

MLA Documentation: Transitioning from MLA 7 to MLA 8

Tri-County Community College Writing Center

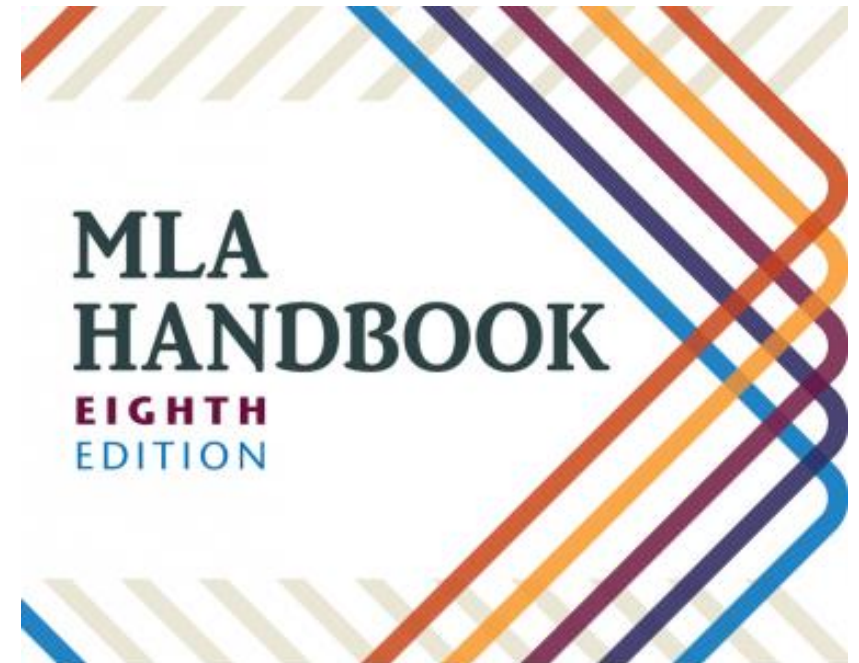
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What are MLA 7 and 8?

“MLA 7” and “MLA 8” are shorthand terms for the Modern Language Association style guidelines, seventh and eighth editions.

The eighth edition, published in 2016, is the most recent version.



Focus of This Presentation

This presentation is designed for individuals who are familiar with MLA 7 documentation or documentation in general who simply need to understand how to apply the MLA 8 guidelines.

Those who are new to research documentation should refer to the presentation *Basics of Documenting Research*.

MLA 8 Citation Principles

Previous versions of MLA guidelines focused on citing sources according to their type—article, book, film, etc. MLA 8 provides more flexibility in citing sources because it is based on these guiding principles:

1. Cite simple traits shared by most works.
2. Remember that there is often more than one correct way to document a source.
3. Make your documentation useful to readers.

(MLA Handbook 3-4)

No Difference – In-text Citations

The adoption of these principles in MLA 8 mainly affects the Works Cited page. In-text citations remain virtually unchanged:

- The in-text citation should contain a keyword(s) pointing the reader to the first element for the entry in the Works Cited list.
- A page number is included for paginated sources.
- In-text citations may be parenthetical or contextual.
- Paraphrases, quotations, and specific information that is not common knowledge should be cited.

Main Difference – Works Cited

The three guiding principles mainly affect how citations are created for the Works Cited page. Here are two key ways your experience of writing Works Cited citations may differ when using MLA 8:

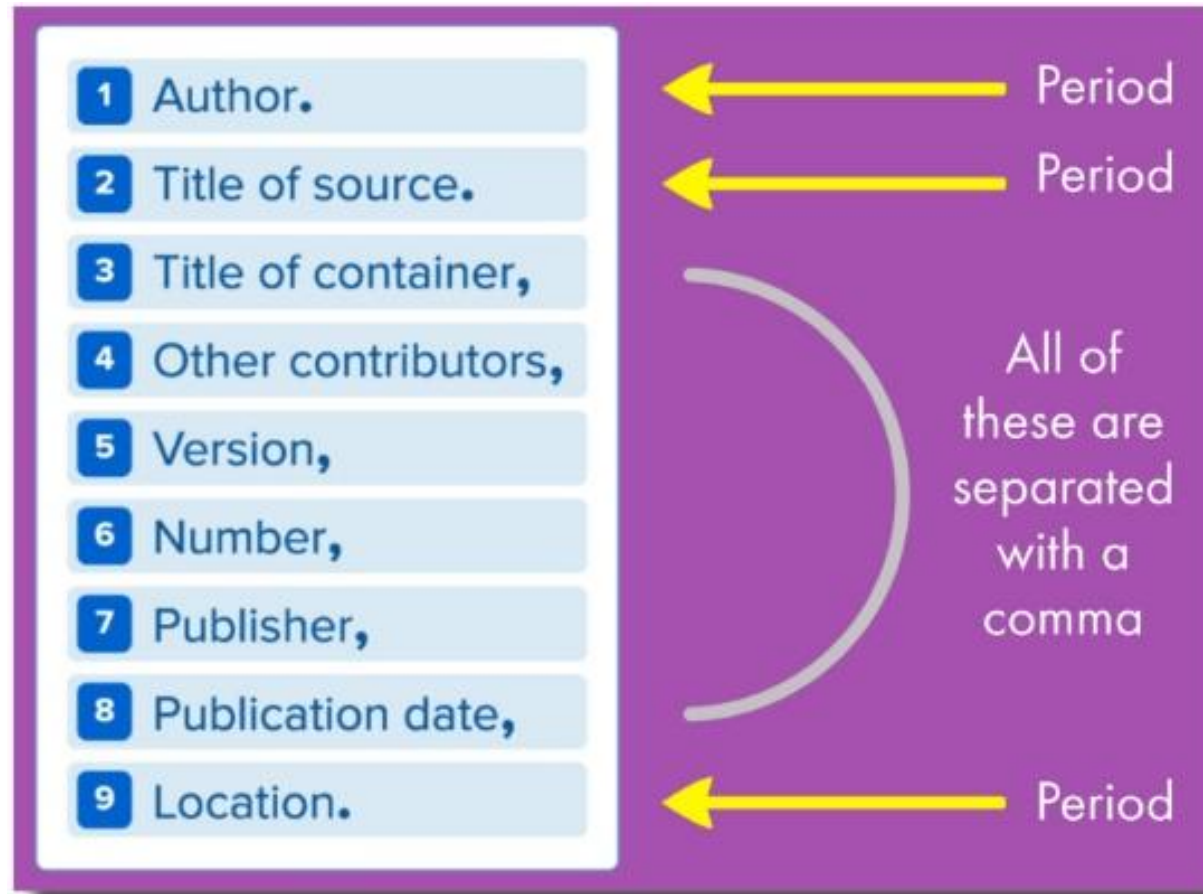
1. You use the same core list of elements to create a citation instead of looking up examples of similar types of sources.
2. If an element is not present in your source, you simply skip it and proceed to the next.

The Core Elements - Introduction

MLA 8 creates a list of Core Elements that many works have in common. These elements are listed in a specific order with either a period or a comma after each.

When citing a source, you examine it to determine which of the core elements are present in your source and write the citation with the elements in the recommended order, separated by the recommended punctuation.

MLA 8 Core Elements



(Utica)

1. Author.

The author is the person(s) or organization that created the source.

- The name of the first author should be reversed (last name first – Smith, Jane).
- Any subsequent authors' names can be listed in regular order.
- Organization titles should be listed in their natural order.
- If a work has more than two authors, you can list only the first and follow it with “et al.” (This is a Latin phrase meaning “and others.”)

2. Title of Source.

The title of the source is the specific name of the source.

- Titles of stand-alone publications (books, websites, films) are in italics.
- Titles of shorter works that are part of a larger work (such as a news article, episode title, chapter title, etc.) should be enclosed in quotation marks.

Italic
Italic
Italic
Italic



3. Title of Container,

The container is the larger work of which the source is a part.

- If the source is part of a larger work, use the title of the larger work as the container. The container title is usually italicized.
- If a work has two containers—for example, an article from the New York Times accessed from ProQuest database—list the most immediate container first. After you list its location, repeat elements #3-9 for the second container.

1	Author.
2	Title of source.
CONTAINER 1	
3	Title of container,
4	Other contributors,
5	Version,
6	Number,
7	Publisher,
8	Publication date,
9	Location.
CONTAINER 2	
3	Title of container,
4	Other contributors,
5	Version,
6	Number,
7	Publisher,
8	Publication date,
9	Location.

(Excelsior)

4. Other Contributors,

Other contributors include people other than the author(s) who are credited in some way with the creation of the source.

- Other contributors may include editors, directors, translators, narrators, or performers.
- Indicate the contributors' role with a phrase such as “adapted by,” “directed by,” “edited by,” “translated by,” “performance by,” etc.

5. Version,

The version provides identifying information for the source if it exists in other forms.

Different versions may be indicated by edition, version, or cut, such as unabridged version, 3rd ed., director's cut, version 2.3, etc.



6. Number,

The number includes both volume and number.

- If the source has a volume and number, list it like this – vol. 3, no. 2.
- Scholarly journals often use volume and number.



Number

Volume

7. Publisher,

The publisher is the organization or company responsible for producing the source.

If the publisher has already been listed as the author or container, there is no need to repeat it.

8. Publication Date,

The publication date is the date associated with the source.

- List dates in international style – 20 Mar. 2017.
- Dates may be labelled on a source as “Last Updated” dates or as copyright years.
- If multiple dates are listed, such as a last updated date and a copyright year, use the more specific date.
- If multiple copyright years are listed, include the most recent.

9. Location.

Locations include page numbers, website URLs, DOIs (digital object identifiers), etc.

- Preface page numbers with p. (for a single page) or pp. (for a range of pages).
- <http://> and <https://> can be omitted in website URLs.

Optional Elements

The following elements are OPTIONAL in MLA 8. Include them if they are important for a particular source or if an instructor requests them.

- Date of original publication. If included, it should be placed after the source's title.
- City of publication. If included, place before the publisher.
- Other facts about a source, such as whether it is part of a series or is an unexpected type of work (such as a transcript or lecture). If included, place after the location.
- Date of access. If included, place after the location.

Obsolete Elements

These elements are NO LONGER used in MLA 8:

- Medium (web, print, etc.)
- n.d. for “no publication date”
- n.p. for “no publisher”

City of publication is no longer *required* for books, though it can be included as an *optional* element if the publication city provides relevant information about the source.

Citation Template

Students may find the use of a citation template to be helpful.

The MLA Style Center has posted one on its website at

<https://style.mla.org/files/2016/04/practice-template.pdf>.

MLA Practice Template

1	Author,
2	Title of source,
CONTAINER 1	
3	Title of container,
4	Other contributors,
5	Version,
6	Number,
7	Publisher,
8	Publication date,
9	Location,
CONTAINER 2	
3	Title of container,
4	Other contributors,
5	Version,
6	Number,
7	Publisher,
8	Publication date,
9	Location,

From *MLA Handbook* (8th ed.), published by the Modern Language Association (style.mla.org).

Other Helpful Resources

Check out the following resources from the TCCC Writing Center:

- Quick Reference Guide to MLA 8 In-text Citations (<http://www.tricountycc.edu/cms-wfc/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/MLA-8-In-Text-Citations-Quick-Ref.pdf>)
- Quick Reference Guide to MLA 8 Works Cited Citations (<http://www.tricountycc.edu/cms-wfc/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/MLA-8-Works-Cited-Quick-Ref.pdf>)
- MLA Essay Format (<http://www.tricountycc.edu/cms-wfc/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/MLA-Essay-Format.pdf>)

Consulting Other Resources

Some textbooks and online resources have not yet incorporated MLA 8 changes, so be sure to ask instructors for guidance about their preferences and to check online resources carefully for the version upon which they're based.

Works Cited

Excelsior College. "MLA Works Cited." *Online Writing Lab at Excelsior College*. 2017, owl.excelsior.edu/research-and-citations/documenting/mla-style/mla-works-cited/.

MLA Handbook. 8th ed., The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

The MLA Style Center. "MLA Practice Template." *Modern Language Association*, 2016, style.mla.org/files/2016/04/practice-template.pdf.

Utica College. *MLA Citation Style (8th)*. Frank E. Gannett Memorial Library, 7 Apr. 2017, utica.libguides.com/mla.