MLA Style establishes standards of written communication concerning: formatting and page layout, stylistic technicalities (e.g. abbreviations, footnotes, and quotations), citing sources, and preparing a manuscript for publication in certain disciplines.

Using MLA Style properly makes it easier for readers to navigate and comprehend a text by providing familiar cues when referring to sources and borrowed information. Editors and instructors also encourage everyone to use the same format so there is consistency of style within a given field. Abiding by MLA's standards as a writer will allow you to: Provide your readers with cues they can use to follow your ideas more efficiently and to locate information of interest to them, allow readers to focus more on your ideas by not distracting them with unfamiliar or complicated formatting, and establish your credibility or ethos in the field by demonstrating an awareness of your audience and their needs as fellow researchers (particularly concerning the citing of references).

**MLA Citation Elements**

The current system is based on a few principles, rather than an extensive list of specific rules. While the handbook still gives examples of how to cite sources, it is organized according to the process of documentation, rather than by the sources themselves. This process teaches writers a flexible method that is universally applicable. Once you are familiar with the method, you can use it to document any type of source, for any type of paper, in any field.

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,
9. Location.

Each element should be followed by the punctuation mark shown here. Earlier editions of the handbook included the place of publication, and required punctuation such as journal editions in parentheses, and colons after issue numbers. In the current version, punctuation is simpler (just commas and periods separate the elements), and information about the source is kept to the basics.

**Book:**

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

**Website:**

Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili."eHow, www.ehow.com/how\_10727\_make-vegetarian-chili.html.\*

**Periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper article):**

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.