

MLA In-Text Citations

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Citing sources in MLA involves a system of in-text signal phrases and parenthetical references which **directly correlate** with the entry for that same source on the Works Cited page.

Remember that **all material from another source**, whether **summarized, paraphrased** or **quoted**, must be cited.

General Guidelines:

- When possible, use an author's name and/or the title of a source **within your sentence** to establish credibility with the reader.
- Every in-text reference **must correspond** to a Works Cited entry and vice versa.
- The in-text reference comes at the end of the cited material, usually at the end of a sentence.
- The general format is **Author-Page** style, with no punctuation in between: (Smith 42).
- If no author's name is given, use the first two or three words of the **article** title in quotation marks, plus the page number: ("The Greenhouse Effect" 220). For a **book** with no known author, put the shortened title in italics.
- **Web-only sources** do not use page numbers, so cite only the author's name (or "Page Title" if no author) in the parentheses. If the author's name is used **within the text** of the sentence, then no parenthetical reference is required, unless requested by the instructor.
- Scholarly journal articles have page numbers that **must** be used, even if accessed online or through a database.
- For a subsequent reference to the same source within a paragraph, only a page number is needed.
- Place the period **after the parentheses**, not after the quotation or last word in the sentence (except when using block quotation format).

In-text Citation Patterns and Samples:

Patterns for In-text Citations	Sample In-text Citations
Single Author (Author page #). Note: When using the author's name in the sentence, give only the page number(s) in the citation.	Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3). Kenneth Burke describes human beings as "symbol-using animals" (3).
Two Authors (1 st author and 2 nd author page #).	Student writers tend to quote too much when using material from outside sources (Graff and Birkenstein 42).
Three Authors (1 st author, 2 nd author, and 3 rd author page #).	"These social facts find a new view of Mexico and its people" (Poll, Pit, and Diaz 22-23).
More than Three Authors (1 st Author et al. page #).	"The quadratic equation symbolizes proximity to the divine" (Spencer et al. 354).
No Author – Listed by Title ("Shortened Title for Article" page #).	Many global warming hotspots exist in North America ("The Impact of Global" 68).

Organization/Corporation as Author (Org or Corp Name page#). Use standard abbreviations as needed.	The 2001 survey of human resource managers addressed employee discipline (Amer. Management Assn. 5).
Scholarly Journal article – Use page numbers from original publication (Author page #). If no author, give “Shortened Title” page #).	"The struggle to revolutionize the institution of marriage is, however, far from over. Next is the battle for divorce equality (Tait 1245).
Internet Document with no Fixed Pages or Section Numbers - Eliminate Page #(s) from In-text Citation (Author. If no author, give <i>Shortened Title</i>). <i>Since pagination may differ from printer to printer, page numbers of printouts should not be cited.</i>	“Steinbeck proposed that the American political structure demonized the common man” (Stephan).
Indirect Source – one quoted in another source (as qtd. in Author page #). Note: Only the author of the main source will be found on the Works Cited.	Robert Cahn says “the national interest might be served better by wilderness than by development” (as qtd. in McDonald 141).
Literary Works - When found in anthologies (collections), cite the author of the piece, not the editor of the collection. (Author page#).	“When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral” (Faulkner 696).
Prose Plays – Cite by Act and Scene if given, by page number if not. (<i>Title</i> act.scene). For first reference, give a shortened form of the title in addition to page # or division. Subsequently, only use page number or division.	“It is the Oriental in her at war with her Western education” (<i>M. Butterfly</i> 1.10).
Verse Plays – Cite by division such as act, scene or stanza, and line. (<i>Title</i> act.scene.lines) For first reference, give a shortened form of the title in addition to division. Subsequently, only use division numbers.	“Faith, that was not so well: yet would I knew/That stroke would prove the worst!” (<i>Othello</i> 4.2.3-4). “Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate/Nor set down aught in malice” (5.2.342-43).
Poems - Cite by author and line number rather than page number. (Author line #) Use the word “line(s)” the first time, but only the number for subsequent references.	“If ever two were one, then surely we./If ever man were loved by wife, then thee” (Bradstreet, lines 1-2).
Two Works by Same Author – Use a shortened form of title in addition to author’s name (Author, “Title” page #) It is preferable to use the author’s name or the title of the piece within the sentence so that all three pieces of info need not appear in the parentheses.	“But women grow up thinking they need to look like Barbie, which for most women is impossible” (Barry, “The Ugly Truth” 3). Dave Barry comments about the difference between men’s and women’s self-esteem: “But women grow up thinking they need to look like Barbie, which for most women is impossible” (“The Ugly Truth” 3).