from a reliable source.** Then, it's important to **give credit** to the sources you used in a paper.

Citing sources tells your readers where you learned information. This shows that your sources, and your writing, are reliable. **MLA format** is a common way to cite sources in school. **Any time you use someone else's ideas or words in your writing, you need a citation!**

There are two ways to cite your sources with MLA formatting:

1. **In-text citations** give credit to a source when you use it in your paper.

2. **Works Cited pages** give credit to all sources at the end of a paper.

Different types of sources are cited differently in MLA. We will look at how to cite a book and a website.

In-text citations are short and only need a few details. One very important part of in-text citations is **quotation marks!** If you use the exact words as your source, put them in quotation marks. Otherwise, you need to summarize their ideas in your own words.

- For **books**, you need the **author** and **page numbers**. You can share this information in the sentence where you use a fact, or write it in parentheses at the end of the sentence. These examples show 3 ways to cite:

  - On **page 43**, **Jane Smith** says "the sky is blue."
  - According to **Smith**, "the sky is blue" **(43).**
  - We see the sky as the color blue **(Smith 43).**

- For **websites**, you only need the **author**. If your article does not have a listed author, use the **article title** instead. You can either include this information in the sentence, or you can write it in parentheses at the end. These examples cite websites:

  - **John Doe**'s article says that "the sky is blue."
  - We know the sky looks like blue **(Doe).**
  - According to an article, Earth's sky is blue **("Color of the Sky")**.

The details in your in-text citations should match your Works Cited page.

At the very end of a paper, add a page that lists every source you used. This page is called the **Works Cited page**. It shows all of the works that you cited!

The Works Cited page gives more details than in-text citations. It helps your readers find the sources you used. You do not include any facts from the sources you used. Instead, you show information that **helps others find the sources**.

MLA uses a special format to write each of the sources you used in your paper. Follow the formats below, and list each source in alphabetical order.

- For **books**, you need the **author**, **title**, and **publishing information**. The publishing information is usually in the front of a book, or you can ask your teacher to help you find it. These examples show books cited:

  o **Last Name, First Name.** *Title of Book*. **Publisher, Publication Date.**

  o Smith, Jack. *The Real Sky Book*. edMe Not Real Publishing, 2018.

  o Smith, Jane. *A Book About the Sky*. edMe Not Real Publishing, 2014.

- For **websites**, include the **author**, **title**, **website name**, **publishing date**, **URL**, and the **date you went to the website**. You may not find all of these pieces for each website you use. That's okay! Skip pieces you can't find.

  o **Last Name, First Name. "Article Title."** *Website Name*. **Publication Date, URL. Accessed day month year.**

  o "Color of the Sky." *edMe Learning*. 2024, myedme.com. Accessed 1 January 2025.

  o Doe, John. "The Sky." *edMe Learning*. 2021, myedme.com. Accessed 1 January 2025.

These examples cite websites:

Take your time when you cite resources. Look carefully at the source when you make each citation, and ask for help if you need it! It is very important to give credit when you write.

If you don't cite a resource when you use someone else's words or ideas, that is called **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is like stealing someone else's words and using it as your own. This can make you lose points in graded assignments and have big consequences at school or work.

Do the right thing, and cite when you write!