

Lesson Plan: Citing Your Sources - The Detective's Guide to Academic Honesty

Student: The Loder

Subject: Research & Writing Skills

Topic: Introduction to Citing Sources in MLA Format

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain at least two reasons why citing sources is essential for credible work.
- Identify the core components needed for a citation (e.g., author, title, date).
- Create a basic Works Cited entry for a book, a website, and a video using the provided MLA templates.
- Write a sentence that includes a correct in-text citation.

Materials Needed

- A computer with internet access
 - A physical non-fiction book of your choice
 - Access to a reliable website (e.g., NASA, National Geographic, a museum site)
 - Access to an educational YouTube video
 - A word processing document (like Google Docs or Microsoft Word) or paper and a pen
 - Handout: "MLA Citation Cheat Sheet" (content provided within the lesson)
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Lesson Plan

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

Hook: The Credibility Case

Imagine you're a detective presenting a case in court. You stand up and say, "The suspect was at the scene of the crime." The judge looks at you and asks, "How do you know?" If you say, "I just have a feeling," your case is thrown out. But if you say, "According to our lead witness, Jane Doe, and confirmed by security footage from the corner store timestamped at 10:32 PM," you've just built a credible case. You backed up your claim with evidence.

Writing a paper is exactly the same. Your ideas are your claims, and your sources are your witnesses and evidence. Citing those sources is how you show the "judge"—your reader—that you've done your research and your work can be trusted. It's your secret weapon for being a convincing and honest writer.

Stating the Objectives

Today, our mission is to become expert evidence-trackers. We're going to learn why citing is crucial, what pieces of information to look for, and exactly how to build a citation for different types of sources, like books, websites, and videos.

2. Body of the Lesson (35-40 minutes)

Part 1: The "Why" - Giving Credit Where It's Due (I do, We do)

I DO (Educator Explains):

So why do we even have to do this? There are three main reasons, and they're all about being a responsible creator:

1. **Avoid Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own. It's like academic theft. Citing is how you give a "shout-out" to the original author and say, "Thanks for this great idea!"
2. **Build Credibility:** Citing your sources shows you've done your homework. It proves you aren't just making things up. It makes your arguments stronger and tells your reader, "You can trust what I'm saying, and here's the proof."
3. **Create a Trail:** Your citation is like a map. It allows your reader to find your original sources to learn more. Good research helps other people do good research.

WE DO (Discussion):

Think about a YouTube video you've watched where the creator mentioned another channel or put a link in the description to a product they used. Why do you think they did that? That's a form of citing! Can you think of any other examples where people give credit to others for their work?

Part 2: The "What" - The Anatomy of a Citation (I do, We do)

I DO (Educator Explains):

Every good citation is made of key ingredients, just like a recipe. The style we'll use today is called **MLA (Modern Language Association)**, which is super common in English and Humanities. The "ingredients" we need to find for most sources are:

- **Who** created it? (The Author)
- **What** is it called? (The Title)
- **Who** published it? (Publisher or Website Name)
- **When** was it published? (The Date)
- **Where** can I find it? (URL for websites, Page numbers for quotes)

WE DO (Guided Practice - The Book Detective):

Grab that physical book you chose. Let's go on a hunt for the ingredients. I'll guide you.

1. **Find the Author:** Where do you see the author's name? (Usually on the cover and title page). Let's write it down, Last Name, First Name.
2. **Find the Title:** That's the easy one! It's on the cover. We write it in italics.
3. **Find the Publisher & Date:** This is a bit trickier. Open the book to the first few pages. Look for the copyright page (it has a © symbol). You should see the name of the publishing company and

the year it was published. Let's find them together.

Great! We have the main ingredients for our book citation. Let's set those aside for a moment.

Part 3: The "How" - Building the Citation (I do, We do, You do)

I DO (Educator Models):

Now we put our ingredients together using a formula, or a template. Here is our "MLA Citation Cheat Sheet."

MLA Citation Cheat Sheet (Simplified 9th Edition)

Book:

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

Website:

Author's Last Name, First Name (if available). "Title of Article or Page." *Name of Website*, Date of Publication, URL.

YouTube Video:

"Title of Video." *YouTube*, uploaded by Channel Name, Date of Upload, URL.

Using the information we found from your book, I would build it like this:

Example: Bryson, Bill. *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. Broadway Books, 2003.

I also need to point to this source inside my paper. That's an **in-text citation**. It's super simple: just the author's last name and the page number in parentheses before the period.

Example: The universe began in an event of "unimaginable violence" (Bryson 14).

WE DO (Guided Practice - The Website):

Now, let's do one together. Find an article on the NASA website about Mars. We will fill in the website template together:

1. **Author:** Can we find one? Sometimes there isn't one, and that's okay! We just skip it.
2. **"Title of Article":** What's the headline of the page? (Goes in quotes).
3. **Name of Website:** This would be *NASA*. (Goes in italics).
4. **Date of Publication:** Look near the top or bottom for a date.
5. **URL:** Copy and paste the link from the address bar.

Let's plug it all into our template. We just created a perfect website citation!

YOU DO (Independent Practice - Your Turn!):

Your final mission, should you choose to accept it:

1. Find an educational YouTube video you find interesting (Crash Course, Mark Rober,

SmarterEveryDay, etc.).

2. On your document or paper, use the "YouTube Video" template from our cheat sheet to create a full Works Cited entry for it. Find the title, the channel name, the upload date, and the URL.
3. Below your citation, write ONE sentence summarizing the main point of the video. At the end of that sentence, add a correct in-text citation. Since videos don't have page numbers, the in-text citation is just the title (or a shortened version of it) in parentheses. *Example: ("The Scientific Method").*

Success Criteria:

- Your citation follows the provided template structure.
- Punctuation (periods, commas) and formatting (italics, quotes) are correct.
- You have written a complete sentence with an in-text citation at the end.

3. Conclusion (5 minutes)

Recap and Reflection

Let's review what we accomplished. In your own words...

- What's the most important reason we need to cite our sources?
- What are the core "ingredients" you look for when you need to cite something?
- What's the difference between the full citation at the end of a paper and the short one inside a sentence?

Reinforce Takeaways

Great job today! Citing isn't just a boring rule you have to follow. It's a skill that makes you a more powerful and trustworthy writer. You now know how to give credit, prove your points, and help others learn. This is a skill you'll use through high school, college, and in many professional jobs.

Assessment

Formative (Checks for Understanding):

- Your verbal answers during our "We Do" discussions.
- Our collaborative creation of the website citation.

Summative (Demonstration of Learning):

- Your completed YouTube video citation and the accompanying sentence with its in-text citation will show me that you have met today's objectives.

Differentiation and Extension

- **Scaffolding:** If finding the information is tricky, we can use an online tool like Purdue OWL's Citation Machine together. We can input the information and then analyze the result to see how the machine used the template.
- **Extension:** Ready for a challenge? Try to find an online newspaper article and cite it. It uses the same website format but might have more complex information. Or, write a full paragraph summarizing your video, using at least two different pieces of information, each with its own in-

text citation.