



An Overview of MLA Style

The three basic ideas behind documenting sources in MLA Style are:

1. Use a **signal phrase** to lead from your words into the quotation or borrowed information
2. Then, use an **in-text citation** directly after the quotation or borrowed information
3. On the final page list all the **Works Cited** in your paper

1. Use a signal phrase

Using the author's name before the quotation prepares your reader:

According to **authors Janice Walker and Todd Taylor**, "The bill prohibits the use of a cell phone while driving unless it is equipped with an earpiece or can act like a speakerphone, leaving the driver's hands free" (481).

2. Use an in-text citation

You must give credit to an author or source for any quotation or borrowed information. If you list the source in your signal phrase, you only need to give a page reference, as in the example above.

However, if you do *not* list the source in your signal phrase, then you must include the author's name or a shortened version of the title within the parentheses:

Most states do not keep adequate records on the number of times cell phones are a factor in accidents; as of December 2000, only ten states were trying to keep such records (Sundeen 17).

Notice that the punctuation for the sentence comes **after** the in-text citation.

3. List all Works Cited

Only those sources which have been directly cited in your paper should be listed. They should appear in alphabetical order and have hanging indents. For exact formats, see the MLA 7th Edition Manual.

On the back of this handout are examples of how to cite books, journal articles, and more.

The Writing Center

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Website Without an Author

"Lawmakers." *Cell Phones Damage the Environment*. 25 May 2000. Web. 14 Sep. 2004.

The first date listed is the date the site was last updated; the second is the date you accessed the source. MLA no longer requires URLs, but the word "Web" is used between the dates to indicate what type of source is being used).

Academic Journal

Sundeen, Katy. "Revolutionizing Driving in the Cell Phone Era." *Technology Today*. 22.3 (2004): 9-32. Print.

After the title of the journal is the volume number and issue number, then the date published, and then the page numbers. "Print" is included at the end to indicate the type of source being used.

Book

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. Denver: MacMurray, 1999. Print.

Walker, Janice R., and Todd Taylor. *The Effects of Technology on Driving*. New York: Putnam, 2001. Print.

Work in an Anthology, Reference or Collection

Harris, Muriel. "Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers." *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*. Ed. Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000. 23-34. Print.

Article in a Reference Book (Encyclopedias, Dictionaries)

"Ideology." *The American Heritage Dictionary*. 3rd ed. 1997. Print.

If the reference book is organized alphabetically, as most are, do not list the volume or the page number of the item.

Article in a Newspaper

Brubaker, Bill. "New Health Center Targets County's Uninsured Patients." *The Washington Post* 24 May 2007: LZ01. Print.

Is your source type not listed here? Try searching on the Purdue OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl>) or use the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

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