WORKING WITH QUOTATIONS 2A: CITATION (MLA)

To effectively support an argument, a quotation requires three parts: lead-in, citation, and analysis. This handout covers how to properly cite a source in MLA format, the citation style used in the disciplines that study language, literature, film, and culture. Citation in other disciplines is covered in Working with Quotations handouts 2b (APA), 2c (CSE), and 2d (Chicago). For guidance writing lead-ins and analysis, see Working with Quotations handouts 1 and 3.

Citation allows you to place your ideas in conversation with the work of other scholars. It shows that the sources used to construct your argument have been employed fairly and makes the significance of your argument clear to your audience by demonstrating how it contributes to the existing field of research. You must cite: a) sources you quote, b) sources you summarize, and c) sources that have influenced the formulation of your ideas.

CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE CITATION STYLE

Though nearly every discipline has its own specific citation style, many employ nearly identical formats. As a result, they are typically placed into the following four subject groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation Style</th>
<th>Subject Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLA (Modern Language Association)</td>
<td>language, literature, film, and cultural studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA (American Psychological Association)</td>
<td>social sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSE (Council of Scientific Editors)</td>
<td>natural sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago (Chicago Manual of Style)</td>
<td>history, art history, and philosophy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The citation style appropriate for your paper depends on the discipline in which you are writing.

THE PARTS OF A CITATION

All citation formats have two parts: 1) a brief indication in the body of the text that a source has been used and 2) a more thorough presentation of the source elsewhere in the paper. To make sure you format your citations properly, it is important to determine the format your discipline uses for each of these parts. The entries below offer guidance for formatting both in-text citations and the list of sources placed outside the body of your text.

CITING IN MLA STYLE

FORMATTING IN-TEXT CITATIONS

MLA in-text citations use the first word of the source list citation and page number(s) to refer the reader to a corresponding entry in the list of works cited. Typically the source’s name appears in the lead-in that precedes the quotation, in which case you only need to include the page number in the parentheses:

As Leslie Fiedler has argued, “Twain is betrayed not by his contempt for culture...but by his pretensions to culture” (272).

If the author’s name does not appear in the lead-in, you must include it in the parentheses (no comma).

As one scholar has argued, “Twain is betrayed not by his contempt for culture...but by his pretensions to culture” (Fiedler 272).

If your paper includes more than one work by the author are citing, it is important to indicate which...
source you are drawing from. This is done by including the title (in a shortened version, if possible) in either the lead-in (preferable) or the parentheses:

As one scholar has argued, “Twain is betrayed not by his contempt for culture...but by his pretensions to culture” (Fiedler, Love and Death 272).

**FORMATTING A LIST OF SOURCES**

MLA refers to sources as “works cited.” Works cited are listed in alphabetical order at the end of your paper and formatted with a half-inch hanging indent (i.e. every line after the first is indented).

**Book**

*General Format:*

Author (last name, first name). *Title and Subtitle.* Editor or Translator (if any). City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

*Examples:*


**Journal Article**

*General Format:*

Author of Article. “*Article Title and Subtitle.*” *Journal Title* and Volume Number.Issue Number (Date of Publication): Page Numbers. Medium.

*Example:*


**Book Article**

*General Format:*

Author of Article. “*Article Title and Subtitle.*” *Book Title.* Editor(s) of book. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium.

*Example:*


**Website**

*General Format:*

Author of Work (if known). “*Title of Work.*” *Title of Website.* Sponsor of Website (“N.p.” if none), Update Date (“n.d.” if none). Medium. Date You Accessed the Source.

*Examples:*


**DVD or Film**

*General Format:*

*Title of Film.* Director of Film. Lead Performers. Distributor, Release Date. Medium.

*Example:*


*MLA guidelines for citing other types of sources can be found at Diana Hacker and Barbara Fister’s [Research and Documentation Online](http://researchanddocumentationonline.com)*