

## How to Write a Works Cited Page

**Brief:** A written works cited page, generally using MLA style, should be included along with an outline.

**Learning Objective:** Understand when and how to create a works cited page.

**Key Terms:**

- **Citation:** An entry in a list of sources from which one took information, words, or literary or verbal context.
- **MLA style:** A citation system developed by the Modern Language Association, most often used in the arts and the humanities.

### Why Do You Need a Bibliography?

Just like when you write a written research paper, when you quote or cite a person, text, image, or other piece of intellectual property, you must give credit to where or from whom the quotation or idea originated. You are expected to include attributions verbally, as you deliver your speech, but you are also expected to include a written works cited page along with your outline.

### *What are Citations?*

Citations are the notation system you use to document the material you're using. Citations are helpful because they not only allow you to preserve intellectual honesty (and avoid plagiarism), but also allow the reader to determine independently whether the referenced material is valid and supports your argument.

Citation styles can be broadly divided into styles common to the humanities or the sciences, though there is considerable overlap. Some style guides, such as the Chicago Manual of Style, are flexible and cover multiple citation systems.

Others, such as MLA and APA styles, specify formats within the context of a single citation system. These may be referred to as citation formats as well as citation styles. The various guides thus specify order of appearance, for example, of publication date, title, and page numbers following the author name, in addition to conventions of punctuation, use of italics, emphasis, parenthesis, quotation marks, etc., particular to their style.

### **MLA Style**

MLA style citations are used in the liberal arts and humanities and are generally preferred in public speaking classes.

When using the MLA Style, your Works Cited section should be arranged alphabetically. In addition, each citation should be formatted with what is called a hanging indent. This means that the first line of each citation should be flush with the left margin (i.e., not indented), but the rest of the citation should be indented a half an inch from the left margin.

Here are nine core elements of a Works Cited entry:

Author.  
Title of source.  
Title of container,  
Other contributors,  
Version,  
Number,  
Publisher,  
Publication date,  
Location.

You should only include the elements relevant to a particular source in its Works Cited entry. For example:

Fish, Stanley. *How Milton Works*. Belknap Press, 2001.

Each element is followed by a comma or a period (as shown). The final element in a Works Cited entry is always followed by a period.

Consult the MLA Handbook, 8th Edition for more information. The MLA website also contains a helpful guide, including a practice template: <https://style.mla.org/works-cited-a-quick-guide>.

## From Concept to Action

By now, you've likely selected your speech topic and begun your research. If not, select a topic you're considering and conduct a quick internet search to identify three different sources. If you already have your topic, choose three sources from among those you've identified. Using the guidance here and from the MLA website, write a citation for each of your sources. Save your citations; you'll need them later.

### OER TEXT SOURCES:

"Citation." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citation>. Accessed 30 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

"Citation." Wiktionary. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/citation>. Accessed 10 May 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

"MLA: Quotations and Citations." Lumen Learning. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-writing/chapter/mla-quotations-and-citations/>. Accessed 6 May 2019. [Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License 3.0 Unported License]