



CITING SOURCES

When you use outside sources to support your ideas, you need to give them credit. If you don't, you are plagiarizing another person's ideas—basically, stealing them and pretending they are your own.

To give credit properly, you need to cite a source, which is basically telling readers where you got the information. There are a few popular ways to cite sources (called citation styles). For this essay, we are going to use MLA (Modern Language Association) style. For other assignments, you may be asked to use other styles, but for now we'll learn MLA.

This lesson will teach you how to create a Works Cited page at the end of your essay and how to do in-text citations.

WORKS CITED PAGE

The Works Cited page is like a bibliography; it's a list of the sources you used when writing your essay. This page is added at the end of your essay.

For a regular book:

Author's Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of publication (print, Kindle file, etc.)

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. Print.

For an article in a magazine:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine*. Day Month Year: pages. Medium of publication.

Thomas, Timothy K. "Why All the Birds Have Left Wyoming." *Western World Monthly*. 12 July 2013: 72-3. Print.

Notice that the article title (a smaller piece) is in quotation marks, but the title of the magazine (a larger piece) is in italics. That's a general rule in MLA formatting: Titles of **small works** like articles, blog posts, podcast episodes, short stories, poems, and book chapters get quotation marks. Titles of **large works** like books, whole websites, magazines, whole podcast series, or whole books of poetry would be formatted in italics.

For an online article or blog post:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Name of Website*. Publisher, Day Month Year of publication. Medium of publication. Date you accessed the material.

Skulnik, Stacey. "Finding Your Passion: Why I Changed My Major." *Her Campus*. Her Campus Media, 5 Oct. 2012. Web. 01 Dec. 2015.

Notice how the second line of that entry is indented? That's called a **hanging indent**. This is how you're supposed to format your Works Cited list. To learn how to make this happen, watch these videos:

Microsoft Word: <http://youtu.be/kEcpi98IEns>

Google Docs: <http://youtu.be/DWnWy5qnkLk>.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Now that you have created a good list of sources, it's time to show exactly what information came from which sources by adding **in-text citations** right in the body of your essay.

To add these, locate the places where you directly quote or paraphrase information from your source. Right at the end of the sentence where you do that, add the first word that appears in that source's listing in the Works Cited list (usually this is the last name of the author) plus the page number where that information appears, in parentheses.

Here's how it would look if you were quoting a line from R.J. Palacio's book, *Wonder*:

In the opening lines of the book, the main character, Auggie, explains how his facial structure impacts other people. "Here's what I think: the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way" (Palacio 3).

Notice that there's no comma between **Palacio** and **3**, which is the page number where this quote is found. Also, notice that the period that originally came after the word "way" has been moved to **after the parentheses**. Doing this is going to feel weird at first, but you'll get used to it.

For your essay, you will be mostly citing online sources, which don't usually have page numbers. In that case, you would just put the author's last name in the parentheses:

A 2014 study by the Economic Policy Institute estimated that people with four-year college degrees earned 98 percent more per hour than those who did not finish college (Leonhardt).

TO LEARN MORE

This mini-lesson just covers the citation for a few basic kinds of texts. To see more, visit the [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#) created by the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University.

What to Do Now

First, create a Works Cited page at the end of your essay, listing all of the sources you used for your essay in alphabetical order.

Next, go through your essay and find the places where you have directly quoted or paraphrased an outside source or text and add in-text citations. To see this in action, look at [Essay 1, Draft 2](#), which now includes a Works Cited page and in-text citations.