

# Citation Guidelines (MLA and APA)

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Although some sources you use will be quite peculiar, most of your citations will follow the common patterns outlined below. Consult with your instructor or someone at the writing center if you want help with specific kinds of citations or if you are interested in using Chicago, AMA, or other citation styles. You can also visit the [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) for more in-depth information about multiple citation styles.

Always remember that **the point of including citations is so your reader can find the information you cite** if they want more details. Citations also give appropriate credit to authors and researchers who worked hard to generate the information you used. Your citations do not have to be perfect. They simply must demonstrate a good-faith effort to be transparent about where you got the information you used and provide your reader with the tools they need to dig deeper into the information if they so choose.

## General tips for in-text citations

- Use the author's **last** name (not first name) when referring to authors in your text.
- Try to **use the author's name rather than full article titles** when referring to sources, unless the article name is particularly significant.
- Including the publication year in your text is usually a smart idea, particularly if you are tracking the progression of certain ideas or research over time. **Giving your reader the author's name and a date can help them remember** where your information comes from.
- **Parenthetical citations go *inside* the period** of the sentence where the information is located. Example: Very few Houstonians remembered the yellow balloon story from 1985 (Stanson 44).
- **Parenthetical citations go *outside* the quotation marks** if you are using a direct quote. Example: Although previous experience contradicted the study results, "the evidence was so consistently overwhelming that the state had no choice but to reexamine its earlier conclusions" (Nguyen 2).
- Do not use a direct quote unless the author is saying something in a particularly unique, remarkable, or idiosyncratic way. **Usually, you can summarize or paraphrase more succinctly** and in a way that does not interfere with the flow of your text.

- **Including too many direct quotes can distract** from your message and interrupt your train of thought.
- **Do not include statistics or highly numeric data information as direct quotes.** Summarize it or even put it in a visual chart or table to simplify it or highlight the data points most important to your message.
- When you cite information from another source, **always include some explanation of your own** that highlights what is most important to your message and how you are interpreting the information you are sharing.
- **APA style emphasizes dates** more than MLA.
- **APA style includes commas** between names, dates, and page numbers. In MLA style, dates are typically not included in parentheses, and no comma is required between the author name and the page number.
- In both styles, **cite specific page numbers** where the information is from, unless it is from a source with no page numbers.

## Summarizing information in text

If you are summarizing information from a source, you need to cite that information in the main text of the sentence or in parentheses at the end of the information you are citing. A typical in-text summary with a citation will usually look like this:

### APA

In the first retrospective descriptive study to ever investigate the predictive value of the FMS, researchers analyzed the association between FMS scores and the likelihood of sustaining a serious injury among professional football players (Kiesel, Plisky, & Voight, 2007).

### MLA

In the first retrospective descriptive study to ever investigate the predictive value of the FMS, researchers analyzed the association between FMS scores and the likelihood of sustaining a serious injury among professional football players (Kiesel et al.).

**Notice:** The period goes outside the parentheses. In MLA, the date is not required, and if there are more than three authors, only one author name is cited, with “et al.” replacing the other author names. APA has slightly different requirements:

- 1-2 authors: List all names every time. Example: (Smith, 2017) or (Smith & Hernandez, 2017)
- 3-5 authors: List all names the first time, and then include only the lead author’s name plus “et al.” in each subsequent mention. Example above.
- 6+ authors: The first time and all other times you cite the authors, only include the lead author’s name, and replace the other names with “et al.” Example: (Walters et al., 2016)

In some cases, you may not need a single citation at the end of a sentence. It may be enough to mention the sources you are summarizing in the sentence. But be sure to **provide some contextual clues like publication dates.**

APA or MLA

Following the promising outcomes by Kiesel et al. (2007), researchers Chorba, Bouillon, Overmyer, and Landis (2010) wanted to further explore the potential of the FMS to predict injury in the athletic population, particularly among female athletes.

**Notice:** The writer includes the authors’ names and the dates of publication to provide context for these studies. The inclusion of dates this way is more common in APA style but is acceptable in MLA as well.

## Using direct quotes

As mentioned in the general tips above, avoid using direct quotes unless the author is saying something in a unique or exceptional way. Otherwise, see if you can summarize the information. Too many direct quotes can interrupt the flow of your writing and can be difficult to integrate into the rest of your message.

Still, sometimes a direct quotation is exactly what you need. Remember that a quote does not always need to be introduced by a comma or colon, but it often is. You are also allowed to integrate quotations directly into your own sentences if a phrase is particularly interesting.

Remember that you can cite the author's name in the text itself, but if you don't, you need to include it and the page number where the quote can be found in parentheses after the quote.

#### APA

In the official documentation, each injury was categorized as a musculoskeletal injury or an overall injury, which included "all potential injuries sustained during athletic practice or competition that might not be captured in the traditional musculoskeletal category, such as concussion" (Dorrel et al., 2018, p. 30).

Raskin experienced a major shift in his thinking after engaging in cognitive-behavioral therapy for one year, even stating, "I feel like a different sort of person almost. I'm still me, but I have practiced these new patterns for long enough that it's changed how I think" (Williams, 2016, p. 19).

#### MLA

In the official documentation, each injury was categorized as a musculoskeletal injury or an overall injury, which included "all potential injuries sustained during athletic practice or competition that might not be captured in the traditional musculoskeletal category, such as concussion" (Dorrel et al. 30).

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### General tips for works cited or reference lists

- At the end of your paper, **always include a list of sources you used in your writing**. For a presentation, include full references in small text on the slides where you use those sources or on a special citation slide at the end. Consult your instructor for appropriate ways to include works cited lists for other formats.
- **Alphabetize all items** in your works cited list. The list should be ordered alphabetically.
- **Abbreviate author first names in APA**. Spell them out in MLA, unless you do not know the full name.

- **If a source does not have an author, simply start the citation with the article/video/audio title** instead. Include it alphabetically according to the first letter of that title.
- **Use a “hanging indent”** for all items in the list (demonstrated in the sections below).
- **Keep your works cited list in the same font and font size as the rest of the paper.** If you double-spaced your paper, the works cited list should also be double-spaced. If the paper is single-spaced, the works cited list should be single-spaced. Be consistent.
- **Double check any auto-generated citations.** Auto-generators sometimes fail to include all authors and may include the journal or article title more than once.
- **The database where you find an article is usually *not* the journal title.** If you find something in an online database (e.g., EBSCO, Emerald, ProQuest, SAGE, or ScienceDirect), be sure you check to see what the actual journal title is.

## Example works cited entries

See the two lists below for examples of how to cite a variety of source in APA and MLA styles. The two lists include the same sources but are cited according to each distinct style. The lists include scholarly journal articles, a podcast episode, a YouTube video, a popular magazine article, and an interactive chart found on a website.

### APA

Dorrel, B., Long, T., Shaffer, S., & Myer, G. D. (2018). The functional movement screen as a predictor of injury in national collegiate athletic association division II athletes. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 53(1), 29-34. Retrieved from <http://natajournals.org/doi/full/10.4085/1062-6050-528-15>

Episode 738: The Russian rodeo. (2016, November 25). *Planet Money*. Podcast retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/money/2016/11/25/503158885/episode-738-the-russian-rodeo>

Gwynne, S.C. (2012, November). Git along, lonesome ranchers. *Texas Monthly*. Retrieved from <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/git-along-lonesome-ranchers/>

Macrotrends. (2018, April 5). [Interactive graph tracking the S&P 500 PE ratio by month over 90 years, can be viewed in smaller segments]. *S&P 500 PE Ratio - 90 Year*

*Historical Chart*. Retrieved from <https://www.macrotrends.net/2577/sp-500-pe-ratio-price-to-earnings-chart>

Sorenson, E. A. (2016). The reliability of functional movement screen scores assigned by athletic trainers. *International Journal of Athletic Therapy & Training*, 21(3), 38-41. Retrieved from <https://journals.humankinetics.com/doi/abs/10.1123/ijatt.2015-0070>

Zagat. (2016, April 15). *Ethical meat: Responsible farming in America* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/0WcVHQMz0XU>

## MLA

Dorrel, Bryan, et al. "The Functional Movement Screen as a Predictor of Injury in National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Athletes." *Journal of Athletic Training*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2018, pp. 29-34, <http://natajournals.org/doi/full/10.4085/1062-6050-528-15>. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

"Episode 738: The Russian Rodeo." *Planet Money* from NPR, 25 Nov. 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/money/2016/11/25/503158885/episode-738-the-russian-rodeo>.

"Ethical Meat: Responsible Farming in America." YouTube, uploaded by Zagat, 15 Apr. 2016, <https://youtu.be/0WcVHQMz0XU>.

Gwynne, S.C. "Git Along, Lonesome Ranchers." *Texas Monthly*, Nov. 2012, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/git-along-lonesome-ranchers/>. Accessed 14 October 2017.

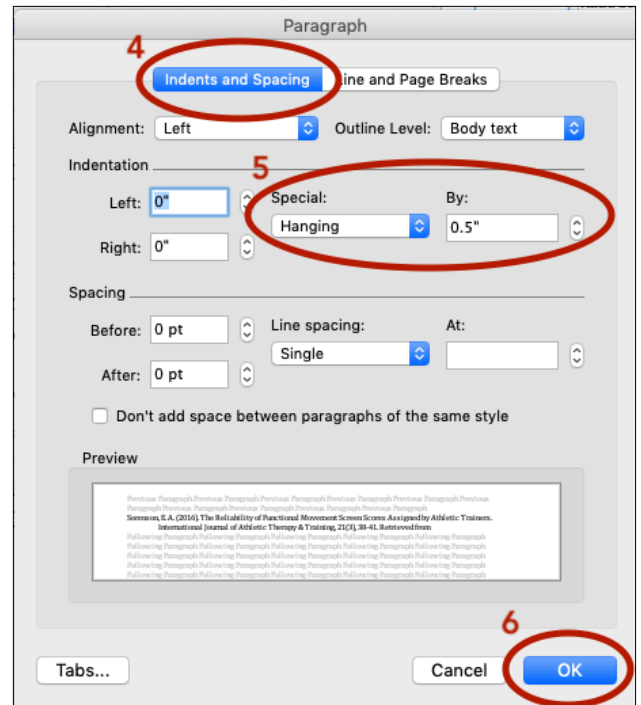
"S&P 500 PE Ratio - 90 Year Historical Chart." *MacroTrends*, 5 Apr. 2018, <https://www.macrotrends.net/2577/sp-500-pe-ratio-price-to-earnings-chart>. Accessed 25 March 2018.

Sorenson, Eric A. "The Reliability of Functional Movement Screen Scores Assigned by Athletic Trainers." *International Journal of Athletic Therapy & Training*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2016, pp. 38-41, <https://journals.humankinetics.com/doi/abs/10.1123/ijatt.2015-0070>. Accessed 3 April 2018.

## Inserting the hanging indent

In both APA and MLA, you need to include a 0.5-inch hanging indent. Word processing applications differ, but to do this in Microsoft Word, follow these steps.

1. Select all the text in your works cited list.
2. Right click (or Ctrl-click) on the text.
3. Select "Paragraph..."
4. Make sure you are on the "Indents and Spacing" tab in the window that opens.
5. In the "Indentation" section, under "Special," select "Hanging" from the dropdown, and enter 0.5" into the "By" field.
6. Click "OK."



## Additional help

For details on how to cite an even greater variety of sources in MLA and APA style, visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html).