**MLA Formatting**

**In-Text Citations**

**Why in-text citations?**

The list of works cited acknowledges the sources used, but does not give specific details. You must let your audience know not only what sources you used, but also what information you used from each source, where in the source you found it and where you included it in your paper. The easiest way to do this is to insert a brief parenthetical acknowledgment in your paper wherever you included another’s words, facts, or ideas. Typically, the author’s last name and page reference are enough to identify the source.

**Important**

* All references in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited. Thus, it will be helpful to have your works cited page completed before you begin your in-text citations.
* Keep parenthetical references as brief—and as few—as clarity and accuracy permit.
* Place the MLA citations close to the quotation, information, paraphrase, or summary you are documenting. However, in order to avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur.

In the following examples, pay close attention to the punctuation.

* At the end of a sentence before the final punctuation:  
  ***Wayland Hand*** *reports on a folk belief that going to sleep on a rug made of bearskin can relieve backache****(183).***
* After the part of the sentence to which the citation applies:  
  *The folk belief that* ***“sleeping on a bear rug will cure backache” (Hand 183)****illustrates the magic of external objects producing results inside the body.*

**MLA Citations Examples:**

1. **Author’s Name in Parentheses:**  
   *When people marry now “there is an important sense in which they don’t know what they are doing” (Giddens 46).*
2. **Author’s Name in Discussion:**  
   *Giddens claims that when people marry now “there is an important sense in which they don’t know what they are doing” (46).*

\*\*Notice that if you state the author’s name in the sentence, then you only place the page number in parenthesis.

1. **General Reference:**A general reference refers to a source as a whole, to its main ideas, or to information throughout; it needs no page number. This applies to websites in which there are no page numbers available.  
   *Many species of animals have complex systems of communication (Bright).*

1. **One Author:**Provide the author’s last name in parentheses, or integrates either the full name or last name alone into the discussion:  
   *According to Maureen Honey, government posters during World War II often portrayed homemakers “as vital defenders of the nation’s homes” (135).*
2. **Two or Three Authors:**  
   *The item is noted in a partial list of Francis Bacon’s debts from 1603 on (Jardine and Stewart 275).*  
   For three authors: *(Norman, Fraser, and Jenko 209).*
3. **More than three Authors:**  
   Within parentheses, name the first author and add et al. (“and others”).  
   Within your discussion, use a phrase like “Chen and his colleagues point out…” or something similar. If you name all the authors in the works cited list rather than using et al., do the same in the text citation.  
   *More funding would encourage creative research on complementary medicine (Chen et al. 82).*
4. **Corporate or Group Author:**When an organization is the author, name it in the text or the citation, but shorten or abbreviate a cumbersome name. This will be common for many websites.  
   *The consortium gathers journalists at “a critical moment” (Comm. of Concerned Journalists 187).*
5. **No Author Given:**Use the title instead. This applies to books and websites. Shorten a long title as in this version of Baedeker’s Czech/Slovak Republics.  
   *In 1993, Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (Baedeker’s67).*
6. **More Than One Work by the Same Author:** When the list of works cited includes more than one work by an author, add a shortened form of the title to your citation.  
   *One writer claims that “quaintness glorifies the unassuming industriousness” in these social classes (Harris, Cute 46).*
7. **Authors with the Same Name:** When authors have the same last name, identify each by first initial (or entire first name, if necessary for clarification).  
   *Despite improved health information systems (J. Adams 308), medical errors continue to increase (D. Adams 1).*

1. **Indirect Source:** Use qtd. in (“quoted in”) to indicate when your source provides you with a quotation (or paraphrase) taken from yet another source. Here, Feuch is the source of the quotation from Vitz.  
   *For Vitz, “art, especially great art, must engage all or almost all of the major capacities of the nervous system” (qtd. in Feuch 65).*
2. **Literary Work:** After the page number in your edition, add the chapter (ch.), part (pt.), or section (sec.) number to help readers find the passage in any edition.  
   *In Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain ridicules an actor who “would squeeze his hand on his forehead and stagger back and kind of moan” (178; ch. 21).*
3. **Two or More Sources in a Citation:** Separate sources within a citation with a semicolon.  
   *Differences in the ways men and women use language can often be traced to who has power (Tanner 83-86; Tavris 97-301).*

**References:**

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition

MLAformat.org <http://mlaformat.org/mla-citations/>