

citing a scholarly journal mla

citing a scholarly journal mla is a fundamental skill for academic success, ensuring proper attribution and avoiding plagiarism. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of MLA (Modern Language Association) style for referencing scholarly articles, a common requirement in the humanities and beyond. We will cover the core components of a journal citation, explore variations for different publication formats, and provide detailed examples. Understanding these guidelines is crucial for building credibility and demonstrating academic integrity in your research papers and essays. This article aims to equip you with the knowledge to confidently cite any scholarly journal article according to MLA standards, from print to online databases.

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Understanding the Core Components of an MLA Journal Citation

When **citing a scholarly journal mla**, several key pieces of information must be present to allow readers to locate the source accurately. The MLA format prioritizes author, title of the article, title of the journal, volume and issue numbers, publication date, and page numbers. These elements work together to create a unique identifier for the article, distinguishing it from countless others. Mastering the order and punctuation of these components is the first step toward creating correct MLA citations for journal articles.

The author's name is always listed with the last name first, followed by a comma, and then the first name. For example, "Smith, John." If there are two authors, both are listed, with the first author's name inverted and the second author's name in normal order, joined by "and." For three or more authors, only the first author's name is inverted, followed by "et al." The title of the article is enclosed in quotation marks. The title of the journal is italicized. Volume and issue numbers are crucial for identifying specific editions, especially for journals that are published frequently. The publication date, usually the year, and the page numbers where the article can be found complete the citation.

Citing Print Scholarly Journals

Citing a physical, print scholarly journal in MLA style follows a specific, structured format. This traditional method remains relevant for researchers who still rely on printed materials. The fundamental principle is to provide enough information for a reader to find the exact article in its original printed form. Attention to detail in punctuation, capitalization, and order is paramount for accuracy and academic credibility when **citing a scholarly journal mla** from a physical copy.

Basic MLA Citation for Print Journals

The standard MLA format for a print journal article is as follows:

- Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season], pp. [page numbers].

For example:

- Johnson, Emily R. "The Evolution of Digital Storytelling." *Journal of Media Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, Spring 2022, pp. 45-62.

It's important to note that the volume and issue numbers are usually indicated with abbreviations "vol." and "no." respectively. The publication date might be a specific month, season, or just the year, depending on how the journal is published. Page numbers should include the first and last page of the article, separated by a hyphen. If the article spans multiple pages that are not consecutive, list all the page numbers separated by commas.

Handling Multiple Authors in Print Journals

When a scholarly journal article has multiple authors, the MLA citation format requires specific treatment to acknowledge all contributors while maintaining conciseness.

- For two authors: Last Name, First Name, and First Name Last Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season], pp. [page numbers].
- For three or more authors: Last Name, First Name, et al. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season], pp. [page numbers].

Example for two authors:

- Miller, David L., and Sarah Chen. "AI in Creative Writing." *Literary Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1, Winter 2023, pp. 112-135.

Example for three authors:

- Garcia, Maria, et al. "The Impact of Social Media on Political Discourse." *Political Science Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, Summer 2021, pp. 201-225.

The use of "et al." is a standard convention in MLA when citing works with three or more authors, simplifying the citation while still indicating the collaborative nature of the research and directing the reader to the full list of authors, typically found on the article's first page or in the journal's editorial information.

Citing Online Scholarly Journals and Databases

In today's academic landscape, many scholarly journal articles are accessed through online databases or directly from the journal's website. The MLA format has adapted to include elements that help readers locate these digital sources. When **citing a scholarly journal mla** from an online platform, providing a stable URL or DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is crucial. This ensures that readers can reliably access the same version of the article you consulted.

MLA Citation for Online Journal Articles (No DOI)

When an online journal article does not have a DOI, the citation typically includes the journal title, volume, issue, date, page numbers, and the URL of the source. The URL should be the direct link to the article itself, not just the database homepage. It is common practice to omit "http://" or "https://" unless the URL is necessary for navigation.

- Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season], pp. [page numbers]. *Name of Database or Website*, [URL].

Example:

- Nguyen, An. "Renewable Energy Policies in Southeast Asia." *Journal of Environmental Economics*, vol. 10, no. 4, December 2022, pp. 301-320. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/45678901.

The inclusion of the database name, if applicable, helps readers understand the context of where the article was found. If the article is directly on the journal's website, you would list the website name instead of a database name.

MLA Citation for Online Journal Articles (With DOI)

The Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is a persistent, unique identifier for scholarly articles. When an article has a DOI, it is the preferred element to include in an MLA citation for online sources, as DOIs are more stable than URLs, which can change or become broken over time. When **citing a scholarly journal mla** with a DOI, your citation will be more robust.

- Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season], pp. [page numbers]. *DOI* [DOI number].

Example:

- Chen, Wei. "The Social Impact of Gamification." *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 85, August 2018, pp. 15-25. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.023.

Note that the DOI is presented without any punctuation preceding it, and it functions as a direct link

that readers can use to access the article. Always check if a DOI is available for your source, as it greatly enhances the usability and longevity of your citation.

Variations and Special Cases in Journal Citation

While the core principles of **citing a scholarly journal mla** remain consistent, certain situations require minor adjustments to the standard format. These variations ensure that all relevant information is captured, even for less common publication types or when certain details are missing. Familiarizing yourself with these exceptions will make your MLA citations more precise and professional.

Journal Articles Without Page Numbers

Some online journals or articles published on platforms that don't use traditional pagination may not have assigned page numbers. In such cases, you omit the page number information from the citation.

- Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season]. *Name of Database or Website*, [URL or DOI].

Example:

- Rodriguez, Sofia. "Urban Green Spaces and Mental Well-being." *Environment Today*, vol. 5, no. 1, January 2023. *Google Scholar*, scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=abcdefg&citation_for_view=abcdefg:hijklmnopqrs.

The key is to provide the most helpful locator information available. If an article is published in an online-only journal without continuous pagination, providing the volume and issue is still important, followed by the URL or DOI.

Citing an Editorial or Letter to the Editor

Editorials and letters to the editor, while often found within scholarly journals, are typically shorter pieces and may not follow the full author-title-journal structure. They are cited similarly to regular articles but with specific attention to the nature of the piece.

- Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Editorial or Letter." *Title of Journal*, vol. [volume number], no. [issue number], [publication date or season], pp. [page numbers].

Example of an editorial:

- Davis, Robert. "The Future of Interdisciplinary Research." *Academic Outlook*, vol. 35, no. 4, November 2022, pp. 5-7.

Example of a letter to the editor:

- Patel, Priya. "Response to 'Climate Change Impacts'." *Environmental Science Journal*, vol. 22, no. 3, July 2021, p. 1.

When citing these shorter forms, ensure you accurately represent the title and clearly indicate if it's an editorial or a letter. The page numbering might be more concise, sometimes just a single page.

The Importance of Accurate Journal Citation in MLA Style

Accurate journal citation in MLA style is more than just following a set of rules; it is a cornerstone of academic integrity and effective research communication. Proper attribution respects the intellectual property of scholars whose work you build upon. When you meticulously cite your sources, you are essentially building a transparent trail for your readers, allowing them to verify your information and explore the original research themselves. This practice is fundamental to good scholarship.

Beyond ethical considerations, accurate MLA journal citations enhance the credibility of your work. They demonstrate that you have engaged with existing literature and have the diligence to properly acknowledge your sources. This attention to detail can significantly influence how your readers perceive the rigor and trustworthiness of your research. Furthermore, well-formatted citations contribute to the overall clarity and professionalism of your paper, making it easier for instructors and peers to follow your arguments and appreciate the depth of your research process. Mastering **citing a scholarly journal mla** is an investment in your academic voice and reputation.

Ensuring Reader Access and Verifiability

The primary goal of any citation system, including MLA, is to enable readers to find and verify the sources you have used. For journal articles, this means providing enough precise detail so that someone could locate the exact same article in the same publication. This verifiability is crucial for academic discourse, as it allows others to assess your research, build upon it, or challenge it based on the original evidence.

When you provide correct volume, issue, and page numbers for print journals, or a stable DOI or URL for online articles, you are facilitating this crucial step. A reader should be able to take the information from your Works Cited page and, with minimal effort, retrieve the source material. This transparency is what distinguishes credible research from unsubstantiated claims. Neglecting to provide accurate locator information can lead to frustration for your readers and can undermine the perceived authority of your work.

Avoiding Plagiarism and Upholding Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Proper **citing a scholarly journal mla** is your primary defense against accusations of plagiarism. By acknowledging every source you consult and incorporate into your writing, you are giving credit where it is due. This is a fundamental ethical obligation in academic and professional

writing.

The MLA format provides a clear and consistent method for doing so. When you use direct quotes, paraphrase ideas, or incorporate data from a scholarly journal, you must attribute that information to its original author. Failure to do so, even if you believe you have significantly rephrased the material, can still be considered plagiarism. Therefore, diligent use of MLA citation practices is not just a stylistic choice but a critical component of maintaining academic integrity and earning the trust of your audience.

Q: What is the difference between citing a print journal and an online journal in MLA?

A: When citing a print journal, you typically include the author, article title, journal title, volume, issue, publication date, and page numbers. For online journals, especially those accessed through databases or with a DOI, you will also include the DOI or URL for the article. The DOI is preferred as it is a more stable identifier than a URL.

Q: How do I cite an article with three or more authors in MLA?

A: For articles with three or more authors, you list the first author's last name followed by their first name, then add "et al." after their name. For example: Smith, John, et al.

Q: What is a DOI and why is it important when citing online journal articles in MLA?

A: A DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is a unique and persistent alphanumeric string assigned to a digital object, such as a journal article. It is important because it provides a stable link to the article that is unlikely to change, unlike a URL which might become broken or outdated.

Q: Should I include the database name when citing an online journal article in MLA?

A: Yes, you should include the name of the database if you accessed the article through one, and if the database name helps identify the source more clearly. However, if you access the article directly from the journal's website, you would list the website name. The inclusion of the DOI or URL is generally more critical for locating the article.

Q: How do I format the title of a journal article in MLA style?

A: The title of a journal article in MLA style is enclosed in quotation marks. For example: "The Impact of Climate Change."

Q: How do I format the title of the journal itself in MLA style?

A: The title of the journal in MLA style is italicized. For example: *Journal of Environmental Science*.

Q: What if a scholarly journal article doesn't have page numbers?

A: If an online journal article does not have page numbers, you simply omit the page number information from the citation. You would still include the volume, issue, publication date, and the DOI or URL.

Q: How should I cite a letter to the editor or an editorial from a scholarly journal in MLA?

A: Letters to the editor and editorials are cited similarly to regular journal articles. You include the author's name (if available), the title of the letter or editorial in quotation marks, the journal title in italics, the volume, issue, publication date, and page numbers. Ensure you accurately represent the title and format it correctly.

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