



The Modern Language Association (MLA) just published the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* (2016), the first major update since 2009. MLA's goal is to simplify the documentation process, but the changes will be significant for those who are accustomed to using the old MLA. Here are some of the more significant changes:

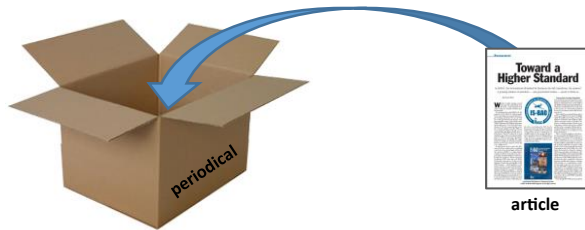
UNIVERSAL FORMAT

MLA recognizes that a single source may be available in multiple forms (e.g. a journal article can be accessed in print, on an e-reader, or through a database; a documentary can be viewed on Netflix, on DVD, or on YouTube). Instead of asking writers to first identify the format of a source and then follow specific rules for documenting each unique medium, the 8th edition introduces a universal set of guidelines that can be applied to all types of sources. Use the following categories to generate a works cited entry. If one of the categories does not apply to the source you are documenting, simply skip it and go to the next category.

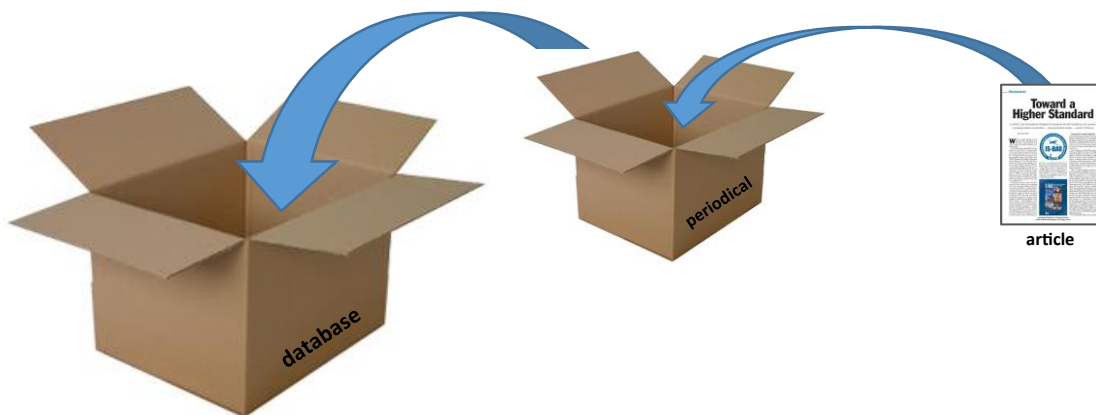
Author	
Title of Source	
Title of Container	
Other Contributors	
Version	
Number	
Publisher	
Publication Date	
Location	

“CONTAINERS”

The 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* introduces the concept of “*containers*” to the documentation process. A *container* is any larger whole which holds a smaller source. Types of *containers* include: a book (which contains essays, stories, or poems—although a novel would be a source, not a container), a periodical (which contains articles), a website (which contains articles, posts, etc.), or a database (which contains periodicals), etc.



In order to properly document a source, it is important to remember that some containers can be held in other containers, like nesting boxes, and that all containers should be identified.



JOTS & TITLES

The 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* also includes a number of smaller changes to the method of documenting sources. Here is a brief summary:

- The title of a *container* is typically followed by a comma in a works cited entry, since the information that comes next describes the container.
- Include the URL or DOI for online resources in the works cited entry (unless your instructor tells you otherwise). Do not include the prefix of *www* or *http://* or set of with angle brackets <>.
- Add *p.* or *pp.* to indicate page numbers in a works cited entry which requires pagination.
- Add *vol.* (volume) and *no.* (issue number) for works cited entries referring to journal articles.

- If a journal is dated using a month or a season, include this information with the year of publication in the works cited entry.
- The date of access is not needed for online resources unless there is no identifiable publication date.
- Do not include the medium of publication for works cited entries.
- Do not include the city of publication for works cited entries.
- Do not include business words/abbreviations (e.g. Company or *Inc.*) for the publisher in a works cited entry.
- Spell out the descriptions of the roles performed by “other contributors” (e.g. *edited by* instead of *ed.*) when they appear in works cited entries.
- When a source has three or more authors, only list the first author in the works cited entry and follow the author’s name with *et al.*
- Reference works that are arranged alphabetically (e.g. an encyclopedia) will be treated like other books. This means that the full span of page numbers for a particular article will now be included in works cited entries.
- Continue to show line breaks in a poetry quotation with a slash mark (/), but also show stanza breaks using two slash marks (//).