A Quick Update on MLA Style Changes for 2009

The Seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2009) contains some significant changes regarding citation of sources, both print and non-print. In-text citations will remain the same, as will the usual paper formatting issues like margins, headings, and line spacing. Even with these changes, citing sources on the Works Cited page will still require care and precision.

Some noteworthy changes:

1. Italicize titles of books, periodicals, films, etc. instead of underlining. Underlining titles is no longer standard practice (but a hard habit to break). A title in an anthology is treated as it traditionally has been, i.e. in quotation marks and the anthology title is given in italics.

2. URL’s are eliminated from citations of online sources unless the URL is necessary for the reader to easily find the source.

3. For periodicals, you need not worry if the pagination is continuous or not—volume and issue numbers are required, regardless of pagination.

4. Each source is either a print source or a web source; these publication markers, as the MLA calls them, come at the end of citations (see examples below). Web markers will be followed by the date of access.

5. Web sources now require a publisher; if none is given, write N.p. For sites that omit date of publication, write n.d. For online journals that appear only online, without a print version, or on databases that do not provide pagination, write n. pag.

Some examples.

**Books.** Book citations remain the same except for the title in italics and the addition of “Print” at the end of the citation.


**Scholarly Publications.** Continuous or separate pagination is no longer relevant in this kind of citation—include both the volume and issue numbers. End with Print.

**Online Periodicals** Online periodicals should include the name of the website in italics and the website publisher. Often, websites have different names that their print counterparts, with suffixes like .com or .org. If no publisher is listed, use N.P. Follow with the date of publication, Web as medium of access, and date of access.


Notice that there are no URL’s for either entry—some web addresses are incredibly long and complex, with letters, numbers, and symbols—often confusing and often inaccurate. The pertinent information contained in a citation should lead the reader easily to any online source.

**Online Database Scholarly Journal Article.** Often complicated with the inclusion of library information, this type citation has been streamlined. Cite the online database as you would a print one by italicizing the title. Do not include library information. Web is the medium of publication and then list date of access.


Note that this citation has page numbers, meaning that this source has a print version as well; for publications that feature online-only format, use n. pag. since there are no page numbers.