

# MLA 9 GUIDE

## Paper Formatting

### Basics

MLA style papers use the same font throughout, such as 12-pt. Times New Roman, with 1 in. margins and double spacing. Also, they include the writer's last name and the page number in the right corner of every page.

### Page Order

MLA style papers always begin with a header with essential information about the writer and the paper, followed by the paper body, and, if needed, the works cited page.

### Header

An MLA style header is the first four lines of an MLA style paper. The following information is included in the order presented on separate lines

- Your Name
- Your Instructor's Name
- Your Course Name and Number
- Your Assignment's Due Date

Following the header will be the title of the paper, centered on the page.

An example of how this is formatted is presented below.

Example (next page)

Cheyenne Vaughn

Steven Ahola

EAP 1260

17 July 2025

### End of Semester Reflection

This is where your actual writing would start, and it is indented using the tab key on the lefthand side of your keyboard. For every paragraph, you will need to make sure it is indented.

# MLA Citation Basics

## Works Cited Page

As students are doing research for their papers, they should be creating their MLA style works cited page to help them with their in-text citations they will do later on. Every MLA style paper that uses outside sources requires a works cited page and in-text citations that are directly connected to the citations on the works cited page.

## Most Common Citation Formats

Each type of source has its own citation format. In each of the sections below, there will be a general format for that type of source and then an example of the source.

### *Book*

#### General format

Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

#### Example

Moore, Wes. *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*. One World, 2011.

### *Academic Journal*

#### General Format

Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, volume #, issue #, Year of Publication, page #. DOI link.

#### Example

Valkenburg, Patti M., et al. "Social Media Use and Its Impact on Adolescent Mental Health: An Umbrella Review of the Evidence." *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol. 44, 58-68.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.08.017>.

### *Website*

#### General Format

Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Webpage." *Website Name*, Date of Article, URL.

### Example

Faverio, Michelle, et al. "Teens, Social Media and Mental Health." *Pew Research Center*, 22

April 2025, [www.pewresearch.org/internet/2025/04/22/teens-social-media-and-mental-](http://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2025/04/22/teens-social-media-and-mental-health/)

health/.

### General Tips

The following are general rules and tips to follow when creating MLA works cited page citations:

- Works cited pages are always on their own page.
- Each citation needs to have a hanging indent. This indentation option is located under paragraph options and under special indent.
- If a piece of information from the source is not present, like an author or publication date, it can just be omitted from the citation.
- Periods go at the end of each section of information to show that section is complete. Commas show a continuation of information.
- Titles are written in title case, meaning every word with important meaning will be capitalized and every word present for grammar purposes will be lowercase.
- Source information that is a larger work or collection, such as a book or journal, will be in italics; in contrast, source information that is a smaller piece of larger work, such as a chapter in a book or article in a journal, will have quotation marks around it.
- DOIs are special URLs for journal articles. If there is not one present, use the URL instead.
- All citations have a period at the very end, even after URLs or DOIs.
- When including a URL, omit the <http://> or <https://> at the start of the URL; however, it should stay for DOIs.

### Author Rules

MLA style citations have specific rules about how to present authors on the works cited page.

#### *Two Authors*

When there are two authors, the first author should be written with their last name first, followed by a comma, and then their first name with a comma and the word and after it, while the second author will be written with their first name first and then their last name.

### Example

Faverio, Michelle, and Monica Anderson.

### Three or More Authors

When there are three or more authors, only first author's last name and first name are written, followed by a comma and the notation "et al.," meaning and others.

#### Example

Faverio, Michelle, et al.

### Same Author

When sources have the same author, they will be organized in alphabetical order based on the source's title. The author's name will only be listed in the first citation, and every other citation will replace the author's name with three hypens and a period.

#### Example

Faverio, Michelle. "A Majority of U.S. TikTok Users are There for Product Reviews and

Recommendations." *Pew Research Center*, 21 Nov. 2024, [www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/11/21/a-majority-of-us-tiktok-users-are-there-for-reviews-and-recommendations/](http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/11/21/a-majority-of-us-tiktok-users-are-there-for-reviews-and-recommendations/).

---. "10 Facts About Teens and Social Media." *Pew Research Center*, 10 July 2025, [www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/07/10/10-facts-about-teens-and-social-media/](http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/07/10/10-facts-about-teens-and-social-media/).

### Works Cited Example (next page)

## Works Cited

Faverio, Michelle. "A Majority of U.S. TikTok Users are There for Product Reviews and Recommendations." *Pew Research Center*, 21 Nov. 2024, [www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/11/21/a-majority-of-us-tiktok-users-are-there-for-reviews-and-recommendations/](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/11/21/a-majority-of-us-tiktok-users-are-there-for-reviews-and-recommendations/).

---. "10 Facts About Teens and Social Media." *Pew Research Center*, 10 July 2025, [www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/07/10/10-facts-about-teens-and-social-media/](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/07/10/10-facts-about-teens-and-social-media/).

Faverio, Michelle, et al. "Teens, Social Media and Mental Health." *Pew Research Center*, 22 April 2025, [www.pewresearch.org/internet/2025/04/22/teens-social-media-and-mental-health/](https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2025/04/22/teens-social-media-and-mental-health/).

Moore, Wes. *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*. One World, 2011.

Valkenburg, Patti M., et al. "Social Media Use and Its Impact on Adolescent Mental Health: An Umbrella Review of the Evidence." *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol. 44, 58-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.08.017>.

## In-text Citations

As students begin writing their MLA style papers, they will need to include in-text citations that connect to the sources in their works cited page whenever they use information from the sources. Doing so helps prevent students from plagiarizing another person's work.

### When Should I Cite?

Students often struggle with knowing when they should cite information by inserting an in-text citation. The following are the most common instances of when to do so:

- You should cite when the information you are presenting is not common knowledge amongst everyday people.
- You should cite when you use technical language.
- You should cite when you are including information that is not your own claims or thoughts.

### In-text Citation Types

There are four different types of in-text citations that can be categorized into two groups: parenthetical vs. narrative and direct quote vs. paraphrase. There are explanations and examples of each of these types below.

#### *Parenthetical vs. Narrative*

Parenthetical and narrative citations focus on how one presents the credentials of the source being cited.

#### **Parenthetical**

Parenthetical citations usually appear at the end of a sentence with source credentials placed in between parentheses. This type of citation allows the writer to include the source information without disrupting the potential flow of the writing.

#### *General Format*

When there is an author, use (Author's Last Name page number)

When there is not an author, use ("Title or Shortened title" page number)

#### *Example*

"As social media (SM) offer adolescents ample opportunities to engage in risky behaviors, join dubious communities, and interact with strangers outside of parental oversight, it is imaginable that parents, policymakers, and researchers alike want to understand the effects of adolescents' avid SMU on their mental health" (Valkenburg et al. 58).

## Narrative

Narrative citations appear within running text, meaning that the source credentials is somewhere within the sentence. They may use attributive tags, such as “According to...,” “As defined by...,” and more.

### *General Format*

Author’s Last Name...

### *Example*

According to Patti M. Valkenburg et al., “As social media (SM) offer adolescents ample opportunities to engage in risky behaviors, join dubious communities, and interact with strangers outside of parental oversight, it is imaginable that parents, policymakers, and researchers alike want to understand the effects of adolescents’ avid SMU on their mental health” (58).

## Direct Quote vs. Paraphrase

Direct quote and paraphrase citations focus on how one presents the information they are referencing from a source.

### Direct Quote

Direct quote citations insert an author’s exact words into one’s own writing from the source they are referencing. The exact word for word information that is used is set off by quotation marks.

### *Example*

“As social media (SM) offer adolescents ample opportunities to engage in risky behaviors, join dubious communities, and interact with strangers outside of parental oversight, it is imaginable that parents, policymakers, and researchers alike want to understand the effects of adolescents’ avid SMU on their mental health” (Valkenburg et al. 58).

### Paraphrase

Paraphrase citations take key words from the original author’s words and restructure the sentence into their own words.

### *Example*

As stated by Patti M. Valkenburg et al., parents, policymakers, and researchers are becoming more interested in how social media usage impacts the mental health of adolescents, given it provides them with access to engage with people and behaviors that put them at risk (58).

## Author Rules

When there is more than one author of a source, MLA style citations use specific rules to show this for in-text citations, specifically parenthetical citations. If there are two authors, both authors’ last names will be written with and in between them. Here is an example: (Smith and Yang 154). If there are three or more authors, only the first author’s last name is written, and it is followed by the notation “et al.,” meaning and others. Here is an example: (Taylor et al. 98).