

# biblatex-mla 0.4

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## Abstract

The biblatex-mla files provide support for MLA citations and Works Cited lists to biblatex, bibtex, and latex. The style is currently limited to in-text parenthetical citations (as recommended by the MLA), but future support for MLA-style footnotes is planned as a package option. The MLA style is outlined in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, now in its sixth edition. Biblatex-mla also follows the logic of the MLA when citing similar material repeatedly, borrowing the function (but not the form) of *ibid* and *idem*: [http://www.mla.org/style/style\\_faq/when\\_i\\_borrow\\_repeat](http://www.mla.org/style/style_faq/when_i_borrow_repeat). (See Section 3.1.3 below for examples.) Biblatex-mla is compatible with Biblatex's support for hyperref and tex2ht, and the main word in each citation (the author's name when it's unambiguous, the title when that author has multiple works, nothing when citing just a page number) serves as a link to the particular entry in the Works Cited.

## I Installation

1. Locate your biblatex installation folder
  - In OS X, biblatex can be found at  
`~/Library/texmf/tex/latex/biblatex/`
2. Place “mla.cbx” into the “cbx” folder there
3. Place “mla.bbx” into the “bbx” folder there

## 2 Usage

### 2.1 Preamble

Call the MLA style in your Latex document using the following two lines in your Latex preface, replacing “<bibfile>” with the name of your .bib bibliography file:

```
\usepackage[style=mla]{biblatex}
\bibliography{<bibfile>}
```

## 2.2 Standard Citations

For backward compatibility with any pre-existing documents, biblatex-mla doesn't distinguish between `\cite` and `\autocite`:

```
Here's a citation \autocite[34]{askme06aa}.
Here's a citation \cite[34]{askme06aa}.
Here's a citation (Askme 34).
```

## 2.3 Citations with Prenotes

If citing a quotation attributed to someone other than the author of the piece you are citing, use an optional “prenote”:

```
Here's a citation \autocite[Shakespeare qtd. in][34]{askme06aa}.
Here's a citation (Shakespeare qtd. in Askme 34).
```

## 2.4 Compressed Citations

To compress citations when using the author's name in the sentence, use the starred variant of the `\cite` or `\autocite` command. The asterisk (\*) forces the citation to skip the author's name in any circumstance:

```
Askme deserves citing \autocite*[34]{askme06aa}.
Askme deserves citing (34).
```

## 2.5 Calling the Works Cited

Before the end of your document, include the following line where you want your bibliography to appear:

```
\printbibliography
```

# 3 Examples

## 3.1 Citations

### 3.1.1 Multi-Authored Works

Here's a reference to a multi-authored book (Public and Moi 34).

### 3.1.2 Multiple Works by One Author

Citations to books written by authors with multiple Works Cited entries include a shortened title in the citation to distinguish among that author's many citations, as seen in this citation of a book (Public, *Default* 34). Citations of articles written by prolific authors, on the other hand, present titles surrounded by quotation marks, as seen in this citation of an online article (Webb, "Online").

### 3.1.3 Successive Citations

MLA citations are meant to be as unintrusive as possible, with citations including only relevant information; thus, the biblatex-mla style suppresses needless information from successive citations. When citing work by one author (Public, *Default* 34), immediately citing another work by the same author will just present the relevant changed information—in this case, the new shortened title and page number (*Elaborate* 34). Immediately successive citations to the same work will even omit this shortened title, as it should be assumed that the same work is being discussed (34). Citing any other author in the meantime resets this behavior. Similarly, the `\citereset` command is useful to clear any citation caches in cases of ambiguity.

These “ibid-” and “idem-” type behaviors work with all variants of the citation commands, whether starred or not, containing a prenote or not, containing a page number or not, and whether using `\cite` or `\autocite`:

```
Here's a citation \autocite[34]{askme06aa}. Here's
another \cite[34]{askme06aa}.
```

Here's a citation (Askme 34). Here's another (34).

```
Here's a citation with no page number \autocite{askme06aa}.
Here's another \cite{askme06aa}.
```

Here's a citation with no page number (Askme). Here's another (Askme).

```
Here's a citation \autocite[34]{public07aa}. Here's
another \autocite[34]{public07aa}. Here's yet another
\autocite
[34]{public08aa}.
```

Here's a citation (Public, *Default* 34). Here's another (34). Here's yet another (*Elaborate* 34).

```
Here's a citation with no page number \autocite{public07aa}.
Here's another \cite{public07aa}.
```

Here's a citation with no page number (Public, *Default*). Here's another (*Default*).

Askme deserves citing \autocite\*[34]{askme06aa}. Askme deserves citing again \autocite\*[34]{askme06aa}.

Askme deserves citing (34). Askme deserves citing again (34).

Public deserves citing \autocite\*[34]{public07aa}. Public deserves citing again \autocite\*[34]{public07aa}. Public deserves citing yet again \autocite\*[34]{public08aa}.

Public deserves citing (*Default* 34). Public deserves citing again (34). Public deserves citing yet again (*Elaborate* 34).

### 3.1.4 Successive Citations with Prenotes

Prenotes follow a slightly different logic. If a prenote is introduced but the citational text remains the same (*ibid*), everything functions as above.

Here's a citation (Askme 34). Here's a quoted citation (Shakespeare qtd. in 34).

However, the simultaneous occurrence of a prenote with *ibid* resets the idem function to avoid obscuring a work's author, making it obvious a quoted author (Plato, below) is not responsible for the second text (here, *Elaborate*):

Here's a quoted citation (Plato qtd. in Public, *Default* 34). Here's a quoted citation (Plato qtd. in 34). Here's another citation (Public, *Elaborate* 34). Here's yet another (Pythagoras qtd. in 34). And another (Pythagoras qtd. in Public, *Default* 34).

As expected, the starred variant still overrides the author's name:

Here's a quoted citation (Plato qtd. in Public, *Default* 34). Here's a quoted citation (Plato qtd. in 34). Here's another citation from our friend Public (*Elaborate* 34).

At the same time, *ibid* continues to work as expected, and after an *ibid* with no prenote, *idem* continues to work as usual:

Here's a quoted citation (Plato qtd. in Public, *Default* 34). Here's a quoted citation (Plato qtd. in 34). Here's another (*ibid*) citation (34). Here's another (*idem*) citation (*Elaborate* 34).

## 3.2 Works Cited entries

All of the example citations in this document are printed at the end in a Works Cited section; they are also shown below out of the context of that Works Cited list as an example of how the different formats will be displayed.

### 3.2.1 Books

The style file handles editors, editions, translators, volumes, series, original years, and multiple authors.

Public, John Q. *Absolutely Elaborate Book Template*. 2007. Ed. Ima G. Reader. Trans. Minnie Tongues. 9th ed. Elaborate Book Template Series 4. Hello, HI: Publishers Unlimited, 2008.

—. *Default Book Template*. Anywhere, NB: Publishers, Ltd., 2007.

Public, John Q. and Mimi Moi. *Multi-Authored, More Elaborate Book Template*. Ed. Ima G. Reader. Trans. Minnie Tongues. 9th ed. Elaborate Book Template Series 4. Hello, HI: Publishers Unlimited, 2008.

### 3.2.2 Journal Articles

The style file handles all volume and issue numbers, dates, pages, and URLs.

Askme, Donna. “Elaborate Article.” Trans. Minnie Tongues. *Journal of Translated Articles* 29 (Sept. 2006): 12–19.

Doe, Jane. “Default Article Template.” *General Studies* 4.4 (2005): 12–45.

Webb, I. C. “Online Article Template with Access Date.” *Online Studies* 9.1 (1983): 22 Nov. 2007. <www.example.com/webb1983>.

### 3.2.3 Items from a Collection (Crossrefs)

MLA suggests using cross-references in the Works Cited when citing two or more sources from a collection; in doing so, the bibliography information isn’t repeated. In-text citations will all look the same, but the Works Cited section will do some behind-the-scenes magic. The following example is how the Works Cited would look when citing three “incollection” works relying on crossrefs to their respective collections. The “collection” information for each (*My Favorite Things*, the editor, and the publication information; the entire entry for Ima G. Reader) is added automatically into the Works Cited page, as are the crossrefs:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The code for this example calls for the entry for Ima G. Reader, because the `\fullcite` command, used only to give examples like this, isn’t smart enough to add that entry. In real usage, with `\cite` and `\autocite` commands, the final Works Cited list, called with `\printbibliography`, handles everything automatically.

Example, Anna Other. "Incollection Template." *My Favorite Things*. Ed. John Q. Public. Vol. 1. Utopia, NB: Publishers, Ltd., 1999. 105–195.  
 Haggis, Mary. "Another Article (Incollection) Cross-Reffing a Book." Reader 6–10. Reader, Ima G., ed. *Book of Collected Things by Many People for Crossrefs*. Utopia, NB: Publishers, Ltd., 1999.  
 Sampul, F. I. N. Al. "An Article Crossref-ing a Collection." Reader 1–5.

### 3.2.4 Newspaper Articles

When a bibliographic entry for an article omits a volume and issue number, the style file assumes it is from a newspaper.

Slinger, Mudd. "Newspaper Article." *The Daily Newspaper* 13 Oct. 2002: B1+.

### 3.2.5 Theses and Dissertations

The "phdthesis" driver outputs "Diss." as the dissertation type, while the "thesis" driver accepts an argument in the "type" field.

Webb, I. C. "The Masters Thesis Template." Nota bene. MSc Thesis. Correspondence Course State University, 1984.  
 —. "A PhD Dissertation template." Diss. Correspondence Course State University, 1981.

## 4 Feedback

If you have any questions, requests, or other feedback please email me. My email address is my last name at gmail.com. My last name is at the top of this document. (You can also click my name in the PDF.)

Additionally, feel free to modify any code in these style files. I would ask you to share your code with the rest of us, however, if you end up improving it to be more accurate to the MLA standard! On that same note, I'm very happy to incorporate improvements anyone suggests. If anything works differently than you feel it ought to work, please let me know; I'm limited only by the problems of which I'm unaware.

## Works Cited

Askme, Donna. "Elaborate Article." Trans. Minnie Tongues. *Journal of Translated Articles* 29 (Sept. 2006): 12–19.  
 Doe, Jane. "Default Article Template." *General Studies* 4.4 (2005): 12–45.

- Example, Anna Other. "Incollection Template." *My Favorite Things*. Ed. John Q. Public. Vol. 1. Utopia, NB: Publishers, Ltd., 1999. 105–195.
- Haggis, Mary. "Another Article (Incollection) Cross-Reffing a Book." Reader 6–10. Public, John Q. *Absolutely Elaborate Book Template*. 2007. Ed. Ima G. Reader. Trans. Minnie Tongues. 9th ed. Elaborate Book Template Series 4. Hello, HI: Publishers Unlimited, 2008.
- . *Default Book Template*. Anywhere, NB: Publishers, Ltd., 2007.
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- Slinger, Mudd. "Newspaper Article." *The Daily Newspaper* 13 Oct. 2002: B1+.
- Webb, I. C. "The Masters Thesis Template." Nota bene. MSc Thesis. Correspondence Course State University, 1984.
- . "Online Article Template with Access Date." *Online Studies* 9.1 (1983): 22 Nov. 2007. <www.example.com/webb1983>.
- . "A PhD Dissertation template." Diss. Correspondence Course State University, 1981.