

MLA In-Text Citation Guide

MLA Formatting

Guidelines from the MLA Handbook (9th edition) and the MLA Style Center:

<https://style.mla.org/mla-format/>

What are in-text citations in MLA?

- In your text, you should include a parenthetical citation each time you directly quote or paraphrase from another source. This is also known as an *in-text citation*.
- Each of the in-text citations in your paper should have a corresponding full reference in your Works Cited.
- An in-text citation gives your reader enough information to locate the full reference in your Works Cited page at the end of the essay.
- The most common way to do an in-text citation is to include the source's information in parentheses at the end of the sentence, before the period.

MLA uses the **author-page** method for their in-text citations—use the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the information came.

Citing a Work with One Author

If the author's name is not included *in the* sentence, use author's last name and the page number in the in-text citation. Take a look at this example:

Example: Dickens despised the way in which dismissing truth and bending the rules allowed citizens in power to commit heinous offenses with impunity (Van Ghent 253).

*Note that the author whose work is being paraphrased is not mentioned in the sentence. This is why we need to include the author's last name and the page number in the parenthetical citation. Also note that the period comes after the in-text citation. See this example and more from the sample paper found on the MLA style page:

https://style.mla.org/app/uploads/sites/3/2020/01/Schlepp_DeconstructingDickens.pdf

If the author's last name is included in the sentence, use only the page number(s) in the parentheses and place the period after the parenthesis. Take a look at this example:

Example: In *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*, Viet Thanh Nguyen, an American writer who has emerged as an indispensable voice in ethnic studies and literature, reminds the public that “[a]ll wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory” (4).

*Note that the author's name is mentioned in the text, so the parenthetical citation only includes the page number of the quotation. The citation comes after the end quote and the period after the parenthetical citation. See this example and more from the sample paper found here:

https://style.mla.org/app/uploads/sites/3/2020/01/Nguyen_VietNamWarMemory.pdf

Citing a Work by Multiple Authors

For a source with two authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

Example: King and Twain argue that literature and science fiction make the best live action plays (9). The authors claim that literature and science fiction are “beautiful, mesmerizing, and entertaining” (King and Twain 9).

For a source with three or more authors, list the first author's last name and replace the rest with “et al.”

Example: Previous research has found that “[t]he greater number of users per book, the more beneficial it is to read from a printed book. In contrast, the digital system increases almost linearly with each additional user” (Kang et al. 6).

Citing Electronic Sources

Electronic sources can be confusing because of the absence of page numbers. However, page numbers are not always necessary.

For electronic and Internet sources, follow the following guidelines:

- Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry that corresponds to the citation (e.g., author name, article name, or website name).
- Do not provide paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser's print preview function.
- Do not include URLs in-text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like *CNN.com* or *Forbes.com*, as opposed to writing out <http://www.cnn.com> or <http://www.forbes.com>.

Multiple Citations in One Instance

To cite multiple sources in the same parenthetical reference, separate the citations by a semi-colon:

Example: . . . as has been discussed in previous research (Dunn 3; Dietz 21).