With the latest edition of MLA Style, the old rules of a specific format for each type of source have been revised. Instead, a set of guidelines for any type of source is provided.

The format of a research paper is not explicitly spelled out. With the growing range of research-based projects, a single format does not (cannot) work. The format of your assignments is left to the discretion of the individual instructor. You can review general guidelines for formatting a research paper from the MLA Style Center (style.mla.org).

This guide attempts to break down the basic guidelines provided by the Modern Language Association. For more specific questions, please ask a librarian or see the handbook in the Reference Collection.

Core Elements of a Citation for All Types of Sources

| 1. Author. | The creator of the content |
| 2. Title. | Book, book chapter, article title, web page title, etc. |
| 3. Title of Container, | Book, journal, website, database, etc.; often more than 1 per citation |
| 4. Other Contributors, | Can be editor, performer, translator, etc. |
| 6. Number, | Volume and issue number, usually |
| 7. Publisher, | Name of publisher, e.g. Oxford UP |
| 8. Publication Date, | If more than one, include most relevant to your use (or all) |
| 9. Location. | Page number, disc number, track number, etc. |
1. Author.
   - The first author should be listed as Lastname, Firstname. Additional authors will be Firstname Lastname. If there are more than three listed authors, list the first three followed by a comma and et. al.
   - For an edited work, place a comma after the editor’s name followed by the word editor.
   - Sometimes the author of a work is not the main person whose contribution you are discussing, e.g., a performer, writer, creator, or director. In that case, list the contributor you are discussing as the author followed by a comma and their role in the creation of the work.
   - Do not list a corporate author if it is the same as the publisher.
   - Use a pseudonym, handle, username if that is what is listed on the source. When listing your sources in alphabetical order in your Works Cited, disregard any special characters like the "@" symbol that appear at the beginning of an author’s name.

2. Title.
   - Standardize the capitalization of titles. Capitalize each word except for articles like the, an, or, of (unless they are the first word of the title or subtitle).
   - Put quotation marks around the title if they are part of a larger source like, e.g. a journal article, chapter title, or a short story in a collection.
   - Italicize titles of larger or self-contained works, e.g. book titles, movie titles.
   - Italicize the title of any work that would normally be self-contained but appears in a collection and follow it by the italicized title of a collection, e.g. a novel that appears in a collection of an author’s complete works.

3. Title of Container,
   - A container refers to anthologies, collected works, journals, TV series, websites, etc.
   - It is possible for a container to be nested inside another container. A journal article (source) appears in a journal (container) which is housed in a library database (container). List subsequent containers after providing the details for the previous containers.

4. Other Contributors,
   - This is where you list others who contributed to a work if they are important to your discussion, e.g. adapted by, edited by, illustrated, etc. followed by the contributor’s name.
   - Not all contributors fit that format. You can also have the noun (description of contribution) followed by a comma and the contributor’s name, e.g., General editor, Firstname Lastname.
   - It is important to list an editor or translator when available.
   - In the case where the contributor does not relate to the entire work (e.g., a translator of a single poem in an anthology), list the contributor after the title of the part that relates in order to be clear where they contributed.

5. Version,
• If there is a version listed, include it. Types of versions include revised edition, unabridged version, and director’s cut.

6. Number,
• This can be a volume number, series, issue number, season, episode.
• Use the appropriate term to identify the meaning of the number.

7. Publisher,
• Publisher refers to whomever is responsible for producing the content.
• When to exclude listing the publisher: periodicals (newspapers, magazines, journals); self-published works; a website that has the same title as the publisher, work appears on a website that isn't responsible for publishing the content, e.g. YouTube, Wordpress, Twitter.

8. Publication Date,
• If there is more than one date listed, choose the one that is most relevant to your situation.
• Can be a date range if applicable.
• For books, be sure to check the book itself (title page or copyright page) instead of relying on a bibliography from another source or a commercial website like Amazon.

9. Location.
• Location most commonly refers to page number(s) reflected as p. or pp.
• It can be a URL, or web address - this is optional. Ask your instructor if they require it. Use a stable or permalink for the URL. If available, use the DOI (digital object identifier) instead of a URL.
• It can also mean a physical location like a disc or track number or museum, location of event, institution, or venue and city (unless the city is part of the venue’s name).

Examples
The order of elements is as follows:
Author(s). Title. Title of Container, Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, Location.

Note: Not all elements are required and some repeat. For example, there can be more than one container listed (articles appearing in a journal housed in a library database have 2 containers: the journal and database). Some elements (usually titles and containers) should be in quotes or italicized depending on the source information. Generally, long titles (titles of books, databases and other “containers”) are italicized, and short titles (article and chapter titles) are put in quotation marks.
Example: Article from an encyclopedia in a database

To create a citation for the article “Graffiti” by Deborah Broderson that appears in the *St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture* which is made available online through the Gale Virtual Reference Library, identify the core elements.

1 Author. -> Broderson, Deborah.
2 Title of source. -> “Graffiti.”

**Container 1**

3 Title of container, -> *St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture*,
4 Other contributors, -> edited by Sara Pendergast and Tom Pendergast,
5 Version, ->
6 Number, -> vol. 2,
7 Publisher, -> St. James P,
8 Publication date, -> 2000,
9 Location. -> pp. 281-282.

**Container 2**

3 Title of container, -> *Gale Virtual Reference Library*,
4 Other contributors, ->
5 Version, ->
6 Number, ->
7 Publisher, ->
8 Publication date, ->
9 Location. -> ezproxy.sunyulster.edu:2048/login?url=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3409001023&v=2.1&u=ulstercc_main&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=22c324bbdbd1592d859ce5e4549b0221c

Note that all elements are not required. Use the core elements in order to create a citation:

Following are some general examples to help you get started. For each of your sources, you must identify the core elements and containers and place them in the proper order. Consider the context of your source – how you accessed it and also how you are using it in your assignment. Sometimes it makes sense to list someone other than the main author as the first element.

**Book General Format:**
Lastname, Firstname. *Title*. Publisher, Publication Date.

**Example:**

**eBook General Format:**
Lastname, Firstname. *Title*. Publisher, Publication Date, *Title of Container*, URL or DOI.

**Example:**

**Chapter of a Book/Work in a Collection/Anthology/Specialized Reference Work:**
Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Chapter/Essay/Novel." *Title of Book/Collection/Anthology*, Edited by Firstname Lastname, Publisher, Publication date, Location: pp. #-##.

**Example:**

**Journal Article General Format:**
Lastname, Firstname. “Title of Article.” *Title of Container (Journal)*, vol #, issue #, publication date, pp. #-#, *Title of Container (Database)*, URL or DOI.

**Example:**

**Abbreviations:**
- Omit business words, e.g., Company, Limited, Incorporated
- University is U
- Press is P
- Omit titles such as Dr, St, PhD, Sir, etc.
- Omit The from corporate author names
• When one element contains more than one piece of information, separate them with a / (when you have two publishers, for example, NOT when you have more than one author).

In-Text Citations

MLA Style uses parenthetical in text citations. The sources are cited briefly - usually author's last name and page number - in the text of your paper and correspond to an alphabetical list of citations at the end of the paper called Works Cited. Use the simple present tense.

Citing sources with a known author
Provide author's last name and page number:

The aesthetic and ideological orientation of jazz underwent considerable scrutiny in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Anderson 7).

When an author's name appears in text
Provide only the page number in parentheses:

Anderson explains in his research the aesthetic and ideological orientation of jazz (7).

Citing a work listed by title (without known author)
Place the quote around the title (if brief) or shortened version that proceeds the page number:

The nine grades of mandarins are “distinguished by the color of the button on the hats of office” (“Mandarin” 10).

Citing two or more works by the same author(s)
Put a comma after the author’s last name, a space, and the title or shortened title followed by the relevant page information:

Shakespeare’s King Lear has been called a “comedy of the grotesque” (Frye, Anatomy 237).

Citing indirect sources
A source cited in another source. Use the phrase "qtd. in" to indicate the actual source used:

Strickland contends that "the shortbow as a specific category of weapon forming an important forerunner of the longbow simply did not exist" (qtd. in Rogers 322).

Works cited:
**Formatting Quotations**
Sometimes a quotation will not flow naturally in the text of your paper or you may only want parts of a quotation. You may need to modify it slightly.

**Brackets**
Use brackets [ ] when you need to adjust a quotation to flow naturally in a paragraph. Brackets are used to indicate when you insert your own words into a direct quotation.

**Ellipsis**
Use the ellipsis (…) to indicate that part of a quotation is not included. The ellipsis can take the place of a whole sentence, multiple words, or just one word. Use the ellipsis at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a quotation that is missing parts. Do not change the meaning of the original quotation.

**Block Quotations**
For quotations more than three lines of prose or three lines of verse, place quotations in a free-standing block of text without quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quotation indented half an inch from the left margin. Your parenthetical citation comes after the closing punctuation mark.

**Works Cited**
The Works Cited list appears at the end of the research paper. Begin the list on a new page, continuing the page numbers from the text of the paper.

**Key Features:**
- Use the heading Works Cited, centered at the top of the page when listing more than one source. Use the heading Work Cited when listing only one source.
- Alphabetize the entries by the first element of each citation
- All citations in the text must appear in the Works Cited list
- Flush left the first line of each entry with a half inch hanging indent (Use CTRL+T in Word). If it is not possible to create a hanging indent, leave a space between each citation.

**Questions? Ask a Librarian at the Macdonald DeWitt Library**
In Person: Reference Desk
Call: 845-687-5208
Email: askref@sunyulster.edu
Live Chat: Library Tab of my.sunyulster.edu
TXT: 845-243-2275