

## CHANGES TO MLA IN 2016: CREATING WORKS CITED ENTRIES

*An Overview to Aid in Transitioning to the Eighth Edition of the MLA Handbook.*

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The previous edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* prescribed specific patterns for documenting different types of sources. The focus of the eighth edition, which is simply called *MLA Handbook*, is “a system for documenting sources that begins with a few principles rather than a long list of rules” (*MLA* 3). The editors provide a list of principles which can be applied to any source. There is often more than one way to document a source, and the choice depends on what the writer’s readers need to know.

The eighth edition of the *MLA*’s core elements for a works cited entry appear on page 20 and are listed below, but not every source will have every element. Researchers should include the available elements in the same order as listed below and use the same punctuation.

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

Most of the words on the list are familiar, but “container” is new in MLA and denotes the larger whole where the source appears, whatever that may be. For example, a poem may have a book as its container; an article may be contained in a magazine, journal, newspaper, or website, just to name a few; a song may be contained on a CD or a website.

The eighth edition the *MLA Handbook* provides help in identifying these core elements, and it still provides other advice, such as whether to use italics or quotation marks. The eighth edition still has many sample works cited entries, but the editors emphasize that more than one approach may be correct.

### **Here are some highlights of 8<sup>th</sup> edition *MLA* documentation and related examples:**

In keeping with the overall goal of providing information that is practical and readily understood, much of the information is less coded. Its meaning should be more readily understood by the casual reader. For example, instead of writers simply listing the volume and page numbers for a journal article entry, the labels *vol.* and *no.* are included, as in the example below:

Tilman, David. “Food and Health.” *Daedalus*, vol. 144, no. 4, Fall 2015, pp. 5—7.

The seventh edition *MLA* did not use URLs, DOIs<sup>1</sup>, or Permalinks. The eighth edition of *MLA* recommends including the DOI, permalink, or URL, whenever one exists, as the last section of a works cited entry. However, the 8<sup>th</sup> edition advises omitting *http://* or *https://* from the URL (110). The hyperlink will still work without them.

Leonard, Andrew. "The Surveillance State High School." *Salon*, 27 Nov. 2012, [www.salon.com/2012/11/27/thesurveillancestate\\_high\\_school/](http://www.salon.com/2012/11/27/thesurveillancestate_high_school/).

A single source may have more than one container, as when an article appearing in a journal is available through a database such as JSTOR. Whenever a source is nested inside more than one container, the second container is listed after all information on the first container is provided (31).

Coles, Kimberly. "The Matter of Belief in John Donne's Holy Sonnets." *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 3, Fall 2015, pp. 899-931. JSTOR. Doi: 10.1086/683855.

In the seventh edition, *et al.* could be used only for a work with four or more authors. In the eighth edition, *et al.* can be used for three or more authors (22): Last name, first name, et al.

The eighth edition also allows "optional elements" in the works cited entry at the writer's discretion (50). Original publication date, city of publication, number of volumes in a work, and date of access are now all optional elements that should be included if they provide information important to their specific use.

Date of access may be important if it indicates which version of a source was used. It may be even more important if an online source provides no other date (53).

"Under the Gun." *Pretty Little Liars*, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013, Hulu, [www.hulu.com/pretty-little-liars](http://www.hulu.com/pretty-little-liars). Accessed 23 July 2013.

Original publication date is important if it provides historical context for a source (50).

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*. 1818. *Project Gutenberg*, December 10, 2012 [EBook #41445], [www.gutenberg.org/files/41445/41445-h/41445-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/41445/41445-h/41445-h.htm).

*For more details, refer to the MLA Handbook itself and reliable online sources such as the Purdue OWL. The MLA also provides online resources, including practice templates at*

[style.mla.org/works-cited-a-quick-guide/](http://style.mla.org/works-cited-a-quick-guide/).

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1. A **digital object identifier (DOI)** is a unique number attached to an object. It is particularly useful for identifying and finding articles that may appear online in various locations. See [www.doi.org](http://www.doi.org).

Work Cited

*MLA Handbook*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., MLA, 2016.