# MLA Guidelines for Proper Formatting of Citing Sources

MLA (Modern Language Association) is a style of documentation based on a general methodology that may be applied to many different types of writing. The current system is based on a few guiding principles, rather than an extensive list of specific rules. When deciding how to cite your source, start by consulting the list of core elements. These are the general pieces of information that MLA suggests including in each Works Cited entry. In your citation, the elements should be listed in the following order:

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

Each element should be followed by the punctuation mark shown here. In the current version, punctuation is simpler (only commas and periods separate the elements), and information about the source is kept to the basics.

## Author

Begin the entry with the author's last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work. End this element with a period.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Knopf, 1994.

## Title of source

The title of the source should follow the author's name. Depending upon the type of source, it should be listed in italics or quotation marks.
A book should be in italics:

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. MacMurray, 1999.

An individual webpage should be in quotation marks. The name of the parent website, which MLA treats as a "container," should follow in italics:

Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow,* www.ehow.com/how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html.*

A periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper) article should be in quotation marks:

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's Bashai Tudu." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1996, pp. 41-50.

## Title of container

Unlike earlier versions, the eighth edition refers to "containers," which are the larger wholes in which the source is located. For example, if you want to cite a poem that is listed in a collection of poems, the individual poem is the source, while the larger collection is the container. The title of the container is usually italicized and followed by a comma, since the information that follows next describes the container.

Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl." *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories,* edited by Tobias Wolff, Vintage, 1994, pp. 306-07.

The container may also be a website, which contains articles, postings, and other works.

Zinkievich, Craig. Interview by Gareth Von Kallenbach. *Skewed & Reviewed,* 27 Apr. 2009, www.arcgames.com/en/games/star-trek-online/news/detail/1056940-skewed-%2526-reviewed-interviews-craig. Accessed 15 Aug. 2009.