

GUIDE TO BIBLIOGRAPHIES: MLA STYLE

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Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.
--Spencer Johnson

Bibliography basics

A bibliography is a list of the sources you consulted in order to complete an assignment. All academic research includes a bibliography. It is not only an academic convention; it is also a statement of credit for the ideas of others. Without a bibliography or citations, your work is dishonest. In order to maintain academic honesty and integrity, you should give credit where it is due. If you quote an article, use statistics from a study, or build upon a theory articulated by an expert, you will need to cite your research. If you don't, you might be plagiarizing, a form of academic dishonesty akin to theft. Rather than risk plagiarism, cite your resources and write a bibliography.

There are many bibliographic styles. In general, classes in the Arts & Humanities use the MLA style to record research. This documentation method is developed by the Modern Language Association and goes through periodic changes. This guide presents information from the 7th edition, published in 2009. This guide provides information only on a few common sources of information, and it is not comprehensive. However, it covers the basics for writing a bibliography, and an example of a bibliography is included on the last page. For more information, please consult the *MLA Handbook*, which is available at the library (LB 23698. G53 2009). If you'd like an online resource that presents a thorough look at the bibliographies with examples, the library's web page has links to a very useful guide:

[SOCC Library](#) → "Reference Tools" tab → [Information sites](#) → Scroll to Bibliography Styles → [Research and Documentation Online](#)

In-text citations

Once you quote a source or summarize information from a source, you should include a citation inside the text of your paper. In MLA format, the in-text citation is the page number of the information cited in parenthesis. Here's an example from a made-up source:

A librarian will "never shush a question" (23), according to Smita Avasthi.

Notice that the sentence itself explains who wrote the quoted material. If the sentence does not explain who wrote the material, you should place the author's name in parenthesis as well. Here's an example:

Although the library is quiet place, a librarian will "never shush a question" (Avasthi, 23).

The idea of the in-text citation is that your reader should be able to turn to your bibliography and find all of the publication information for that source with ease. Thus, a reader would simply have to go to your bibliography, find the entry for "Avasthi" and would be able to tell how to locate that resource.

The format of the bibliography

At the end of your document, you should include your bibliography. Your bibliography should begin on a separate page. Center the heading, which is "List of Works Cited." Each entry should be alphabetized by the author's last name, and

hanging indents should be used on the first line of each entry. When you use a hanging indent, the first line begins at the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented by half-an-inch. You can use the ruler to create a hanging indent. Like the rest of your paper, bibliographies should be double-spaced. For an example of how a bibliography should look, consult the last page of this handout, where imaginary sources are documented in a properly formatted bibliography.

The format of the entries

The basic format in MLA style for the most common resources are below, along with an example:

Journal article found in a database:

Last name of author, First name of author. "Title of Article." *Journal Title* Volume Number.Issue Number
(Publication Date): starting page-ending page. *Database Title*. Publication medium. Date of Access.

Avasthi, Smita. "Love Your Librarian or Live in Endless Confusion." *Information Navigator* 13.7 (2009): 3-11.
Academic Search Premier. Web. 23 February 2009.

Journal article found in print:

Last name of author, First name of author. "Title of Article." *Journal Title* Volume Number.Issue Number
(Publication Date): starting page-ending page. Publication medium.

Avasthi, Smita. "Librarians: The Best Search Engines." *Information Guru* 9.16 (2009): 4-7. Print.

Book:

Last name of author, First name of author. *Book Title*. City of publication: Publication Date. Publication Medium.

Avasthi, Smita. *Don't Fear Your Librarian*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009. Print.

Web document:

Last name of author, First name of author. "Web article Title." *Website Title*. Sponsoring organization. Date of
publication. Publication Medium. Date of access.

Avasthi, Smita. "How to Evaluate a Website." *SOCC Library*. Southwestern Oregon Community College. 20 July
2009. Web. 9 October 2009.

Newspaper found in print:

Last name of author, First name of author. "Title of Article." *Newspaper Title* [City of publication, if not in the
newspaper title] Date: Page number. Publication medium.

Avasthi, Smita. "Librarians Rock!" *The Seattle Times*. 17 November 2009: B6. Print.

Newspaper found in a database:

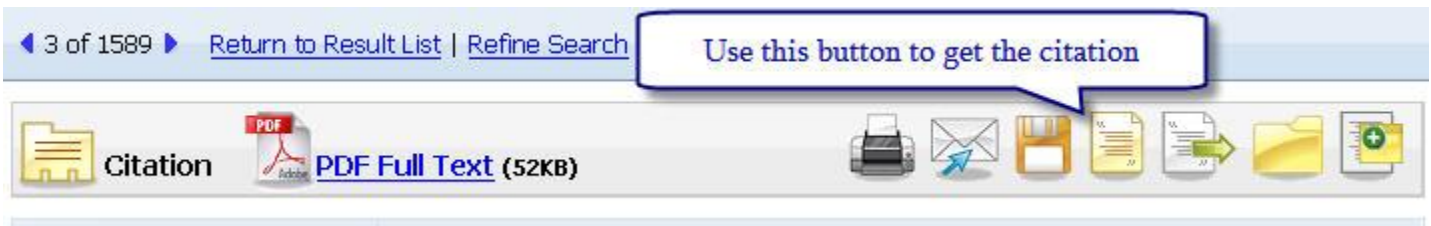
Last name of author, First name of author. "Title of Article." *Newspaper Title* [City of publication, if not in the
newspaper title] Date: Page number. Database Title. Publication medium. Date of access

Avasthi, Smita. "Librarians Protect Your Privacy, Despite the Patriot Act." *The Oregonian* [Portland, OR]. 13
February 2009: B6. *Points of View Reference Center*. Web. 31 October 2009.

Citation editors

Many databases include tools to help you cite your sources. Although these citation editors will format your citation, they are often inaccurate. Citation editors work like calculators: they simply put information into a formula. Thus, it is necessary to review **every** citation and check for errors; then, you can edit the citation appropriately so that your bibliography is well-written.

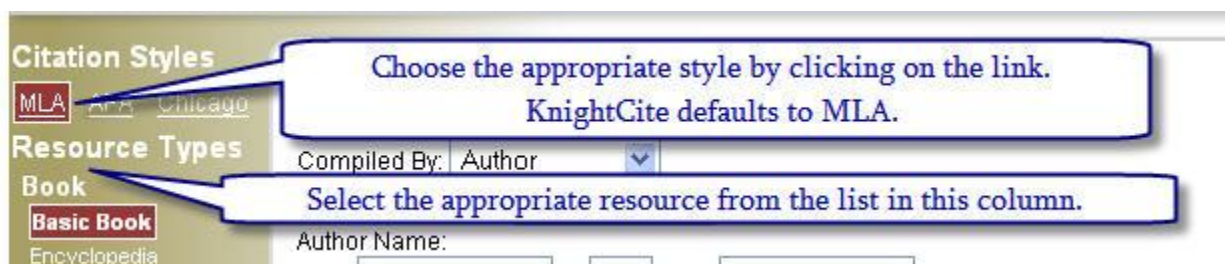
Most of [SOCC's databases](#) are provided through Ebscohost, and this company has a tool that will show you how to cite any article found in that database. Click on the title of the article, and then click on the gold button:



Once you click on the button, a window will open that has the bibliographic information for that article in APA and MLA format. You can copy the citation and paste it into your bibliography, but check it for errors. Use this guide or another bibliographic guide to check the entry, and edit it carefully so that it is accurate, up-to-date and correct.

Other library resources, such as our online reference collection, Credo, or our Issues & Controversies database list the citation information for an article at the end of the document. For both resources, scroll to the bottom of the article to find out how to cite that document. As always, these citations are often inaccurate, so double-check and edit them.

From the library's home page, you can also access [KnightCite](#). KnightCite will format your citation for you once you fill out an appropriate form. Links to KnightCite are on all of the library's subject pages, and you can also access the site by finding the link under the "Reference Tools" tab. Once you access KnightCite, look on the left-hand side:



You will need to select the appropriate citation style (MLA, in this case), and you also need to select the appropriate type of resource (i.e., books, encyclopedias, web documents, journal articles, newspaper articles). Once you've made those selections, fill out the form **accurately**, and click the submit button. Then, you'll get the citation in its proper format. As with other citation editors, you should double-check whether it is accurate. If you use KnightCite incorrectly, your bibliography will be incorrect. Like all citation editors, it follows a formula. Links to KnightCite are on all subject pages, or you can find it by clicking on the "Reference Tools" tab on the library's home page. The latest version of MS Word also has a citation editor. However, it is deeply flawed, and we don't recommend using it. It will take longer to correct the automated program than it would to write your bibliography.

If you use a citation editor, you **must** check for accuracy. You might find it is easier to write the bibliography than to use an editor, especially as you get used to the format.

List of Works Cited

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