What’s new in MLA style?

The Modern Language Association (MLA) has updated its guidelines for student writers in the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* (2016). As a service to users of Bedford/St. Martin’s textbooks, we offer this overview of the major changes in MLA style.

**Notable changes**

- MLA uses the organizing principle of “container.” A container might be an anthology, a periodical, a Web site, a television program, a database, an online archive, etc. Basically, containers are enclosed by periods, with commas used for the elements within the containers. See the visual and a few examples on the next page.
- Use *et al.* for three or more authors in works cited entries and in in-text citations.
- Use *p.* and *pp.* for all page numbers in works cited entries.
- Spell out *editor*, *translator*, *edited by*, etc. Continue to abbreviate *vol.* for “volume” and *ed.* for “edition” in works cited entries.
- Indent for long quotations in text is now ½ inch (not 1 inch).
- If the publisher name is the same as the Web site title, omit the publisher name.

**Works cited: books**

- Do not give the medium in citations.
- Do not use the place of publication for books.
- Use full publisher names, except for terms such as *Inc.* and *Company*. Retain terms such as *Books* and *Publisher*. Continue to use *U* and *P* for university presses. Examples: Alfred A. Knopf, Penguin Books, W. W. Norton, Florida UP, U of Michigan P.

**Works cited: periodicals**

- For journals, use the season or month in addition to volume and issue numbers: vol. 22, no. 4, June 2016.

**Works cited: Web sources**

- Use a URL for all Web sources (omit http://)
- DOIs and permalinks, when available, are preferable to URLs.
- Use the date of access for Web sources that don't have a publication date: Accessed 3 Mar. 2016.
Understanding MLA’s container concept

WORKS-CITED ENTRY (ONE CONTAINER)


WORKS-CITED ENTRY (TWO CONTAINERS)


Additional works-cited examples

SINGLE AUTHOR


THREE OR MORE AUTHORS


BOOK WITH EDITOR(S)

ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL


ARTICLE FROM A DATABASE


SHORT WORK FROM A WEB SITE