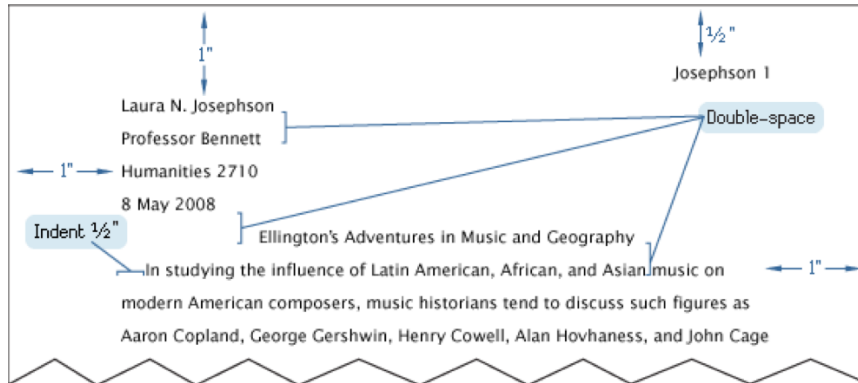


# MLA Style Basics / Reminders



## PAPER HEADING

This image (swiped from the MLA) shows how your first page should look. The header ("Josephson 1") should appear on every page, while the heading ("Laura N. Josephson," etc.) should appear only on page 1. Learn to use the "header field" in your word processor, and how to add simple page numbering using the header field!

## Not Every Title Should be Italicized

*Italicize* the titles of books; put "quote marks" around the titles of articles. Anything else will confuse informed readers, making it harder for them to know what kinds of sources you're citing.

If you're writing by hand, indicate things that need to be italicized by underlining them (because people can't "write" italics).

If your prof is telling you to italicize a title s/he will probably underline it on your printed essay.

It's a useful (if not 100% perfect) guideline that sources which enclose other things should be *italicized* and sources that are enclosed in a bigger thing should have "quote marks" around them.

**Thus:** *Books* enclose "Chapters"; *Magazines* enclose "Articles"; *CDs* enclose "Songs"; *Books of Poetry* enclose individual "Poems."

One more thing: 'Single Quotes' are ONLY for showing "quotes 'within' other quotes," not for titles or for showing emphasis.

## Double Space Everything

Top to bottom, all elements including heading, title, and works cited list, no exceptions. And center ONLY your title.



## Capitalization for Titles

Make titles of your sources follow the rules below no matter how they look in the original source.

General guideline for titles that will get you by in many situations: *Capitalize All the Important Words*.

Specific Rules: Do not capitalize (1) articles (a, an, the); (2) prepositions (aboard, about, above, across, etc.); (3) coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, etc.); or (4) "to" in infinitives (to Drive, to Walk, etc.), UNLESS one of those words is the first word in the title or the first word after a colon in the title.

## How Quote Marks Work with Periods, Commas, Colons, and Semicolons

Watch how the quote marks work with the comma and the period here. For MLA "style," you do "this." (Colons and semicolons go outside the quotes, "though"; I've shown that in this sentence. It's a convention that most likely started with the way printers had to set up their letters in the old days, so it's a little arbitrary. But it's the convention.)

## The OWL Has More Info & Help

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/)

## "Works Cited" Entries and "Parenthetical" (In-Text) Citations

MLA, like all citations styles, has conventions both (1) for creating a list of all the sources you make use of (the "works cited" list) and (2) for quickly noting, inside your writing, your use of a source ("parenthetical citations"). Those are the two things you need to know how to produce.

So here's something Paul McCartney said in an interview, cited correctly here and then included in the mini works-cited list below: "I suddenly realized I wouldn't be able to sing if I played trumpet. So I figured guitar would be better" (McCartney). Notice: There's no page number *because I'm using an online source with no page (or other) numbering*.

Now: In a conversation with Taylor Swift, Paul McCartney said this: "I often feel like I'm writing to someone who is not doing so well. So I'm trying to write songs that might help" (McCartney and Swift 39). I've included the page number here because I've used the print version.

You should see how, as a reader, you can quickly snap from my in-text citation to my works cited entry, below, and that's the goal. Make it easy for a reader to check out your source and maybe track it down, too. Notice how the word that leads the parenthetical citation is the exact same word you'd look to find *alphabetically* in the works cited list, below. So, consider a case where you have an anonymous source—no author/creator available to include. In that case you start your works cited entry with the *title*, and the parenthetical, too, begins with the first non-article (non a, an, or the) word of the title, like this ("Top"). Again, the first word in the parenthetical leads you to the right spot in the alphabetized works cited list.

### Works Cited

McCartney, Paul. "Paul McCartney: The Rolling Stone Interview." Interview by Paul Gambaccini. *Rolling Stone*, 31 Jan. 1974, [www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/paul-mccartney-the-rolling-stone-interview-3-241349](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/paul-mccartney-the-rolling-stone-interview-3-241349). Accessed 1 Feb. 2022.

McCartney, Paul, and Taylor Swift. "Musicians on Musicians: Paul McCartney and Taylor Swift." Conversation coordinated and introduced by Patrick Doyle. *Rolling Stone*, Dec. 2020, pp. 34-39, 74.

"The Top Ten Beatles Songs of All Time." *Rolling Stone*, 22 Aug. 2010, [www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-lists/the-top-ten-beatles-songs-of-all-time-10664](http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-lists/the-top-ten-beatles-songs-of-all-time-10664). Accessed 1 Feb. 2022.

### Models for Parenthetical (In-Text) Citations

- This sentence cites a fact from an article with no page numbering or other numbering (McCartney).
- This sentence cites a fact or bit of info from an article (McCartney 17).
- This one cites a fact or bit of info, and the cited stuff spans two pages (McCartney 17-18).
- This sentence cites a fact from McCartney, and I name him (17-18).
- This sentence cites a fact from something with two authors (McCartney and Westerberg 17).
- This sentence cites a fact from something with more than two authors (McCartney et al. 18).
- This cites a fact from an anonymous source ("Title" 27).
- This cites one of two or more works by one creator/source (McCartney, "Title" 52).
- This cites one of two creators named McCartney, when both are cited in one paper (P. McCartney 52).

Notice that only ONE of these examples includes a comma inside the parenthetical. Almost no standard MLA parenthetical citations have commas inside them.

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## Models for Page Ranges in MLA

- 4-5.  
 9-12.  
 25-35.  
 25-35, 62.  
 100-12. << For 100-112.  
 1045-56. <<For 1045-1056.  
 1045-115. << For 1045-1115.  
 23+. <<When the pages aren't consecutive.

Notice in the examples above how MLA allows—and requires—shortening of some numbers, as long as there are at least two digits in the shortened version. Also: Please use page numbers FROM the ORIGINAL, printed article, not the page numbers of your printout *of* the article, which won't help anyone but you.

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## Incorporating Quoted Material

Let's start with a completely fake and ridiculous direct quote from a fake person called Bob Loblaw, to give us something to work with: "I like to be quoted. It's like my dad always said, 'Proper citation builds character, and it makes you strong.' Who doesn't like being quoted?" The following are not examples of great/illuminating quotes to include in an essay; they're examples of different ways to incorporate elements from Bob Loblaw's fake quote. Take a close look at the punctuation differences and options.

- Some say good citation "builds character" (Loblaw 17).
- As Loblaw says, "I like to be quoted" (17).
- Loblaw says he "like[s] to be quoted" (17).
- Loblaw likes "to be quoted" (17).
- Loblaw asks, "Who doesn't like being quoted?" (17).
- Loblaw said, "It's like my dad always said, 'Proper citation builds character'" (17).

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## Abbreviating Months

In the Works Cited list, abbreviate all months longer than four letters: Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

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## Useful Terms: URL, DOI, and PDF

**URL** ("uniform resource locator") is the technical name for a website address.

A **DOI** ("Digital Object Identifier") is a stable address for something online. It's better than a normal web address because it works like a tracking beacon that stays with/on the online object. Even if the web address changes, the DOI will stay the same. That's useful, so use these instead of normal web addresses when they're available. You'll see some samples of this, below. (See also 5.93 in the MLA Handbook.)

If you've got a full text **PDF** ("Portable Document Format") copy of a scholarly journal article, that's basically a high tech photograph of the actual source. It's usually fair in such a case for you to cite the text as a print source—no database or website info needed, unless you think the extra info will be important for future researchers.

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## Optional Elements

There are several "optional elements" that MLA style no longer 100% requires but that are often very helpful for creating a clear picture of your sources. Among those are the type of resource, the original date of publication, the city of publication, and the date of access for web resources. Models for these sometimes-super-useful elements are included below; follow your professor's instructions about including these (or just include them because you judge that they will be useful).

## About Shortening Web Addresses

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You'll see URLs included above and below in sample entries, and these can be really helpful documentation. BUT they can also be an unhelpful mess. As you may know, URLs for sources inside library databases are often crazy long. You don't want (or need) to include those super long URLs. The MLA guide (at 5.96) says this: **"If a URL runs more than three full lines or is longer than the rest of the entry, truncate it. When truncating, always retain at least the host."** Goal: If you must include a URL, make it as short as you can make it. (See also 5.94 - 5.97 in MLA Handbook.)

So how do you shorten ("truncate") a URL for your entry?

- First, look at this sample "works cited" entry:  
 McCartney, Paul. "Paul McCartney: The Rolling Stone Interview." Interview by Paul Gambaccini. *Rolling Stone*, 31 Jan. 1974, [www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/paul-mccartney-the-rolling-stone-interview-3-241349/](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/paul-mccartney-the-rolling-stone-interview-3-241349/). Accessed 1 Feb. 2022.
- Notice that you *don't need* to include the "http://" part at the front of the URL. You *do* need the basic website ("host") info (e.g., [www.rollingstone.com](http://www.rollingstone.com)) and the *path* info that follows the host info (e.g., [/music/music-features/paul-mccartney-the-rolling-stone-interview-3-241349/](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/paul-mccartney-the-rolling-stone-interview-3-241349/)).
- But then take a look at this monster URL (below). Scan it for the word "ref.":  
[https://www.amazon.com/Abbey-Road-Beatles/dp/B07RC9XY3F/ref=sr\\_1\\_1\\_sspa?keywords=beatles+abbey+road&qid=1643920006&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFaSzJlZGFkSWQ9QTA0ODk2OTgxTFhJVUFWOUgySE1CJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvb11jbGlja1JlZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJlZQ==](https://www.amazon.com/Abbey-Road-Beatles/dp/B07RC9XY3F/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?keywords=beatles+abbey+road&qid=1643920006&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFaSzJlZGFkSWQ9QTA0ODk2OTgxTFhJVUFWOUgySE1CJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvb11jbGlja1JlZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJlZQ==)
- *This is crucial:* From the word "ref" onward, every bit of that monster URL is extra info that Amazon has tacked on to track and code a particular visit to their site, and it can all be deleted, leaving just the basic host and basic path: [www.amazon.com/Abbey-Road-Beatles/dp/B07RC9XY3F/](http://www.amazon.com/Abbey-Road-Beatles/dp/B07RC9XY3F/)
- Similarly, consider this URL, and notice the question mark in it.: [https://www.thebeatles.com/search?search\\_api\\_fulltext=Paul+McCartney](https://www.thebeatles.com/search?search_api_fulltext=Paul+McCartney)
- Every bit of this URL from that question mark forward may be cut. The "?" indicates the start of a specific search/query that brought me to that page, and the only reason I might need all of it is if I'm wanting to link to that specific search for "Paul McCartney" at the thebeatles.com site. So we can probably truncate to this: <https://www.thebeatles.com/search>, or, if we're not meaning to cite the search page, we can just cite the whole site: <https://www.thebeatles.com/>
- If you're not sure your shortening works, cut-and-paste into the browser to test it.

### Choose Permalinks and DOIs, When You Can

Where a source or database offers you a "permalink" or a "DOI"/"digital object identifier" (as scholarly databases often do), use those, rather than whatever is in your browser's address bar.

## Models for Book and E-Book Works Cited Entries

THE MLA has their own online guide, here: <https://style.mla.org/works-cited/citations-by-format/>

### Basic Books

**Author. Title of Book. Edition Info (If Any), Publisher, Year.**

Mehr, Bob. *Trouble Boys: The Story of the Replacements*. Da Capo Press, 2016.

**Author and Author. Title of Book. Edition Info (If Any), Publisher, Year.**

Westerberg, Paul, and Paul McCartney. *Some Ways to Let it Be*. 3rd ed., Hootenanny Editions, 2002.

**More Than Two Authors. Title of Book. Edition Info (If Any), Publisher, Year.**

McCartney, Paul, et al. *Left-Handed Compliments*. Apple Box Press, 2002.

**Author. Title of Book. Edited by Editor, Edition Info (If Any), Publisher, Year.**

Westerberg, Paul. *Forty Essays in 4/4 Time*. Edited by Paul Stanley, 2nd ed., Rock City Editions, 2009.

**Editor's Name, editor. Title of Book. Edition Info (If Any), Publisher, Year.**

Weller, Paul, editor. *Westerberg-Stanley-Weller-McCartney: Reflections*. Hootenanny Editions, 2005.

### Basic E-Book

**Author. Title of Book. Edition Info (If Any), e-book ed., Publisher, Year.**

Frye, Cameron. *Ferrari Maintenance and Repair*. E-book ed., Bueller Brothers, 2015.

Frye, Cameron. *Ferrari Maintenance and Repair*. 2nd ed., e-book ed., Bueller Brothers, 2020.

Frye, Cameron. *Ferrari Maintenance and Repair*. 2nd e-book ed., Bueller Brothers, 2020.

### Online Books and E-Books: Three Quick Notes

**Containers:** In these cases (see below), you're adding "online" info, likely to one of the stems above. MLA sees this as nesting a first "container" (the basic entry) in a second "container." That is, the book is one container, and it is sitting inside a second container, its online location.

**Choices You Make:** Notice the two Cahan examples below are for the same work, in the same place, with different choices about how to cite it. Version two has a URL for the database (rather than the specific source), and it has both an access date and a note about the kind of source this is. All these choices are legit.

**Date of Access:** Notice, below, that I show date of access. That info is optional, but it can be helpful for many online sources, because of the way online stuff is sometimes changed over time.

### Online Books and E-Books

**Author. Title of Book. E-book ed., Publisher, Year. Database, URL/DOI. Date of Access.**

Frye, Cameron. *Ferrari Maintenance and Repair*. E-book edition, Bueller Brothers, 2015. *Bueller E-ditions Online*, saveferris.net/frye\_1. Accessed 13 Aug. 2015.

Cahan, Abraham. *Yekl*. Appleton, 1896. *Google Books*, books.google.com/books?id=A\_4QAAAAYAAJ. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.

Cahan, Abraham. *Yekl*. Appleton, 1896. *Google Books*, books.google.com. Web-Based Archive. Accessed 2 July 2022.

## Models for Academic Articles

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### Article or Chapter From Inside a Book

**Author. "Article Title." *Collection Title*, edited by Editor Name, Publisher, Year, Pages.**

Westerberg, Paul. "I'm in Love with That Song." *The Minneapolis Music*, edited by Tommy Stinson, The Shook Down Press, 2007, pp. 22-42.

### Article or Chapter From Inside a Book, Found ONLINE or in a DATABASE

**Author. "Article Title." *Collection Title*, edited by Editor Name, Publisher, Year, Pages. *Database or Website*, URL/DOI. Date of Access.**

Westerberg, Paul. "I'm in Love with That Song." *Minneapolis Music*, edited by Tommy Stinson, Shook Down Press, 2007, pp. 22-42. *Google Books*, books.google.com. Accessed 4 July 2000.

**Here's a citation for an academic e-book, where I choose to keep the long URL:**

Calhoun, Scott D., editor. *U2 Above, Across, and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Assessments*. Lexington Books, 2014. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/whitworth/detail.action?docID=4694452.

**And here's a citation for a chapter from inside that same e-book, where I truncate the URL:**

Johnson, Fred. "A Transmedia Storyworld: The Edge is One, But Not the Same." *U2 Above, Across, and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Assessments*, edited by Scott D. Calhoun, Lexington Books, 2014. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com.

### Article From a Peer Reviewed Academic Journal

**Author. "Article Title." *Publication Title*, Number [Volume and Issue], Publication Date, Pages.**

McCartney, Paul. "The 'Hey' in Jude." *Abbey Road Review*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1995, pp. 23-35.

Giles, Rupert. "The 'Me' in Team." *Watcher's Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2003, pp. 45-72.

### Article From a Peer Reviewed Academic Journal, Found ONLINE or in a DATABASE

**Author. "Article Title." *Publication Title*, Number [Volume and Issue], Publication Date, Location [Pages]. *Database or Website*, Location. [Format (Optional).] [Date of Access (Optional).]**

Burkle, Winifred. "Interdimensional Physics: A Brief Introduction." *Cryptophysics Online*, vol. 20, no. 2, Winter 2016, pp. 22-53. *Wolfram and Hart Academic*, www.wolfhart.com/cryptophysics. Webtext. Accessed 15 June 2016.

**This first example (above) shows an article found on the journal's own site. The citation includes an optional type identifier ("Webtext.") to tell readers what kind of text this is. Brief, logical identifiers like this can be helpful for unexpected, unclear, or just interesting source types.**

Giles, Rupert. "The 'Me' in Team." *Watcher's Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2003, pp. 45-72. *Watcher's Council Quarterly*, www.ox.ac.uk/watchers/50\_3\_index.html. Accessed 2 Nov. 2009.

Giles, Rupert. "The 'Me' in Team." *Watcher's Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2003, pp. 45-72. *Academic Search Premier*, https://doi:10.1080/00111619.2014.888047. Accessed 9 May 2016.

McCartney, Paul. "The 'Hey' in Jude." *Abbey Road Review*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1995, pp. 23-35. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/12345678910. PDF download. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.

## Models for Everyday Periodicals and Websites

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### Article from an Everyday Periodical (E.g., Regular Newspapers and Magazines)

**Author. "Inside (Article) Title." *Publication Title*, Date [Publication Date], Location [Pages].**

Evans, David. "The Subtle Stadium." *Weekly Magazine*, 12 Sep. 2014, pp. 24-27.

Hewson, Paul. "Talking Lions I've Known." *Monthly Magazine*, Feb. 2007, pp. 8-16.

Clayton, Adam. "Down and Out on the Low End." *Local Newspaper*, 6 Nov. 2015, pp. B1+.

### Article from an Everyday Periodical found ONLINE or in a DATABASE

**Author. "Inside (Article) Title." *Publication Title*, Date [Publication Date], Location [Pages].  
*Database*, URL/DOI. [Date of Access (Optional).]**

Evans, David. "The Subtle Stadium." *Weekly Magazine*, 12 Sep. 2014, pp. 24-27. *EBSCOhost*. Accessed 2 Nov. 2016.

**Now look: The databases are going to generate long, long URLs and suggest they go in like this:**

Grow, Kory. "The Road Back." *Rolling Stone*, no. 1253, Jan. 2016, p. 13. *EBSCOhost*, search-ebSCOhost-com.librarysftp.whitworth.edu:2443/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=112254554&site=ehost-live.

**But no one is typing all that. The database name is often sufficient, unless your prof asks for more.**

Hewson, Paul. "Talking Lions I've Known." *Monthly Magazine*, Feb. 2007, www.monthlymag.com/arts/features/123\_14. *Proquest*. Accessed 2 Nov. 2016.

Hewson, Paul. "Talking Lions I've Known." *Monthly Magazine*, Feb. 2007, pp. 8-16. *ProQuest*, ProQuest document id: 1778474950. Accessed 2 Nov. 2016.

Clayton, Adam. "Down and Out on the Low End." *Local Newspaper*, 6 Nov. 2015, www.localnewspaper.com/clayton/down-and-out.html.

**Notice that, in each of the cases above, if you have the page numbers, then the simple "offline" format would provide enough info for any researcher and therefore would be adequate and acceptable. Include database/web info only if it is for some reason essential—for example when you do not have a full text PDF that includes accurate page numbers, when the source is only online, or when you suspect the online text may be in some way not stable/permanent.**

### ONLINE: A Page from a Website

**Creator/Writer. "Title." *Website Name*, Publisher/Producer, Year/Date of Publication [If Not a Specific Date, Then Probably THIS Year, for an Actively Maintained Site, but Sometimes It's Unclear. If Unclear, Use the Current Year.], Web Address.**

"Paul McCartney: *Flaming Pie* Archive Collection Out Now." *TheBeatles.com*, Apple Corps, 12 June 2020, www.thebeatles.com/paul-mccartney-flaming-pie-archive-collection-out-now.

NCAA. "Men's Basketball." NCAA.com, Turner Sports Interactive, 2022, www.ncaa.com/sports/basketball-men/d1.

Siegel, Jacob, and Sean Cooper, editors. "What Happened Today: February 2, 2022." *The Scroll*, Substack / *Tablet Magazine*, 2 Feb. 2022, thedailyscroll.substack.com/p/what-happened-today-february-2-2022.

## ONLINE: An Entire Website

*Website Name. Publisher, Year/Date of Publication [Probably THIS Year, for an Actively Maintained Site, but Sometimes a Specific Date, or Sometimes Unclear. If Unclear, Use This Year.], Truncated Web Address.*

*The Beatles.com. Apple Corps, 2022, www.thebeatles.com.*

**But sometimes you want a couple of clarifiers, so you might, as in the example below, indicate at the end both the kind of source and the date of access.**

*The Beatles.com. Apple Corps, 2022, www.thebeatles.com. Website. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

**And sometimes it's possible to find and include much more specific information about the editor(s) and producers. Consider the added into below.**

*The Beatles.com. Produced by Jeremy Neech, Apple Corps, 2022, www.thebeatles.com. Website. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

**Or consider these solutions.**

*The Replacements.com. Produced by Alex Rosas, The Replacements, 2021, thereplacementsofficial.com. Official band website. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

*The Jam.com. Universal Music, 2015, www.thejamofficial.com. Official band website.*

*Marshall McClean Band. Hosted at Bandcamp, marshallmclean.bandcamp.com/music. Bandcamp page for Marshall McClean. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

*The Onion: America's Finest News Source. G/O Media, 2022, www.theonion.com. Website.*

*The Onion: America's Finest News Source. Edited by Chad Nackers, G/O Media, 2022, www.theonion.com. Website. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

*NCAA.com. Turner Sports Interactive, 2022, www.ncaa.com. Website. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

*Loblaw, Bob. Bob Loblaw's Law Blog. Maintained by Bob Loblaw, 2022, www.loblawlawblog.com.*

## Some Video and Audio Examples

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*Silverado. Directed by Laurence Kasdan, Columbia Pictures, 1985. Film.*

*Kasden, Laurence, director. Silverado, Columbia Pictures / Delphi IV Productions / Eaves Movie Ranch, 1985. Film.*

*Silverado. Directed by Laurence Kasdan, Columbia Pictures, 1985. Netflix app. Film.*

*Zhou, Tony, writer and director. "Jackie Chan: How to Do Action Comedy." Vimeo, uploaded by Tony Zhou, 2014, vimeo.com/113439313. Video Essay.*

*"Fire in the Hole." Directed by Michael Dinner. Justified, season 1, episode 1, Sony Pictures / FX Productions, 16 Mar. 2010. Hulu app. Television episode.*

*Mullins, Aimee. "My 12 Pairs of Legs." TED Conferences, 2009, www.ted.com/talks/aimee\_mullins\_my\_12\_pairs\_of\_legs. Web Video. Accessed 2 Feb. 2022.*

*The Replacements. Stink. Twin Tone, 1982. Rock and roll music.*

*The Replacements. Stink. Twin Tone, 1982. Spotify app. Album.*