

## MLA DOCUMENTATION: PHOTOGRAPHS / VISUAL ART

To determine how you'll document a photograph or work of visual art, first consider how you're actually using it:

- 1) You're actually drawing information from the photo or work of art and using that information in your paper. In that case, an in-text citation will follow, and the photo or work of art will be entered in your works-cited list along with other research sources such as books and articles.

----- or -----

- 2) You're using the photo or work of art to illustrate something you're discussing. In that case, the item is regarded as an illustration, labeled as "Fig. 1" or "Fig. 2," etc., and identified with a caption. Captioned illustrations are not regarded as actual research sources and do not appear in your works-cited list.

### PHOTO / WORK OF ART USED AS AN ACTUAL SOURCE

Content of the works-cited entry will vary depending on whether you viewed the item directly (e.g. at a museum or gallery), in a book, in an online database, or on a Web site.

If the photo or work of art is untitled, describe it very briefly in your own words (as in the final example below).

*Photo or work of art viewed in a book: The photographer or artist is named first. The date, medium, location, and similar details may be included—whatever seems relevant.*

Banks, Josiah. *Cape Spear*. 1939. Oil on canvas. Private collection. *The Works of Josiah Wood*, edited by Susan Tully, Cornell UP, 1971, plate 54.

Gates, Sam. *April Sunset*. 2010. Photograph. *Images of Canada*. 3rd ed., compiled by George Green, Macmillan, 1966, p. 17.

*Photo or work of art viewed on a web site or online database: Internet usernames are presented exactly as they appear online.*

Harris, Elaine B. *Icarus*. 1949. Watercolour. *ArtzMatrix*, [www.artz-matrix.org/ebh/icar/71.0](http://www.artz-matrix.org/ebh/icar/71.0).

puffin@sea. *Fishing Village*. 2012. Photograph. *Flickr*. [www.flickr.com/puffin@sea/28314pt/12-08-16](http://www.flickr.com/puffin@sea/28314pt/12-08-16).

*Photo or work of art viewed at a museum, gallery, or exhibit:*

Garvis, Albert. *Mill at Middy*. 1951. Oil on wood. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, permanent collection.

Notman, William. *Ships in Montreal harbour*. Late 19th century. Black-and-white photograph. McCord Museum, Montreal.

## PHOTO OR WORK OF ART USED AS AN ILLUSTRATION

Reproduce the image in the body of your paper, close to the discussion that relates to it. Place a notation in your essay, in parentheses, referring the reader to it, e.g. “(see fig. 1).” Place this notation wherever it works best (before a comma or a period if there is one at that point in your sentence).

Under the image, write a caption opening with the matching reference number e.g. “Fig. 1.” In your caption, identify the image, providing background details (whatever seems relevant) and source information. Details may be separated by commas and semicolons as shown. Captions are double-spaced and run margin-to-margin.

The content of captions is flexible, depending on what is available and relevant. As a rule, it opens with the name of the photographer or artist and the title of the work. (If it has no title, substitute a brief description).

You may include the date, the medium, a museum or collection and its location, etc. When possible, include information on the source, e.g. a book, Web site, or database. You may add comments of your own at the end of the caption following a period.

[photo of a work of art found in a book]

Fig. 1. Elizabeth Cooper, *Yew Trees at Dawn*; 1985; acrylic on canvas; from *Contemporary Landscapes*, edited by Lewis Hertz, Hindman Press, 1995, p. 55.

[untitled photo found in a book; limited background info.]

Fig. 2. Fishermen and their boat, Conception Bay, Newfoundland; unattributed photograph; early 20th century; from *Cast Your Nets* by James Spracklin, Memorial UP, 1980, p. 67.

[photo found online; comment added]

Fig. 3. Thomas Hurlburt, *Cluttered Room*; 2010; photograph; from *Picasa*, [picasa.google.com/4873.76/thomas-hurlburt/c711.0](https://picasa.google.com/4873.76/thomas-hurlburt/c711.0). Note Hurlburt’s effective use of a wide-angle lens.

[photo of a work of art found online]

Fig. 4. William Blake, *The Lazar House*; 1795; black ink and watercolour; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England; from *Dark Gallery*, [www.dark-gallery.org/wb/lazar-house/6592.op7/](http://www.dark-gallery.org/wb/lazar-house/6592.op7/).