

Citing the World Wide Web in Style

Modern Language Association

This guide is neither a substitute for nor a summary of the MLA publication. It provides, in greater detail, information pertaining to the citing of Internet sites and articles obtained from journal databases. This guide is intended to assist you in preparing references at the end of a paper. This guide pertains only to documents retrieved from the Internet, including journal databases. For other sources, e.g., print, video, etc., or for information on using references within the text of a paper and all other aspects of citation style, please refer to the printed MLA publication. For citing other sources, e.g., print, video, etc., or for information on using references within the text of a paper and all other aspects of preparing a manuscript in MLA style, it is recommended that you use the original printed publication—see "Source for this publication," below.

Although by no means a substitute for the official printed style manual, users may find the following online resource to be useful in the preparation of their papers.

MLA Crib Sheet <<http://docstyles.com/mlacrib.htm>>

MLA Formatting and Style Guide <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01>>

Student's Guide to MLA Style <<http://docstyles.com/mlaguide.htm>>

“URL” is a term used in this document to refer to the address of an Internet site. URL is the abbreviation for “uniform resource locator,” e.g., <http://www.troy.edu>. It is simply a term used to refer to the Internet address of a Web site.

The source for this publication is the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Fifth Edition*.



This publication was written by Jay Brandes, Reference Librarian, Troy University. Updated 7/7/08

Available online at the TROY Global Campus Library site
<<http://uclibrary.troy.edu>> in the *Information and Help* section.

Determine which of the following two types of items you are citing and then proceed to the section for that type. If you have difficulty in determining which type of source you have, take a look at some of the examples for that section.

THE TWO MOST COMMON TYPES OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

1. Journal articles retrieved from **proprietary databases** (journal indexes). **PAGE 3**

TYPE OF PUBLICATION: It is a formal document, i.e., a journal article, newsletter, government document, or book. It is not a plain-old Web page.

ACCESS: Retrieved from a proprietary database. The article itself usually does not have a single, static URL by which it may be directly retrieved. Articles from proprietary databases are technically on the Internet but, in order to access them, the user must typically sign in to the database, search for the article, and then retrieve it from the database.

2. Regular Internet sites, i.e., **common Web pages**. **PAGE 7**

TYPE OF PUBLICATION: It is not a formal document, i.e., it is a plain-old Web page. It is not an online journal article, newsletter, government document, or book.

ACCESS: Internet site. It has a URL by which it can be freely and directly accessed. It was not retrieved from a proprietary database.

Items (journal articles or books) retrieved from an online database.

I. DEFINITION

II. ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE

III. EXAMPLES

I. DEFINITION Items (journal articles) retrieved from an online database. Defined as:

TYPE OF PUBLICATION: It is a formal document, i.e., it is an article or book. It is not a plain-old Web page.

ACCESS: Retrieved from a proprietary database*. The article or book itself usually does not have a URL by which it can be readily accessed.

* *Proprietary database* is the term used to refer to online journal and document indexes. These commercial, subscription, or non-profit services typically provide indexing, abstracts, and text for journal articles. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** not to confuse the database (content) with the company that provides it (computer service) or the search interface (software) used to access the database. For example:

CHART “A”. These are just a few examples. If you need assistance in determining a database name, the company name, or its URL, [click here](#) or check with the Library.

DATABASE name	COMPANY name (Interface name)	URL
General BusinessFile ASAP	Gale Group (InfoTrac Web)	http://www.gale.com
Expanded Academic ASAP	Gale Group (InfoTrac Web)	http://www.gale.com
Health Reference Center	Gale Group (InfoTrac Web)	http://www.gale.com
ABI/INFORM	ProQuest (ProQuest)	http://www.proquest.com
Criminal Justice Abstracts	ProQuest (ProQuest)	http://www.proquest.com
Research Library Complete	ProQuest (ProQuest)	http://www.proquest.com
ProQuest Psychology Journals	ProQuest (ProQuest)	http://www.proquest.com
Academic Universe	LexisNexis	http://www.lexisnexis.com
Business Source Premier	EBSCO Industries, Inc. (EBSCOhost)	http://www.epnet.com
Academic Search Premier	EBSCO Industries, Inc. (EBSCOhost)	http://www.epnet.com
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection	EBSCO Industries, Inc. (EBSCOhost)	http://www.epnet.com

II. ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE (If given):

1. Name of author, editor, compiler, or translator of the text. **Last name, First name.** Followed by an abbreviation, such as *ed.*, if appropriate. Note on abbreviations: For editor, *ed.* For compiler, *comp.* For translator, *trans.* For example: Smith, Doug ed., Loyd, Phil comp., Bloxson, Ozzie trans.
2. Document title--the title of the article you are citing. **In quotation marks.** In both titles and subtitles, capitalize the first words, the last words, and all principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms. Do not capitalize the following parts of speech when they fall in the middle of the title: articles (a, an, the), prepositions (against, between, in, of, to, etc.), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet, etc.). For more information and examples, refer to section 2.6 of the *MLA Handbook*.
3. Name of the editor, compiler, or translator of the article (if relevant and if not cited earlier). **First name Last name.** Preceded by the appropriate abbreviation, such as *Ed.* Note on abbreviations: *ed.* for editor, *comp.* for compiler, *trans.* for translator. For example: ed. Doug Smith, comp. Phil Loyd, trans. Ozzie Bloxson.
4. Journal title--the title of the journal from which you are citing an article. **Underlined.**
5. Version number of the source. That is, journal volume number, issue number, or other identifying numbers. The format is volume number *period* issue number, e.g. 54.7, indicates volume 54, issue 7.
6. Date of publication. Day Month year, e.g., 10 Dec. 1997:
7. Statement of length. The pagination of the printed version of the document. If there is no printed version, or if the length of the printed version is not known, the number range or total number of pages, paragraphs, or other sections, only if they are numbered or known. Note: It may take some "deciphering" to know the page numbers as they appear in the printed journal. The following examples from citations as they appear in journal databases may assist you in this task. See below for how to interpret the page numbering:

Example (1) from Academic Search Premier database: Psychopharmacology, 2001, Vol. 158 Issue 2, p181, 9p

Example (2) from ABI/INFORM database: Astronomy, Milwaukee; Feb 2002; Vol. 30, Iss. 2; pg. 88, 4 pgs

Example (3) from General BusinessFile ASAP database: Kirkus Reviews Jan 1, 2002 v70 i1 7(1)

Example 1 interpreted. The article begins on page 181 and is 9 pages long. Therefore, the pagination is 181-189.

Example 2 interpreted. The article begins on page 88 and is 4 pages long. Therefore, the pagination is 88-91.

Example 3 interpreted. The article begins on page 7 and is 1 page long. Therefore, the pagination is 7.

8. Name of the database. **Underlined.**

9. The name of the service/company that produces or provides the database (see chart "A," above, for reference).

10. If access to the database is provided by a Library, the name of the Library. Note that in the examples, Troy University Library is abbreviated as *Troy U Lib.* in following the abbreviation guidelines of section 7 of the *MLA Handbook*.

11. Date when you accessed the item. **Day Month year**, e.g., 10 Dec. 2002.

III. EXAMPLES

EXAMPLES FOR JOURNAL ARTICLES RETRIEVED FROM A PROPRIETARY DATABASE. Articles without a printed version, i.e., the journal is only an electronic one--there is no printed version.

EXAMPLE:

Freund, Bob. "Wisconsin Bank to Buy Three Marquette Bank
Branches in Minnesota." Knight-Ridder/Tribune Business
News. 17 Jan. 2002. General BusinessFile ASAP. Gale
Group. Troy U Lib. 21 Sep. 2007.

EXAMPLES FOR JOURNAL ARTICLES RETRIEVED FROM A PROPRIETARY DATABASE. Articles with a printed version, i.e., the journal is also a printed journal.

EXAMPLE:

Budd, John M. "The Degrees of Knowledge." Brandweek 37.45.
25 Nov. 1996: 221-226. Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale
Group. Troy U Lib. 27 Aug. 2007.

EXAMPLE:

Schumaker, Eric. "Changing of the Guard." Mediaweek 8.1.
5 Jan. 1998: 347-349. ABI/INFORM. ProQuest. Troy U
Lib. 24 May 2002.

EXAMPLE (no author given in the article):

"Policies and Procedures." HR Reporter 18.12. 7 Dec.
2001. Academic Universe. LexisNexis. Troy U Lib.
24 May 2007.

EXAMPLE:

Menzel, E. Roland. Fingerprint detection with lasers.
New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1999. Troy U Lib.
NetLibrary. Online Computer Library Center, Inc. 5 May
2007.

For a regular Internet site, i.e., a common Web page.

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I. DEFINITION For a regular Internet site, i.e., a common Web page. Defined as:

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II. ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE (if given):

1. Name of author, editor, compiler, or translator of the source. **Last name, First name.** Followed by an abbreviation, such as *ed.*, if appropriate. Note on abbreviations: For editor, *ed.* For compiler, *comp.* For translator, *trans.* For example: Smith, Doug ed., Loyd, Phil comp., Bloxson, Ozzie trans.
2. Document title.
3. If your reference is to a Web page or group of pages within a scholarly project or parent Web site: The title of the page **in quotation marks**, or for a page with no title, a description such as Home page (not in quotation marks).
4. If your reference is to a personal or professional Web site (the main site): The title of the site **underlined**, or for a site with no title, a description such as Home page (not underlined).
5. In both titles and subtitles, capitalize the first words, the last words, and all principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms. Do not capitalize the following parts of speech when they fall in the middle of the title: articles (a, an, the), prepositions (against, between, in, of, to, etc.), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet, etc.). For more information and examples, refer to section 2.6 of the *MLA Handbook*.
6. Date of publication. Date of electronic publication or latest update. **Day month year**, e.g., 10 Dec. 1997.
7. Statement of length. The total number of pages, paragraphs, or other sections, only if they are numbered. Note on abbreviations of length: For paragraphs, *pars.*, e.g., 13 pars.; for pages, *pp.*, e.g., 4 pp.
8. The name of any institution or organization sponsoring or associated with the Web site.

This is used if the document is part of an online project or site, e.g., a museum or school.

9. Date when you accessed the item. **Day Month year**, e.g., 10 Dec. 2007.
10. The electronic address or URL, in angle brackets followed by a period, e.g., `<http://www.troy.edu>`. If it is necessary to break a URL, do so just after a slash.

III. EXAMPLES

EXAMPLES FOR A REGULAR WEBSITE:

EXAMPLE:

Morenus, David. David's Townhouse. 1997. 13 Feb. 2007

`<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/1001>`.

EXAMPLE:

Gradson, James. "Life in Ancient Egypt." 1998. Carnegie

Museum of Natural History. 17 May 2002 `<http://`

`www.clpgh.org/cmnh/exhibits/egypt/index.html>`.

EXAMPLE:

Cherry, Nicole. "Norse Mythology." 7 Feb. 1997.

California Institute of Technology. 15 Apr. 2007

`<http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~cherryne/mythology.htm>`.

EXAMPLE:

Boeree, C. George. "Personality Theories: Sigmund Freud."

1997. 24 May 2007 `<http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/`

`freud.html>`.