

# MLA Citing in the Humanities

Presented by the Harper College Library and Writing Center  
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Ask how many people have used MLA style to cite before. Ask what they have found most confusing about it.

## Today, you will...

- Learn to create MLA citations for the kind of sources you might cite in this class
- Learn to properly cite your sources in MLA style in the body of your papers for this class

Remind students that they already learned in the tutorial about why citing is important, what MLA is used for, and how to create citations for basic materials like books or articles. Mention that in the Humanities citing can be extra tricky, though, because the works often have special circumstances or unusual rules. Say we're going to focus today on those unusual rules since that is what they need to be able to cite the kinds of works they're reading in the class. Go over the learning outcomes.

# MLA Core Elements

The Modern Language Association (MLA) directs writers to the “core elements” and provides examples for commonly cited source types and mediums.

- 1 Author.
- 2 Title of source.
- 3 Title of container,
- 4 Other contributors,
- 5 Version,
- 6 Number,
- 7 Publisher,
- 8 Publication date,
- 9 Location.

\*From MLA Handbook, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

Keep this slide brief. Remind students that they learned about these in the tutorial so we won't cover all of them in depth. In particular, discuss the difference between title of source and title of container, and discuss what a container is—point out that the Norton book is a container. Mention that other contributors can be people like editors or translators. Highlight that not all the information will be present for all of these elements and if it doesn't exist, leave it out.

# Citation Example

Aeschylus. *Agamemnon*. Translated by Robert Fagles. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature: Vol. A*, edited by Martin Puchner, et al., W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 655-701.

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- 2 Title of source.
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Each element will appear as you advance the slide. This is an example of a work within a container. Show where the play is in the Norton book. Go over each element, explaining what it is and where it can be found in the Norton book. Point out punctuation too and mention it has to be followed exactly. The citation should also be double spaced and have a hanging indent.

## In-Text Citations

- Briefly identifies a source within the body of your paper
- Leads directly to the full citation in your Works Cited/Bibliography

## In-Text Citation Example #1: Play

Agamemnon says “True to my ideals?  
Once I violate them I am lost”  
(Aeschylus 927).

Corresponding bibliography entry:

Aeschylus. *Agamemnon*. Translated by Robert Fagles. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature: Vol. A*, edited by Martin Puchner, et al., W. W. Norton & Company, 2012, pp. 655-701.

At first only in-text example will be shown. Point out that the author name and line number go in the parentheses. There are no act or book numbers because this play doesn't have them. When the slide advances, the citation example we looked at earlier will appear. Show that whatever is in the parentheses has to tie directly to the start of the bib entry.

## In-Text Citation Example #2: Epic Poem

The elders warn Gilgamesh to let Enkidu take the lead:

Trust not, Gilgamesh, in your own strength,  
Let your vision be clear, take care of yourself.  
Let Enkidu go ahead of you,  
He has seen the road, traveled this way.  
(*Gilgamesh* 4.113-116)

Point out that more than 4 lines gets indented and doesn't have quotation marks, and that the line breaks are shown as they are in the version we have. Point out that because the author is unknown, we use the title of the work and because it's an epic poem, it gets italicized. Then we include the tablet number and lines.

## Answers: Group #1

According to Vlahos, “Scholars in the West for centuries relied on a single commentator to assist them in interpreting Homer's poems” (3).

Vlahos, John B. “Homer's ‘Odyssey’: Penelope and the Case for Early Recognition.” *College Literature*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2011, pp. 1–75. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41302856](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41302856).



## Answers: Group #2

Penelope says “For every thing there is a season, and a time / For all we do on the life-giving earth” (Homer 19.651-652).

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature: Vol. A*, edited by Martin Puchner, et al., W. W. Norton & Company, 2012, pp. 332-622.

## Answers: Group #3

Eurycleia admitted she helped Telemachus leave and hide the truth from Penelope (Homer 4.795-801).

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature: Vol. A*, edited by Martin Puchner, et al., W. W. Norton & Company, 2012, pp. 332-622.

## Answers: Group #4

Tiresias says "I'll cause no grief to you or me"  
(Sophocles 401).

Sophocles. *Oedipus the King*. Translated by Robert Fagles.

*The Norton Anthology of World Literature: Vol. A,*

edited by Martin Puchner, et al., W. W. Norton &

Company, 2012, pp. 707-747.

## Answers: Group #5

“Athene (Athena) was the Olympian goddess of wisdom and counsel, war, the defence of towns, heroic endeavour, weaving, pottery and various other crafts” (“Athena”).

“Athena (Athene).” *Theoi.com*, 2000-2017,

[www.theoi.com/Olympios/Athena.html](http://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Athena.html).

## Answers: Group #6

The image shows Athena standing in front of Heracles, pouring wine from her jug (Douris).

Douris. *Heracles and Athena*. ca. 490 - 470 B.C.,

Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich. *Theoi.com*,

2000-2017, [www.theoi.com/Gallery/K8.2.html](http://www.theoi.com/Gallery/K8.2.html).

Questions?