

# mla citing an interview

## MLA Citing an Interview: A Complete Guide to Proper Attribution

**mla citing an interview** might seem tricky at first, especially if you're new to academic writing or unfamiliar with the Modern Language Association (MLA) citation style. But once you grasp the basics, it becomes a straightforward process that adds credibility and clarity to your work. Whether you're referencing a personal conversation, a published interview, or an audio recording, understanding how to properly format and attribute these sources is essential. In this article, we'll explore the ins and outs of MLA citing an interview, share tips on accurately documenting interviews, and explain why proper citation matters in academic and professional writing.

## Understanding MLA Citing an Interview

When you conduct or reference an interview in your paper, it's important to acknowledge the source to avoid plagiarism and respect intellectual property. Interviews can be considered primary sources, providing firsthand information that supports your arguments or research. The MLA format guides you through presenting this information clearly, whether the interview is personal, published, or accessed online or in print.

## What Counts as an Interview in MLA?

An interview, in MLA terms, includes any direct conversation or dialogue where information is gathered from someone else. This could be:

- A personal interview you conducted yourself
- An interview published in a magazine, newspaper, or book
- A broadcast interview on radio, television, or podcasts
- Online interviews available as transcripts or videos

Each type requires slightly different citation details, but the core principle remains the same: credit the interviewee, provide context, and cite where the interview can be found or when it occurred.

## How to Cite an Interview in MLA Format

MLA provides clear guidelines to follow depending on the nature of your interview source. Here's a breakdown of the most common scenarios:

## Citing a Personal Interview

When you conduct an interview yourself and it has not been published, you treat it as a personal communication. MLA style recommends citing it in the text only, not in the Works Cited list, unless your instructor requests otherwise.

Example of an in-text citation for a personal interview:

> (John Smith)

Or, if you mention the person in the sentence:

> According to John Smith, the process is more complicated than it seems.

If you want to specify the type and date of the interview, you can add details in a signal phrase:

> In an interview conducted on March 15, 2024, John Smith explained that...

## Citing a Published Interview

If the interview appears in a magazine, newspaper, book, or on a website, you need to include full source information in your Works Cited entry. The general format looks like this:

> Last Name, First Name of the interviewee. "Title of the Interview" (if available). Interview by First Name Last Name of the interviewer. Title of the Container (e.g., magazine, website), Publisher, Date, URL or page numbers.

For example:

> Obama, Barack. "A Conversation on Leadership." Interview by Jane Doe. \*Time Magazine\*, 12 May 2021, [www.time.com/leadership-interview](http://www.time.com/leadership-interview).

If the interview doesn't have a title, simply start with the name of the interviewee.

## Citing a Broadcast or Podcast Interview

Broadcast interviews require citation of the show name, episode title or number, the network or platform, and the date aired. For example:

> Last Name, First Name of Interviewee. Interview by First Name Last Name of Interviewer. \*Title of Show\*, season number, episode number, Network, Date of Broadcast.

Example:

> Carter, Jimmy. Interview by Sarah Lee. \*The History Hour\*, season 3, episode 7, NPR, 10 July 2020.

# Tips for MLA Citing an Interview Accurately

Understanding the nuances of MLA citing an interview can save you from common pitfalls. Here are some valuable tips to keep in mind:

## 1. Identify the Roles Clearly

Make sure to distinguish between the interviewer and interviewee. The person providing the information is the interviewee and usually the main focus of the citation, but including the interviewer's name adds clarity.

## 2. Use Italics for Containers

In MLA style, the "container" (the larger work that houses the interview, like a magazine, website, or TV show) should be italicized. This helps differentiate the interview itself from its source.

## 3. Include Access Dates for Online Interviews

If you're citing an online interview, it's good practice to include the date you accessed the material. This is especially important because online content can change or be removed.

Example:

> Accessed 20 April 2024.

## 4. Be Consistent with Formatting

MLA style is known for its simplicity and consistency. Pay attention to punctuation, capitalization, and order of information. Err on the side of clarity if you're unsure.

## Why Proper MLA Citation of Interviews Matters

You might wonder why such detailed citation matters when it comes to interviews. The answer lies in academic integrity, transparency, and respect for intellectual labor.

- **Credibility:** Proper citation strengthens your arguments by providing verifiable sources.
- **Ethics:** Giving credit to interviewees honors their contributions and ideas.

- **Traceability:** Readers or instructors can follow up on your sources for further reading or fact-checking.
- **Professionalism:** Adhering to MLA guidelines reflects well on your writing and research skills.

## Common Mistakes to Avoid When Citing Interviews

Even seasoned writers occasionally stumble when citing interviews. Here are a few pitfalls to watch out for:

### Not Citing Personal Interviews in the Works Cited

Remember, personal interviews usually don't appear in the Works Cited list unless specifically required. Including them incorrectly can confuse readers.

### Mixing Up Interviewer and Interviewee Names

It's essential to correctly identify who you are quoting and who conducted the interview. Mislabeling can undermine your credibility.

### Omitting Key Details

Dates, publication titles, and URLs are all important. Leaving these out can make your citation incomplete and less useful.

## Additional Resources for MLA Citing an Interview

If you want to dive deeper or need examples for less common interview sources, the official MLA Handbook is an excellent reference. The MLA Style Center website also offers up-to-date guidelines and sample citations that can help clear up any confusion. Online citation tools can be handy, but always double-check their output against trusted sources to ensure accuracy.

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Mastering MLA citing an interview is a valuable skill that enhances your writing and research quality. By carefully documenting interviews, you honor your sources and provide your readers with a transparent, trustworthy narrative. Whether you're quoting a personal conversation or a famous figure's broadcast interview, following MLA rules will help your work stand out for its

professionalism and integrity.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do you cite a personal interview in MLA format?

In MLA format, a personal interview is cited in the text only and not included in the Works Cited list. The in-text citation includes the name of the person interviewed, e.g., (John Smith).

### What is the correct MLA format for citing an interview I conducted?

When citing an interview you conducted, include the name of the person interviewed, the description 'Personal interview,' and the date of the interview. For example: Smith, John. Personal interview. 15 March 2024.

### Do I need to include an interview citation in the Works Cited list in MLA?

If the interview is unpublished and conducted by you, it should be cited only in the text and not included in the Works Cited list. However, if the interview is published or broadcast, it should be cited in the Works Cited with appropriate details.

### How do I cite a published interview from a magazine in MLA style?

For a published interview, include the interviewee's name, the title of the interview (if any), the interviewer's name, the title of the magazine, volume and issue number, date, and page numbers. For example: Smith, John. Interview by Jane Doe. Magazine Title, vol. 12, no. 3, 2024, pp. 45-47.

### Can I use 'Interview by author' in MLA citation?

Yes, in MLA format, if you conducted the interview yourself, you can indicate this by writing 'Personal interview' or 'Interview by author' in the citation to clarify the source.

## Additional Resources

**\*\*Mastering MLA Citing an Interview: A Professional Guide for Writers and Researchers\*\***

**mla citing an interview** remains one of the more nuanced aspects of academic writing and professional research documentation. Unlike traditional sources such as books or journal articles, interviews present unique challenges in citation due to their personalized and often unpublished nature. Navigating these challenges with precision is crucial for maintaining credibility, avoiding plagiarism, and ensuring that readers can trace the origins of vital information. This article offers an in-depth exploration of MLA citing an interview, providing clarity on formatting, variations

depending on interview types, and practical tips for researchers and writers.

## Understanding MLA Citing an Interview: The Basics

MLA (Modern Language Association) style regularly updates its guidelines to accommodate evolving source formats. Interviews, whether conducted personally or found in published media, require specific citation approaches that differ from standard print or digital references. The core objective remains the same: to give proper credit to the interviewee and contextualize the source for readers.

In MLA format, citing an interview depends largely on how the interview was accessed. Personal interviews, unpublished and directly conducted by the author, are treated differently from published interviews found in magazines, podcasts, or websites. This distinction affects both the in-text citation and the Works Cited entry.

### Citing Personal Interviews in MLA

When citing a personal interview—one that the writer conducted themselves or an interview shared privately—the MLA Handbook suggests including the interviewee's name, the phrase "Personal interview," and the date of the interview. This citation typically appears only in the Works Cited list and not in the text itself, as the interview is a firsthand source.

Example of a Works Cited entry for a personal interview:

- Smith, John. Personal interview. 12 March 2023.

In-text citation for personal interviews is generally unnecessary because the source is not retrievable by others. However, if required, a simple parenthetical citation with the interviewee's last name suffices.

### Citing Published Interviews in MLA

Published interviews, whether in print or digital form, require a more detailed citation. MLA format demands that writers treat the interview similarly to other published works, including the interviewer's name (if applicable), the interviewee's name, the title of the interview (if any), the container (such as the magazine, website, or podcast), the publisher, the publication date, and the URL or DOI if accessed online.

For example, a magazine interview citation might look like this:

- Johnson, Mary. Interview by Alex Green. *Time Magazine*, 15 April 2022, pp. 45-47.

For online interviews:

- Doe, Jane. Interview by Michael Lee. *Vulture*, 10 June 2023, [www.vulture.com/interview-jane-doe](http://www.vulture.com/interview-jane-doe).

This detailed structure ensures that readers can locate the exact interview and verify the cited information.

## Comparing MLA Interview Citations with Other Styles

In professional and academic writing, understanding the distinctions between MLA and other citation styles like APA or Chicago is essential for context and discipline-appropriate formatting.

- **APA Style:** Typically requires the interviewer's name, date, and specifies whether the interview is personal or published. Personal interviews are cited only in-text, not in the reference list.
- **Chicago Style:** Offers two systems—notes and bibliography or author-date—with detailed guidelines for interviews that include access dates and locations if unpublished.

Compared to these, MLA's approach is straightforward but demands attention to the interview's format and accessibility.

## Challenges and Best Practices in MLA Interview Citation

One common challenge when MLA citing an interview is managing interviews without formal titles or those conducted informally, such as email or phone interviews. Best practices include:

- Clearly identifying the type of interview in the citation.
- Providing as much information as possible to help readers locate the source.
- Using consistent formatting throughout the document.
- Consulting the latest MLA Handbook or official MLA Style Center for updates.

Additionally, when quoting or paraphrasing from an interview, maintaining accurate attribution in the text is crucial for transparency and intellectual honesty.

# Integrating MLA Citing an Interview into Academic and Professional Writing

MLA citation of interviews plays a pivotal role in disciplines such as journalism, literature, sociology, and anthropology, where primary data collection through interviews is common. Proper citation not only credits the interviewee but also strengthens the research's foundation by anchoring it to verifiable sources.

In academic papers, interviews often serve as primary sources, offering firsthand insights that enrich analysis. When MLA citing an interview, writers should balance brevity and completeness, ensuring citations are informative but not cumbersome.

For journalists and content creators, accurate MLA interview citation enhances the article's professionalism and trustworthiness, especially when interviews form the cornerstone of an investigative piece.

## Tips for Effective MLA Interview Citations

- **Record essential details:** Interviewee's full name, interview date, interviewer's name, and medium of the interview.
- **Note the interview format:** Differentiate between in-person, phone, email, podcast, or published formats.
- **Use clear labeling:** Terms like "Personal interview," "Interview by," or "Podcast episode" help clarify the source type.
- **Keep citations consistent:** Follow MLA's latest guidelines and apply the same formatting rules throughout your document.
- **Consult authoritative sources:** The MLA Handbook (9th edition) and the MLA Style Center online provide the most current and comprehensive advice.

## The Impact of Proper MLA Interview Citation on Research Integrity

Citing interviews correctly in MLA format is more than a stylistic requirement; it's a marker of research integrity and academic rigor. Missteps in citation can lead to accusations of plagiarism, undermine the credibility of the work, and diminish the value of the interviewee's contributions.

Moreover, as digital media grows, interviews increasingly appear in multimedia formats such as podcasts and video streams. MLA's flexible citation system accommodates these formats, but writers

must be vigilant in adapting traditional citation elements to new media contexts.

In practice, thorough MLA citing of interviews ensures that research remains transparent and traceable. It also respects the intellectual property and personal input of interview subjects, which is especially important in sensitive or controversial topics.

By mastering MLA citing an interview, writers and researchers not only adhere to academic standards but also enhance the clarity and reliability of their work, fostering trust among readers, peers, and professionals alike.

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