

When you incorporate someone else's words or unique ideas into your writing (regardless of whether you quote, paraphrase, or summarize), you need to give credit. The same is also true of unique, out-of-the-ordinary, or relatively unknown research.

To be free of plagiarism as you do so, you'll need to credit your source(s) by using signal phrases and in-text citations (sometimes called parenthetical references) and within your paper and by compiling a work(s) cited. All are necessary to properly give credit where credit is due.

Depending on the career field or course you are writing for, you may be asked to follow a particular style for crediting your sources. Examples include Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), and American Medical Association (AMA). Here, the focus is on MLA.

MLA In-Text Citations

In MLA, the two key components of an in-text citation are the author's last name – if given -- and the page number – if one is available. This is shown in the following passage.

"We all come from the factory wired for language. By the time we know what it is, we've got it," explained [Patricia O'Conner](#), a *New York Times* book review editor (p. IX). What doesn't come from the factory, however, is a user's manual. So, to effectively use what we've already got, we need to be taught. But, that's often not an easy "sell." "It's difficult," Courtney Preebles, an English instructor at an Arkansas two-year college, says, "to convince students that they need to learn the English language; they think they already know what they need to know and that they've known it all throughout their 'knowing years'" ([Strasma](#)). Even so, Western Technical College Communication Skills Instructor [Tracy Helixon](#) pointed out that successfully persuading students of the value of learning more about their language is essential for language arts teachers to be effective. Preebles takes this a step further and identifies competence and credibility as essential qualities for an instructor to possess so that he/she can convince students of the need to learn ([Strasma](#)). Competence is best defined by [Dana Schmiszy and](#)

Darcy Barone, two educational psychologists at Loyola University, as a thorough understanding of the subject matter and a mastery of communication skills (16). Besides competence, credibility requires that learners view the instructor as someone who cares about them ("Credible Classrooms" 46).

Author's Last Name

If an author(s) name is given, the last name(s) is/are used in the in-text citation unless it has already been stated in the text itself, which is the case with Patricia O'Conner, Tracy Helixon, as well as Dana Schmizy and Darcy Barone in the passage above.

If there is no author associated with a particular source, use the title of the article or the title of the chapter within a book. However, to keep parenthetical references from getting too lengthy, shorten the title to the first word or two or three, ignore any *a*, *an*, and *the* that the title starts with, put quotation marks around the shortened title, and capitalize the title correctly. "Credible Classrooms" at the very end of the above passage is an example of this.

Page Numbers

If a source has page numbers, such as a book, a PDF version of an article, or an article you spotted in a print copy of a magazine or newspaper, use the exact page number where the cited information appeared. This can be seen with the red page number in the passage above. Note that is just one page number. That is usually the case. A piece of information often only appears on one page. If it were to start at the bottom of one page and continue on a second page, then the page number inside the in-text citation may look like this: 23-24. Remember, you are providing the exact page number(s) where the information appeared, not the page numbers for the entire article, chapter, or book.

But, there are plenty of sources that do not have page numbers, such as interviews, pamphlets, videos, web sites (without PDF's), and even articles that are printed in full text format from informational databases (e.g. BadgerLink, SIRS Researcher, LexisNexis, Health Reference Center, etc.). While such printouts will usually state a page number or two as part of the bibliographical information or will give you the starting page number for the article, you, as the researcher, still don't know the exact page number that the information appeared on. That is why the Strasma in-text citations in the paragraph above do not have page numbers.

It is even possible that you will not have an in-text citation after a piece of information that you are crediting. For instance, the Helixon example in the passage above is based upon an interview. Helixon is the author – the interviewee, to be exact – and, because her name is stated when introducing the information, her name is not repeated in an in-text citation because that would be redundant. In addition, there is no page number to use in the in-text citation because personal interviews do not have page numbers. As a result, there is no in-text citation. To include one would violate MLA rules.

MLA Works Cited

At the end of your document, there will be a separate page where you'll alphabetically list the sources that you used as you wrote your paper. This is your works cited.

MLA requires a works cited, but some research paper formats require a bibliography. While both a bibliography and works cited require you to provide source information about your research, they are not identical. A bibliography lists all sources that you gathered, perused, consulted, and used. In contrast, a works cited only lists the sources you actually used information from in your document. In other words, a works cited is briefer than a bibliography. Only the sources that you introduced information from (i.e. used signal phrases) and included in-text citations for should appear on the works cited.

In the box below, there are sample MLA works cited entries for five different kinds of sources.

First: a print magazine article

Second: a personal interview

Third: a book

Fourth: a magazine/scholarly journal article from an online database (LexisNexis)

Fifth: an internet article

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Works Cited

"Credible Classrooms in the New Millenium." *The Global Educator*, vol. 186, no. 74, Spring 2004: pp. 46-48.

Helixon, Tracy. *Personal Interview*. 10 May 2006.

O'Conner, Patricia T. *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*. Putnam, 2010.

Schmizzy, Dana, and Darcy Barone. "Teaching Those Who Don't Want to Learn." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 2, 4 Apr. 2010. *LexisNexis Academic*, lexisnexis.com. [ezproxy.westerntc.edu: 2048/Inacui2api/api/version1/getDocCu=42VC-H5S0-0109-T3NB&csi= 270944,270077,11059,8411&hl=t&hv= t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc=0024&perma=true](http://ezproxy.westerntc.edu:2048/Inacui2api/api/version1/getDocCu=42VC-H5S0-0109-T3NB&csi=270944,270077,11059,8411&hl=t&hv=t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc=0024&perma=true). Accessed 3 Nov. 2012.

Strasma, Kip. "Future Research in Two-Year College English." *Education Week, Editorial Projects in Education*, 21 Sep. 2005, edweek.org/info/about/?intc=main-footer, Accessed 6 Nov. 2012.

Take note of the following:

- ◆ The works cited starts on a new page; it is not typed directly under the conclusion.
- ◆ A header with your last name and the correct page number appears at the top right of the page.
- ◆ The title is *Works Cited*, not *Work Cited* or *Bibliography*.
- ◆ The title is typed in the same font and size as rest of the works cited page. No underlining, italics, or quotation marks are used with the title.
- ◆ Everything is double spaced—even between the title and the first entry. There are no triple or quadruple spacings anywhere on the page.
- ◆ Entries start at the left margin.
- ◆ The second and ensuing lines of longer entries are indented.
- ◆ Entries are arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name. However, sources without an author are alphabetized by the first word in the title, excluding *a*, *an*, or *the*. Also, if you have a title that begins with a number, alphabetize based upon the spelling of that number. For instance, "125 Admit to . . ." would be alphabetized by the "O" in *one*.

While each entry on the page must correspond with MLA's precise rules, these are some common guidelines that apply to most sources:

Author (blue)

The author's name, when available, always begins a work cited entry. The last name is typed first to help with alphabetizing the entries on the works cited page. Notice that when you have two authors, the second author's name is not reversed since it's not being used for alphabetization purposes.

Title (green)

The next item is the title of an article or of a chapter in a book.

Name of Source (bright pink)

This is the title of the book or the journal, magazine, newspaper, or web site that the article appeared in.

Publication Information (reddish brown)

For books, this is usually the name of the publishing company.

For magazine articles, this is usually the volume and/or issue numbers. The abbreviations *vol.* and *no.* are used.

For newspapers, this may include which edition (version) of the newspaper that was printed on this particular day.

For internet sources, this would be the name of the person or organization who sponsors/publishes the web site. Often, the sponsor could be identical to the title of the web site. For example, the Mayo Clinic web site is sponsored by the Mayo Clinic.

Date of Publication (purple)

This, typically, refers to the date the information was published. Be as specific as possible with the date of publication. If only a year is provided, that's all you can document. If an exact or full date is provided, you should use that date. If no date is given, you will have to skip this component.

Page (red)

While the page number in the in-text citation represents the exact page that the information appeared on, the page number(s) on the works cited indicate the span of

the entire source. But, as explained earlier, because many sources do not have page numbers, most works cited entries do not contain a page number. In addition, if you have consulted and/ or used an entire book, no page numbers are used. However, if you used only a chapter or two from a book, then the page numbers for the chapter would be included. Use *pp.* for pages and *p.* for page.

Additional Information (teal)

If the article you used was found online rather than being an actual print article that you have from a newspaper or magazine, you need to provide more source information about the article.

For articles found via online databases, the additional information would consist of the title of the database, the URL (web site address without the *http://www*) OR DOI (a number starting with *10* that can be used at any time to re-locate the article), and, if requested by your instructor, the date of access. By doing so, you are telling future readers of your paper that this information was available on this database on this particular date even though future readers may not be able to access it anymore via the database.

For internet articles, after the URL, include the date of access if your instructor would like you to do so.