

# Citing A Dictionary Entry Mla

## Citing a Dictionary Entry MLA: A Comprehensive Guide

Proper citation is crucial for academic integrity. While citing books and articles is relatively straightforward, citing sources like dictionary entries can be confusing. This article provides a clear and comprehensive guide on how to correctly cite dictionary entries using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, ensuring that your research is both accurate and ethically sound. We will cover the basic format, address variations depending on the dictionary type, and offer helpful examples to clarify the process.

## Understanding the Basics of MLA Dictionary Citation

The core components of an MLA dictionary citation are consistent, regardless of the specific dictionary used. These include:

**Entry Word:** The term you looked up in the dictionary.

**Dictionary Title:** The full title of the dictionary, italicized.

**Edition:** If the dictionary has multiple editions, specify the edition number (e.g., 3rd ed.).

**Publisher:** The name of the publishing company.

**Publication Year:** The year the dictionary was published or the edition you consulted was published.

**Medium:** Usually "Print" or "Online." For online dictionaries, you'll need to provide a URL and access date.

## Citing Print Dictionaries in MLA Style

The basic format for citing a print dictionary entry in MLA is:

"Entry Word." *Dictionary Title*. Edition, Publisher, Publication Year, Page number(s). Medium.

Example 1:

"Ephemeral." *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 456. Print.

Example 2 (Multiple Authors):

"Syzygy." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., edited by John Simpson and Edward Weiner, Oxford UP, 1989, p. 1234. Print.

Note how the entry word is in quotation marks, the dictionary title is italicized, and the page number is specified. The "Medium" indicates the format of the source. Always double-check your spelling and punctuation for accuracy.

## Citing Online Dictionaries in MLA Style

Citing online dictionaries requires additional information to ensure that your reader can easily locate the source. The format is essentially the same, but adds a URL and access date:

"Entry Word." *Dictionary Title*. Edition, Publisher, Publication Year, URL, Access Date. Medium.

Example 1 (No edition number):

"Quixotic." Oxford Languages. Oxford University Press, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/quixotic](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/quixotic), Accessed 22 Oct. 2023. Web.

Example 2 (With an edition number):

"Ubiquitous." Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary. 12th ed., Merriam-Webster, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ubiquitous](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ubiquitous), Accessed 22 Oct. 2023. Web.

Remember to replace the example URL and access date with the actual ones for your entry. The access date is essential as online content can change over time.

## Handling Variations and Specific Cases

Certain situations may require slight adjustments to the basic format. For instance:

**No Publisher:** If you cannot find the publisher, omit this element.

**No Edition:** If the edition number is not available, omit it. However, it's always best to strive for completeness.

**Multiple Entries:** If you're citing information from multiple dictionary entries, cite each entry individually in separate entries in your Works Cited page.

**Specialized Dictionaries:** The citation format remains largely the same, but ensure you include the full and accurate title of the specialized dictionary (e.g., *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, *A Dictionary of Music*).

## Conclusion

Accurately citing dictionary entries is a fundamental aspect of academic writing. By following the MLA guidelines outlined above, you can ensure the credibility and integrity of your work. Consistent application of these principles will contribute to the overall quality and professionalism of your academic papers.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Do I need to cite every dictionary entry I use? Yes, any information taken directly from a source, including a dictionary, needs proper citation.
2. What if I only paraphrase the definition? Even paraphrases require citation. While you're not directly quoting, the idea still originates from the dictionary.
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