

MLA IN-TEXT OR PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS

When you use the ideas or words of another person in your paper, you must document the source within the text of the paper as well as on the Works Cited page. Whether you quote or paraphrase a source, you must include a citation that 1) clearly points to the source on the Works Cited page and 2) identifies the location of the borrowed information. Because the citation must point clearly to an entry on the Works Cited, it can be helpful to create the Works Cited page first.

An in-text citation most commonly includes the author's last name and the page number from the passage you cite, such as (Clark 146). Some exceptions exist. A citation is usually placed at the end of a sentence or after the quotation where there is a pause in the sentence (such as before a comma or semicolon). When citing at the end of the sentence, the end period comes after the parentheses.

Keep in mind the function of in-text citations: they direct the reader to the full source information at the end of the paper. Thus, there should be clear correspondence between the parenthetical citation and the entry on the Works Cited page. In other words, as readers move through the essay, they come across a citation, stop, and flip to the Works Cited page. They should be able to run their fingers down the left-hand side of the page and immediately find the Works Cited entry in alphabetical order. If the in-text citation is (Clark 146), the reader can turn to the Works Cited page and find Clark as the first element of an entry in alphabetical order.

1. Author not named in sentence: Include the author's last name and page number in parentheses after the quotation or paraphrase.

Another critic argues, "*The Awakening* should be read in the broader context of the contemporaneous New Woman fiction movement in England" (Rich 72).

The punctuation comes after the parentheses.

2. Author named in sentence: If you mention the author's name in the sentence, do not mention it again in the citation.

For example, Charlotte Rich argues, "*The Awakening* should be read in the broader context of the contemporaneous New Woman fiction movement in England" (72).

3. For two authors, name both authors.

It has been noted that Chopin's novella is rich with imagery (Smith and Hughes 89).

Smith and Hughes note that Chopin's novella is rich with imagery (89).

4. For three more authors, include only the first author's name followed by "et al." "Et al." is Latin for "and others."

It has been noted that Chopin's novella is rich with imagery (Sanders et al. 89).

5. If you cite two different works by the same author, name the title or a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citation.

Rich suggests that Chopin would have read English magazines for women ("Reconsidering" 74). In a later article, Rich revises her statement by arguing that Chopin had actually submitted her stories to English magazines ("Publishing" 75).

6. A source without page numbers: If a source does not have page numbers, do not include a page number in the parenthetical citation. *If .pdf files have page numbers in the text of the document, use them; however, do not use the page numbers that your printer or browser places on the page when printing.*

Rich argues that "*The Awakening* should be read in the broader context of the contemporaneous New Woman fiction movement in England."

Notice that no parenthetical citation is needed because the author is named in the sentence, and there is no page number.

7. A corporate author: A work may be cited in text by a corporate author such as an institution, association, or government agency. When a corporate author is named in a parenthetical citation, abbreviate terms that are commonly abbreviated, such as *Department (Dept)*. Omit *The* before corporate names. When an entry starts with a government agency as the author, begin the entry with the name of the government, followed by a comma and the name of the agency.

The current minimum wage is set at just over seven dollars per hour (United States, Dept. of Labor).

8. A source without an author or organization: Include the title of the work and abbreviate it if longer than a noun phrase. Properly format the title. If possible, give the first noun and any preceding adjectives. Exclude *a*, *an*, and *the*.

People in this era shared a great sense of social responsibility (“Victorian England”).

9. A quote in the source from a person other than the author: This is called an indirect quotation. To cite an indirect quotation, give the name of the original source in the sentence, abbreviate "quoted in" as "qtd. in," and then include the name and page number of the source where you found the quotation.

In a Victorian advice manual, Marion Harland stated that by the age of twenty-five, a woman's "bloom has gone and her buoyant spirits are depressed by the dread of permanent invalidism" (qtd. in Stacy 161).

10. If the quotation is more than four typed lines of text, include it as a block quotation by setting the quotation off from the text. First, introduce the quotation as you normally would. Begin the quotation on a new line and indent the whole quotation one half-inch from the left margin. Double-space the quotation. A block quotation does not have quotation marks around it. Also, the punctuation is placed at the end of the quotation, not outside the parenthetical citation. The next line of the paragraph should begin back at the left margin. See the “citing literary works” handout for more information.

11. Citing literary works: See the separate handout for special rules governing citing prose, plays, and poetry.

Simplifying citations: For readability, you should keep citations as short as possible. For example, if you name the author in the sentence, do not repeat the name in the citation. Likewise, if you are citing from just one source throughout a paragraph, you may give a single parenthetical reference after the last borrowing. The page numbers given in the citation should match the order the borrowings are presented in the paragraph. Separate the page numbers with a comma. If it may be ambiguous how the page numbers match the borrowings, citations should be separated. The author or title should always be made clear, either when introducing the first borrowing or in a single parenthetical reference at the end of the paragraph.

Examples of simplified citations

The authors expose the dangers in making assumptions about children. First, they claim that “these ideas about children say less about them than they do about what adults imagine children are like” (Nodelman and Reimer 86). While uncovering these uncomfortable truths about adults, these assumptions also “define childhood almost exclusively by its limitations” (88).

This important critical theory underwent many changes during this era: “Firstly, feminism became more eclectic.” Changes such as this “seem characteristic of feminist criticism” (Barry 122, 123).

According to Frost, philosophy moved from conceiving of the “universe as a home of many spirits” to a more scientific study of nature (27). In time, philosophers began to observe the universe “as a result of moving bodies,” leading to “the statement of certain laws of the universe” (28).