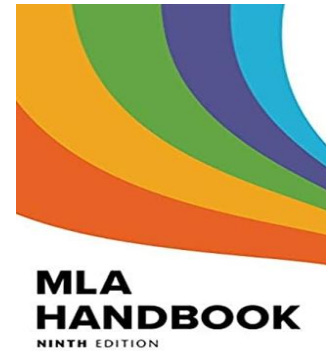


The Modern Language Association (MLA) provides guidance to scholars studying and writing about **literature, culture, and languages, particularly English**. If there is something that is not in this quick guide, please see a Librarian, the MLA Handbook or [OWL Purdue](#).



IN-TEXT CITATIONS

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WHY CREDIT SOURCES

Citations are discussed in the context of avoiding plagiarism. When you plagiarize, it means that you are either intentionally or unintentionally passing off someone else's work as your own. This is a major academic offense.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS tell the reader who said what and give credit to those who have helped the writer develop their current understanding. They also point the reader to the **WORKS CITED ENTRIES**. These entries tell readers exactly where they can find the sources the writer used.

OVERVIEW

WHAT REQUIRES IN-TEXT CITATION?

In MLA style writing, paraphrases, summaries, and quotations all require the use of in-text citations.

- **A paraphrase** restates the source material in new language and with original sentence structure. A paraphrase uses approximately the same number of words as the original.
- **A summary** condenses the source material to reflect its main idea(s). A summary uses significantly less words than the original.
- **A quotation** restates the source material using the exact language of that material.

CITATION APPEARANCE IN-TEXT

MLA style writing makes use of **parenthetical citations**. These are frequently used in combination.

Parenthetical citations make use of parentheses () to provide source information. These most often occur at the end of the sentence in which the source information appears. When placed at the end of a sentence, parenthetical citations appear **before the closing punctuation**. These are two examples:

The article argues that Millay was a savvy contributor to her own mythos and that she used “photography to construct a flexible poetic identity” **(Parker 381)**.

The Art of Travel tells us that travel, with its gift of distancing us from our ordinary selves, gives us the opportunity to “encounter our true selves” **(de Botton 147)**.

FORMATTING THE PARENTHETICAL CITATION:

MLA **does not** require the use of punctuation between the major elements of a parenthetical citation and simply list the page number.

(Author(s) Last Name page number)

EXAMPLES:

- (Schroerlucke 237).
- (Happle and Navarre 7-19).
- (Johnston et al. para. 4).
- (*A Woman in Berlin* 154).

Authorship

AUTHOR NAMED IN SIGNAL PHRASES

- The first time you name an author, use their full name.
- When the name of the author appears in the sentence, do not repeat it in the parentheses.
- Add the parenthetical citation with page number where there is a natural pause, generally at the end of the sentence.
- Include the page number or other source location information in parentheses.
- **Do not use p. or the word *page*.**

EXAMPLE:

William Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

AUTHOR NAMED IN PARENTHESES

- If the name of the author is not included in the sentence, put the name in parentheses along with any page or other source location information.
- Parentheses should be placed in the same sentence as the source information and after a natural pause.
- Usually, they appear at the end of the sentence and before any closing punctuation.

EXAMPLE:

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

TWO AUTHORS

- Both authors are mentioned each time the work is cited.
- Use the word **and** between the authors' last names.

EXAMPLES:

Best and Marcus argue that one should read a text for what it says on its surface, rather than looking for some hidden meaning (9).

The authors claim that surface reading looks at what is "evident, perceptible, apprehensible in texts" (Best and Marcus 9).

THREE OR MORE AUTHORS

- With a work that has three or more authors, use the first author's last name followed by the phrase **et al.**, an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *et alia* meaning "and others."

EXAMPLES:

According to **Franck et al.**, "Current agricultural policies in the U.S. are contributing to the poor health of Americans" (327).

The authors claim that one cause of obesity in the United States is government-funded farm subsidies (**Franck et al. 327**).

TWO OR MORE WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- If you are citing multiple works by the same author, distinguish the source by including the title of the work in the text or the parenthetical citation.
- **Long works** should be italicized.
- **Short works** are placed in quotation marks.

EXAMPLES:

The narrator tells us "elective ignorance was a great survival skill, perhaps the greatest" (**Franzen, *The Corrections* 265**).

In a non-fiction essay about his father's Parkinson's disease, **Franzen** writes, "one of the stories I've come to tell, then, as I try to forgive myself for my long blindness to his condition, is that he was bent on concealing that condition . . ." ("**My Father's Brain**" 80).

NOTE: It is acceptable to shorten the title of a work in the parenthetical citation.

AUTHORS WITH THE SAME LAST NAME

- If you cite a source from two authors who have the same last name, use authors' full name or first initial to distinguish between the two works.

EXAMPLE:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

ORGANIZATION OR GOVERNMENT AS AUTHOR

- If a source is authored by an organization, corporation, association, or a government agency as their author.
- If there is an abbreviation for the organization or government agency, make sure you indicate this after the first time you use the **full name**. Ex. Food and Drug Administration – FDA.

EXAMPLES:

The 1936 report documents how communities were responding to what the U.S. Department of the Interior called the youth problem, a problem succinctly identified as “five million young people -1 out of every 4 in the country- . . . without constructive occupation at school, work, or home” (2).

The Council of Social Agencies in five Orange County communities sponsored a “trial by jury of the case of Youth vs. Society” in order to “educate public opinion on the subject of social problems, and more specifically youth problems, and to break ground for constructive community action along definite lines” (U.S. Dept. of the Interior 19).

UNKNOWN AUTHOR

- If no author is given use the source's title in in-text citations.
- Long works are italicized and can be shortened to the first noun phrase. Remember to exclude articles (a, an, the).
- Short works are placed in quotation marks.

LONG WORK EXAMPLE:

According to *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* abracadabra is "a cabalistic charm said to be made from the initials of the Hebrew words Ab (Father), Ben (Son), and Ruach ACadsch (Holy Spirit)" (3).

SHORT WORK EXAMPLE:

The editorial asserted that the opioid crisis can be curtailed by providing safe spaces and medical supervision for users ("Safe Injection" 4).

*The full title of the article is "Safe Injection Facilities Save Lives."

TWO OR MORE WORKS CITED TOGETHER

- If a sentence makes use of more than one source, list all sources.
- When multiple sources are listed in parentheses, separate each source with a semicolon.

EXAMPLE:

Numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of educating incarcerated men (Lochner and Moretti; Esperian; Hughes; Utheim).

SOURCE QUOTED IN ANOTHER SOURCE

- If you cite a source quoted in another source, add the abbreviation **qtd.** into your parenthetical citation.

EXAMPLE:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd. in Weisman 259).

WORK(S) WITHOUT PAGE NUMBERS

PARAGRAPH, SECTION OR CHAPTER NUMBERS

Many electronic documents do not have page numbers, but will have paragraph(s), section(s), or chapter numbers. If such numbers appear, use them with the appropriate abbreviation. If the author's name appears in the parenthetical citation, separate the name from the abbreviation with a comma.

- **Paragraph** (Jones, par. 4).
- **Section** (sec. 3)
- **Chapter** (ch. 17).
- **Paragraphs** (pars. 4-7).
- **Sections** (Eisenstein, secs. 2-5)
- **Chapters** (chs. 17-18)

****DO NOT count unnumbered paragraphs or sections for the purposes of in-text citation.**

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

To reference a specific portion of a video or audio recording, provide the timestamp for that portion in parentheses. Include the hours, minutes, and seconds separated by colons. E.G. (01:16:23-01:18:42).

WORK IN AN ANTHOLOGY

- When creating an in-text citation for a work from an anthology, refer to the author of the piece, not the editor of the collection.

EXAMPLE:

Albert Einstein's article "A Brief Outline of the Theory of Relativity," which was published in *Nature* in 1921, you might write something like this:

Relativity's theoretical foundations can be traced to earlier work by Faraday and Maxwell (Einstein 782).

ENTRY IN A REFERENCE WORK

- Reference works entries, such as those found in dictionaries and encyclopedias, usually do not list an author. If an entry has no author, use the title of the entry in the in-text citation.

EXAMPLE:

The word robot has its etymological origins in the Czech word for "forced labor, compulsory service, drudgery" ("Robot").

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

- When referencing law and court cases, refer to a case or law by name.
- *Italicize* legal cases.
- Leave laws, acts, and historical documents, such as the Magna Carta, in plain text.

EXAMPLE:

Prior to 1963 and the case of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, those who were unable to afford a lawyer had no recourse to legal counsel. The only exception occurred when a person was accused of crime punishable by the death penalty.

****for more in-depth citations for legal documents, laws, statutes, etc. please see [Cornell's law website](https://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/1-100)** (<https://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/1-100>)**