How to Use the MLA 8th Edition Template

The Modern Language Association’s MLA Handbook, published in 2016, takes a fundamentally different approach to documentation from previous editions. Today, creative and scholarly works are often published in multiple or combined formats making it impractical to list definitive citation guidelines based on publication format. Instead, the MLA Handbook asks writers to consider basic traits shared by most works, to collect the relevant information available, and to organize this information into a series of container. The two most fundamental elements of any source are the author’s name and the title of the source. Depending on the situation, the author and title of source may be listed as such

Author, if present, may be listed as:

- Last, First.
- Last, First, and First Last.
- Last, First, et al.

Title of source may be listed as:

- “The Short Title of the Source.”
- The Long Title of the Source.

Next, the writer should consider whether or not the source is part of a larger whole. If so, the source can be thought of as a container that holds the source. If not, the source should be considered self-contained. The relevant information about the container should be collected in the following ways:

Title of container may be listed as:

- The Title of the Container

Other contributors, if present, may be listed as:

- directed by
- edited by
- illustrated by
- performance by
- etc.
Version, if applicable, may be listed as:
- expanded ed.
- 8th ed.
- director’s cut
- version 1.6.2,
- etc.

Number, if applicable, may be listed as:
- vol. 24, no. 68
- season 6, episode 3
- etc.

Publisher may be listed as:
- Random House
- The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
- Metro Goldwyn Mayer
- Sony/ATV Music Publishing
- etc.

Publication date may be listed as:
- 5 May 1980,
- Apr.-Sept. 2010
- 1999
- etc.

Location within the container may be listed as:
- p.476
- pp. 12-127
- disc 5
- libguides.easternflorida.edu/cite
- doi:10.2244/ghf.1895.0004

Containers can be books, anthologies, magazine articles, visual art, eBooks, literary journals, newspapers, photography, video, or websites, and they are often nested within each other. A short story, for example, may be found in a magazine, published in a collection, or available on a website. Not every piece of information will be relevant or available for every container.