



Parentetical Documentation - MLA Style ()

Quick Reference Guide - Herkimer County Community College Library

What is Parenthetical Documentation?

As you write a research paper, you will need to refer to sources of information. You must clearly indicate what those sources are, either in the text of your paper or in parentheses. The reader will be able to look at your Works Cited list and find complete information about your source. See the handout "Format – Works Cited List" for more information.

The parenthetical documentation in this example indicates that the information was found on page 594 of a work by Olsen:

Shakespeare does not portray bailiffs as servants in his plays (Olsen 594).

It refers to this source in the Works Cited list:

Olsen, Kirstin. "Servants." All Things Shakespeare: an Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's World. Vol 2.
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.

The following examples are based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th ed. on reserve at the Circulation Desk. Please see this handbook for more examples and information.

EXAMPLES – PRINTED SOURCES

- ❖ **Typical parenthetical documentation - try to place your parentheses at the end of the sentence to minimize the interruption.**

Evidence suggests that Nabokov was a skilled taxonomist (Gould 39).

- ❖ **If the source does not have an author, use an abbreviated version of the title. If it is a book, underline it. If it is an article, enclose it in quotations marks.**

A shortage of water is an ever-present threat to the people of Israel (Facts About Israel 15).

Applying different standards for various job categories is acceptable ("How Companies Are" 625-30).

- ❖ **If you have already named the author or source in the text of your paper, just state the page numbers.**

Gould argued that Nabokov was not an amateur but a talented, fully qualified taxonomist (39).

- ❖ **If the source is only one page, page numbers are not needed.**

Annual snowfall in Syracuse exceeds annual snowfall in Buffalo (Palmer).

- ❖ **Two or three authors:**

Children at the WVU Child Development Lab have many reading materials (Nelson, Azef and Linek 57-8).

- ❖ **Four or more authors – use "et al." after the first author's name.**

Photographic enlargers usually use a tungsten or quartz-halogen light bulb (Upton et al. 169).

- ❖ **Corporate or government authors:**

By 1992, it was apparent that the health care system needed to be changed (Public Agenda Foundation 4).

- ❖ **Different authors in the same parenthetical documentation – separate with a semi-colon ;**

Recent research confirms this finding (Dugan 32-3; Lutz xiv; Monroe and Bril 7201).

- ❖ **Multi-volume works - (volume number: page numbers).**

Elderly people in America are politically influential (Penner 4: 1409).

Wellek admits that " An evolutionary history of criticism must fail" (15: xxii).

EXAMPLES – ELECTRONIC SOURCES

ARTICLES

- ❖ **Articles from a periodical database or full-text Internet articles - state the author and the paragraph, screen, chapter or lines where the information is located. Use "par.", "scr.", "ch." or "lines".**

In 1000 A.D., much of the population of the Holy Land was still Christian (Crawford par. 13).

According to Crawford, in 1000 A.D. much of the population of the Holy Land was still Christian (par. 13).

- ❖ **If an article has no author, enclose an abbreviated version of the title of the article in quotation marks:**

Some companies have customers with strong views on social issues ("Culture Wars" scr. 4).

- ❖ **If you are referring to the entire article, do not state the paragraph, screen, chapter or line numbers.**

Libraries can offer presentations that highlight selected web resources (Adams).

WEB SITES

- ❖ **Web sites - state the author and the paragraph, screen, chapter or line numbers where the information is located. Use "par.", "scr.", "ch." or "lines". Sometimes the author is a sponsoring organization, company, institution or agency.**

Linkage analysis examines crime scenes in an attempt to link the crimes with a signature (Ramsland Institute ch. 6).

- ❖ **If the Web site has no author or sponsor, use an abbreviated version of the title in quotation marks and give the paragraph, chapter, screen, or line numbers.**

The supergalactic plane was recognized in 1953 ("Supergalactic Coordinate System" par. 14).

- ❖ **If you are referring to the entire site, no numbers are needed.**

The Erie Canal lift lock at Little Falls is one of the highest in the world (Stendhart).

Distance learning is a good alternative to attending night classes ("No More Night Classes").

- ❖ **Personal Web sites or Blogs - state the author and the paragraph, chapter, screen, or line numbers unless you are referring to the entire site.**

Camping in a National Park is a personally rewarding experience (Philips par. 1).

There are many resources on the Internet for small business owners (Myers).