

cite website mla 9

The importance of properly citing sources cannot be overstated in academic and professional writing, and for many, understanding how to cite a website in MLA 9th edition is a common challenge. This comprehensive guide will demystify the process, providing clear, step-by-step instructions and detailed examples to ensure your citations are accurate and adhere to the latest MLA guidelines. We will cover the core components of a website citation, explore common variations such as citing articles, pages, and entire websites, and address frequently asked questions to equip you with the confidence to cite any web-based source effectively. Mastering the MLA 9 website citation format is crucial for academic integrity and for allowing your readers to easily locate your sources.

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Understanding the Core Components of an MLA 9 Website Citation

When you cite a website in MLA 9, the goal is to provide your reader with enough information to locate the source independently. The MLA 9th edition emphasizes a container system, where a website is often considered a container for its individual articles or pages. While the exact elements may vary slightly depending on the type of web content, several core components form the foundation of almost every MLA 9 website citation. These elements work together to build a complete and accurate reference.

The fundamental elements of an MLA 9 website citation are as follows: Author, Title of Source, Title of Container, Other Contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication Date, and Location. For web sources, the "Location" most commonly refers to a URL. However, MLA 9 discourages the inclusion of "http://" or "https://", and recommends omitting the ".com", ".org", etc. when they are redundant. The focus is on clarity and ease of access for the reader. Understanding each of these components is the first step to mastering MLA website citations.

How to Cite a Specific Web Page MLA 9

Citing a specific web page in MLA 9 requires attention to detail to ensure all necessary

information is included. This is perhaps the most common scenario encountered by students and researchers. The format aims to pinpoint the exact page being referenced, making it easy for readers to follow your research trail. A typical citation for a web page will include the author (if available), the title of the specific page, the title of the website (acting as the container), the publisher of the website (if different from the website title and discernible), the publication date, and the URL.

The structure for a general web page citation looks like this: Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Specific Page." *Title of Website*, Publisher (if different from website title), Date of Publication, URL. If an author is not listed for the page, you begin with the "Title of Specific Page." It is crucial to include quotation marks around the title of the specific page and italicize the title of the website, just as you would for a book or journal article within a larger collection. Pay close attention to whether the publisher is explicitly stated and if it differs from the name of the website itself; if they are the same, you can omit the publisher.

Citing an Article from a Website MLA 9

When citing an article published on a website, the MLA 9 format follows a similar pattern to citing a specific web page, but with a slight nuance in how the article title is presented. The article itself is the "Source" and the website it resides on is the "Container." This distinction is key to the MLA's container approach. The essential components remain the same: author, article title, website title, publisher, publication date, and location (URL).

The standard format for an article from a website is: Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Website*, Publisher, Date of Publication, URL. For instance, if you are citing a news article, the author's name would come first, followed by the article's title in quotation marks. The name of the news website would be italicized. Ensure you are looking for the most specific publication date available, which might be the day, month, and year.

Consider these specific points when citing an article:

- **Author:** Use the author's full name as it appears, with the last name first. If no author is listed, begin with the title of the article.
- **Title of Article:** Enclose the article's title in quotation marks.
- **Title of Website:** Italicize the title of the overall website where the article is published.
- **Publisher:** Include the name of the organization or company that publishes the website, but only if it is different from the website's title and is clearly identifiable.
- **Publication Date:** Provide the most specific date available (Day Month Year).
- **URL:** List the full URL, but omit "http://" or "https://".

Citing an Entire Website MLA 9

Citing an entire website in MLA 9 is less common than citing a specific page or article, as it usually implies you are referencing the website as a whole, perhaps for general background information or a broad overview. The process for citing an entire website is similar to citing a single page, but the focus shifts to the overall publication and the general content it provides. You will still aim to include the author (if one person or entity is clearly responsible for the entire site), the title of the website, the publisher, and the date of publication.

The general format for citing an entire website is: Author/Organization. *Title of Website*. Publisher, Date of Publication, URL. For example, if you are citing a well-known organization's website without a specific author, the organization's name might serve as both the author and the publisher. If the website has a version or edition, you would include that after the title. The date of publication is important, and if only a copyright date is available, that is acceptable. The URL provides the location, again without the "http://" or "https://".

Key considerations for citing an entire website:

- **Author/Organization:** If a specific author is not credited for the entire site, use the name of the organization that created and maintains the website.
- **Title of Website:** Italicize the full title of the website.
- **Publisher:** Include the name of the publishing organization if it is different from the website's title and is clearly indicated.
- **Publication Date:** Use the most recent copyright date or publication date found on the site, typically in the footer. If no date is available, use "n.d." for no date.
- **URL:** Provide the direct web address.

Common Variations and Special Cases in MLA 9 Website Citations

While the core principles of citing websites in MLA 9 remain consistent, several variations and special cases require specific attention. These arise when certain information is missing or when the nature of the web content deviates from a standard article or page. Understanding these nuances will ensure your citations are thorough and accurate, regardless of the source's complexity. Common scenarios include missing authors, missing publication dates, and citing content from social media platforms or online databases.

When an author is not listed for a web page or article, you begin the citation with the title of the source, which will be the title of the page or article. The title of the website then follows, italicized, and then the publisher, publication date, and URL. If no publication date is available, you will use "n.d." (no date) in its place. This is a standard practice in MLA when a date cannot be determined. For online databases that host a variety of articles, you would cite the specific article within the database as the source, and the database itself as the container, noting the database's publisher and publication date if applicable.

Other common variations include:

- **Social Media Posts:** Cite as a personal communication, including the author, the content of the post in quotation marks, the platform as the title of the container (italicized), the date of posting, and the URL.
- **Videos (e.g., YouTube):** Cite the uploader as the author, the title of the video in quotation marks, the name of the website (e.g., YouTube) as the title of the container (italicized), the publisher (if different), the date of publication, and the URL.
- **Pages with Revised Dates:** If a page has a "last updated" or "revised" date, use that date as the publication date.

Key Differences: MLA 8 vs. MLA 9 Website Citations

The transition from MLA 8th edition to MLA 9th edition brought about several refinements, though the core principles of citation remained largely consistent. For website citations, one of the most significant adjustments in MLA 9 is the deemphasis on the "medium of publication" (e.g., "Web"). MLA 9 encourages a more streamlined approach, focusing on the essential elements that allow for retrieval. This update aims to simplify the citation process while maintaining clarity and accuracy for readers.

In MLA 9, the inclusion of URLs is still recommended when accessing sources online, but the recommendation to omit "http://" or "https://" is more strongly emphasized than in MLA 8. Additionally, MLA 9 provides more detailed guidance on citing various digital sources, including social media, podcasts, and streaming media, often treating them within the framework of the "container" system. While MLA 8 also used the container concept, MLA 9 refines its application to digital contexts, making it more intuitive to cite a variety of online materials. The overall goal of MLA 9 is to offer a more flexible and user-friendly citation system that adapts to the evolving landscape of information sources.

Some specific points of divergence include:

- **Omission of Medium:** MLA 9 generally omits the medium of publication (like "Web") for online sources.

- **URL Formatting:** Stronger recommendation to omit "http://" and "https://", focusing on the core web address.
- **Enhanced Digital Guidance:** MLA 9 provides more explicit instructions for citing newer digital formats like podcasts and streaming services.
- **Emphasis on Containers:** While present in MLA 8, the container concept is further solidified and clarified in MLA 9 for diverse digital works.

The continued focus on the author, title of source, title of container, publisher, publication date, and location (URL) ensures that the fundamental principles of MLA citation are maintained, even as the guidelines are updated to reflect current research practices.

Frequently Asked Questions About Citing Websites in MLA 9

Q: How do I cite a website if there is no author listed?

A: If no author is explicitly listed for a web page or article, begin your citation with the title of the specific page or article. Enclose the title in quotation marks. The rest of the citation, including the title of the website (italicized), the publisher, publication date, and URL, would follow as usual.

Q: What should I do if a website does not have a publication date?

A: If a website or a specific page/article lacks a publication date, you should use the abbreviation "n.d." in place of the date. This stands for "no date" and indicates that the publication information was unavailable. Place "n.d." where the publication date would normally appear in your citation.

Q: Do I need to include the full URL in my MLA 9 website citation?

A: Yes, you should include the full URL in your MLA 9 website citation. However, you are strongly encouraged to omit the "http://" or "https://" prefix and any unnecessary elements like ".com", ".org", etc., if they do not aid in locating the source. The goal is to provide a clean and easily navigable link.

Q: How do I cite a page that has been updated or revised?

A: If a web page indicates a "last updated" or "revised" date, use that date as the publication date in your MLA 9 citation. This indicates the most recent information available for that content. Place this date in the publication date slot of your citation.

Q: Is it necessary to cite the publisher for every website?

A: You should include the publisher of the website if it is clearly identifiable and different from the title of the website itself. If the organization name serves as both the website title and the publisher (e.g., a personal blog hosted by the author), you may omit the publisher to avoid redundancy. The goal is to provide clarity, not unnecessary repetition.

Q: How do I cite a PDF document found online?

A: When citing a PDF document found online, treat it as you would a typical web page or article. Include the author (if available), the title of the PDF document (in quotation marks if it's an article, italicized if it's the title of the document itself), the name of the website where it was found (italicized), the publisher, publication date, and the URL. If the PDF is a standalone document with its own title, that title would be italicized.

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