

mla citing an interview

MLA citing an interview is a crucial skill for students and researchers alike, particularly in the humanities. The Modern Language Association (MLA) citation style is widely used in academic writing, especially in fields like literature, philosophy, and the arts. Citing interviews correctly not only lends credibility to your work but also respects the intellectual property of those whose insights you incorporate into your research. This article will delve into the MLA format for citing interviews, including how to cite both published and unpublished interviews, the nuances of in-text citations, and common pitfalls to avoid.

Understanding MLA Format for Interviews

When it comes to citing interviews in MLA format, there are specific guidelines that must be followed. The basic structure varies depending on whether the interview is published or unpublished. Below, we will break down the components of each type and provide examples to clarify the format.

Published Interviews

Published interviews are those that have appeared in print or digital formats, such as books, magazines, or online articles. When citing a published interview, you should include the following elements:

1. Interviewee's Last Name, First Name - The person being interviewed.
2. "Title of Interview" - This can be the title of the article or the subject of the interview, placed in quotation marks.
3. Interviewer's First Name Last Name - The person conducting the interview.
4. Title of the Source - The name of the publication (book, magazine, website) in italics.
5. Publisher - The entity responsible for publishing the source.
6. Publication Date - The date of publication.
7. Page Numbers (if applicable) - If the interview appears in a print source, include page numbers.
8. Medium of Publication - Indicate whether it's print, web, etc.

Example of a Published Interview Citation:

Smith, John. "The Art of Storytelling." Interview by Jane Doe. *Literary Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2022, pp. 45-50. Print.

Unpublished Interviews

Unpublished interviews are those that have not been formally published in any medium. They may be interviews you conduct yourself or those that exist in personal collections, archives, or private databases. The citation for an unpublished interview should include:

1. Interviewee's Last Name, First Name - The name of the person interviewed.
2. "Title of Interview" - If applicable; otherwise, use a brief description.
3. Interviewed by - The name of the interviewer.
4. Date of the Interview - The full date when the interview took place.
5. Type of Interview - Such as "Personal interview" or "Telephone interview."

Example of an Unpublished Interview Citation:

Doe, Jane. "Personal Insights on Modern Art." Interview by John Smith. 15 Apr. 2023. Personal interview.

In-Text Citations for Interviews

In-text citations in MLA format provide a way to credit sources within the body of your text. For interviews, the format typically includes the interviewee's last name in parentheses.

Example of In-Text Citation:

According to Smith, "storytelling is an essential part of our culture" (Smith).

If you have mentioned the interviewee's name in your text, you can just include the page number or the type of interview in the parentheses.

Example:

Smith discussed the importance of storytelling in various cultures (personal interview).

Common Pitfalls in Citing Interviews

While citing interviews may seem straightforward, there are several common mistakes that can detract from the quality of your work. Here are some pitfalls to avoid:

1. Neglecting to Cite - Always remember to cite your sources, even if the information seems common knowledge.
2. Incorrect Formatting - Adhere strictly to MLA formatting guidelines; minor

errors can affect the professionalism of your work.

3. Confusing Interviewee and Interviewer - Ensure that you are clear about who is being cited and who conducted the interview.

4. Omitting Important Details - Always include all necessary components of the citation to provide full context.

5. Using Inconsistent Styles - Maintain consistency in your citation style throughout your work, avoiding a mix of different citation formats.

Best Practices for Citing Interviews

To ensure your citations are accurate and effective, consider the following best practices:

1. Keep Detailed Notes - When conducting interviews, take thorough notes or record the conversation (with permission) to ensure accuracy.

2. Double-Check MLA Guidelines - Always refer to the latest MLA Handbook or trusted online resources for the most current citation rules.

3. Use Citation Tools - Tools like citation generators can help streamline the process, but always review the generated citations for accuracy.

4. Practice Consistency - Ensure that all citations in your work are formatted consistently to maintain a professional appearance.

5. Ask for Help - If unsure about how to cite an interview, don't hesitate to ask a teacher, librarian, or peer for assistance.

Conclusion

Understanding MLA citing an interview is essential for anyone engaged in academic writing, particularly in the humanities. By following the guidelines for both published and unpublished interviews, you can ensure that your citations are accurate, complete, and in accordance with MLA standards. Remember the importance of in-text citations, avoid common pitfalls, and adhere to best practices for a polished final product. With these skills, you will enhance the credibility of your work and respect the contributions of those whose voices enrich your research.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the basic format for citing an interview in MLA style?

The basic format for citing an interview in MLA style includes the interviewee's name, the title of the interview (if applicable), the name of the interviewer, the publication or website (if applicable), and the date of the interview. For example: Last Name, First Name. 'Title of Interview.'

Interview by First Name Last Name. Date.

How do I cite a personal interview in MLA format?

To cite a personal interview in MLA format, you would include the interviewee's name, the type of interview (Personal interview), and the date. For example: Last Name, First Name. Personal interview. Day Month Year.

Is it necessary to include the interviewer's name when citing an interview?

Yes, it is necessary to include the interviewer's name in the citation if the interviewer is relevant to the context or if the interview is published. If it's a personal interview, the focus is primarily on the interviewee.

How do I cite an online video interview in MLA format?

To cite an online video interview in MLA format, include the interviewee's name, the title of the video, the platform (like YouTube), the publisher (if different), and the date of publication. For example: Last Name, First Name. 'Title of Interview.' YouTube, uploaded by Uploader's Name, Day Month Year.

What if the interview was not published or recorded, how do I cite it?

If the interview was not published or recorded, you can still cite it as a personal interview. Include the interviewee's name, the designation 'Personal interview,' and the date of the interview. For example: Last Name, First Name. Personal interview. Day Month Year.

Can I use an email interview as a source in MLA format?

Yes, you can use an email interview as a source in MLA format. Cite it similarly to a personal interview, including the interviewee's name, 'Email interview,' and the date. For example: Last Name, First Name. Email interview. Day Month Year.

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