

## How to cite **websites** in MLA and APA style

**MLA Style** This entry follows the current MLA guide: *The MLA Handbook* (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.) of 2016.

For the Modern Languages Association, all information can be thought of in the same way, and we cite it all according to a set of basic principles involving the **who** (author), the **what** (title), the **where** (container), the **when** (date of publication) and the **how** (publication details, physical or online). Nevertheless, students often struggle with citing material from websites. In a sense of course, all online material is “from a website,” but in many cases we recognise parallels with the print world – it may be an article in an online journal for example, or a movie on an online database. What raises most problems are what we might call organisational websites, like a Canadian government website, or that of a business organisation, or, indeed, the Writing Centre’s homepage, which I will use for this example.

### Entries on your “Works Cited” page

1. **Author.** Last name, first name. Who is responsible for this material? Look at the top and scroll down to the bottom of the page. **No author?** Would it be appropriate to use the organization as author, that is, to represent the material you are citing as the *views* of that organization? For example, *according to the United Nations* “blah blah....” For this kind of informational material, I think not, so instead we will choose to start with the **title** and, if it is long, use a **brief version in your in-text citation**.
2. **Title** of the document you are using on the website, or, if it isn’t that kind of thing, the title of the page within that overall website. As for an essay or article, things “inside” a container (the overall website), use “quotation marks.” E.g. **“Overview”**, which in this case, let’s say, is the page on the Writing Centre website we are quoting from/referring to.
3. **Title of the container.** In this case I think **Writing Centre** is useful, as the title of the section where we found “Overview” (as for all “outside” titles or *containers*, use *italics*).
4. **Container 2 details**, if applicable, and useful, for example the database (Such as JSTOR) containing a journal which contains an article). In this case, the **Overall title of the website** that the page containing the item you are citing appears inside. i.e. **Vancouver Island University**
7. **Publisher**, or *sponsor* of the site. That is, what is the organisation behind the website? Check for a copyright statement (often at the bottom of the page) I think we would be right to say this is **Vancouver Island University**. But MLA say we do not need to repeat the name of the sponsor if it is the same as the website.
8. **Publication date**, (year: give season/month also if appropriate/available) in this case there only date is attached to the copyright statement which tells us little about when this material was produced, so we will say, no date (“N.D.”). Note: Only give the date you accessed the material if you think your source is likely to change.
9. **Location.** Give URL (Uniform Resource Locator, or web address) for web sources (without http:// or https://) Use a doi (Digital Object Identifier) number instead if available. In this case there is no doi, so we can use the URL: Note: we no longer need to give format [web] or [print].

Put it all together to get your **works cited entry**:

“Overview.” *Writing Centre, Vancouver Island University*, n.d., [services.viu.ca/writing-centre](http://services.viu.ca/writing-centre).

**NOTE: use a period after author and title. Separate everything else with commas. Finish with a period.**

### In text Citation

For MLA the link from the cited material to the **Works Cited** page is usually made with the author's **surname** plus the **page**. If there is no author you must use whatever you put in its place **FIRST** in your works cited entry (usually the title - abbreviated), because that is how we make the link between the two. So in this case we have no author and chose to list the item under the title, "**Overview.**" It is not paginated, so we simply omit the page number, E.g. ("**Overview**").

### APA Style

This entry follows the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth edition

There is no specific format for websites, so to some extent we are working by analogy with other types of source. You should follow the same **who, when, what, and where** elements that you would for anything else. **So author, publication date, title of web document/page (plus title of overall website if different), format description** (in square brackets, but only if it is an atypical type of item such as a blog post) and a retrieval statement: "**Retrieved from**" plus **the URL** as below:

**Author, A. (date). Title of document [Format description]. Title of larger container: i.e website, Retrieved from <https://URL> [Note – you can leave the hyperlink live]**

So for our "overview" page on the Writing Centre website, there is no actual personal "who," but we *could* represent this material as the views of The Writing Centre as a "corporate" author. However, for this kind of informational material I think we might opt NOT to do that, and instead treat it as if there was NO author, so we will slip "what" into its place: i.e the title will come first: **Overview.**

There is no publication date for this specific material, only a copyright date for the website as a whole, which APA do not consider useful, so we will insert "n.d." for no date, in brackets, thus: **(n.d.).**

Then comes the container for this document: I think it is useful here to give BOTH the title of the web page it is found on, and the title of the overall website, like this: **Writing Centre, Vancouver Island University.** Note: on a smaller, less complex website there might only be the document title and the website title.

Then we end with the retrieval statement: **Retrieved from <https://services.viu.ca/writing-centre>**

Put it all together and you have the following entry for your **References** page:

**Overview. (n.d.). Writing Centre, Vancouver Island University. Retrieved from <https://services.viu.ca/writing-centre>**

### In-text citation

This is always the **first thing** that you have chosen to list the item under on your References page, plus the date. In this case, we listed under the title, and there is no date, as below:

**("overview", n.d.)** Note: unlike in the References list, APA **add quotation marks to article-type titles when used in text**, to distinguish them from ordinary writing.