

PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS

BASIC IN-TEXT CITATION RULES

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as **parenthetical citation**. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends (1.) upon the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and (2.) upon the source's entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.
- Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text, must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS FOR PRINT SOURCES WITH KNOWN AUTHOR

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

Example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Both citations in the examples above, (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tell readers that the information in the sentence can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the Works Cited page, where, under the name of Wordsworth, they would find the following information:

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. London: Oxford U.P., 1967. Print.

Example:

Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3).

Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

These examples must correspond to an entry that begins with Burke, which will be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of an entry in the Works Cited:

Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1966. Print.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS FOR PRINT SOURCES WITH NO KNOWN AUTHOR

When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work (such as an article) or italicize it if it's a longer work (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire Web sites) and provide a page number.

Example:

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has "more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . ." ("Impact" 6).

In this example, since the reader does not know the author of the article, an abbreviated title of the article appears in the parenthetical citation which corresponds to the full name of the article which appears first at the left-hand margin of its respective entry in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes the title in quotation marks as the signal phrase in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader directly to the source on the Works Cited page. The Works Cited entry appears as follows:

"The Impact of Global Warming in North America." *Global Warming: Early Signs*. 1999. Web. 23 Mar. 2009.

CITING AUTHORS WITH SAME LAST NAMES

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even the authors' full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. For example:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

CITING A WORK BY MULTIPLE AUTHORS

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation.

Examples:

Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

For a source with more than three authors, use the work's bibliographic information as a guide for your citation. Provide the first author's last name followed by et al.

Examples:

Jones et al. counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (4).

Legal experts counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (Jones et al. 4).

CITING NON-PRINT OR SOURCES FROM THE INTERNET

With more and more scholarly work being posted on the Internet, you may have to cite research you have completed in virtual environments. While many sources on the Internet should not be used for scholarly work, some Web sources are perfectly acceptable for research. When creating in-text citations for electronic, film, or Internet sources, remember that your citation must reference the source in your Works Cited.

Sometimes writers are confused with how to craft parenthetical citations for electronic sources because of the absence of page numbers, but often, these sorts of entries do not require any sort of parenthetical citation at all. 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, website name, film name).
- You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser's print preview function.
- Unless you must list the Web site name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, 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>.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

One online film critic stated that *Fitzcarraldo* is "...a beautiful and terrifying critique of obsession and colonialism" (Garcia, "Herzog: a Life").

The *Purdue OWL* is accessed by millions of users every year. Its "MLA Formatting and Style Guide" is one of the most popular resources (Stolley et al.).

In the first example, the writer has chosen not to include the author name in-text; however, two entries from the same author appear in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes both the author's last name and the article title in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader to the appropriate entry on the Works Cited page (see below). In the second example, "Stolley et al." in the parenthetical citation gives the reader an author name followed by the abbreviation "et al.," meaning, "and others," for the article "MLA Formatting and Style Guide."

Both corresponding Works Cited entries are as follows:

Garcia, Elizabeth. "Herzog: a Life." *Online Film Critics Corner*. The Film School of New Hampshire, 2 May 2002. Web. 8 Jan. 2009.

Stolley, Karl, et al. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The OWL at Purdue*. 10 May 2006. Purdue University Writing Lab. 12 May 2006 .

WHEN A CITATION IS NOT NEEDED

Common sense and ethics should determine your need for documenting sources. You do not need to give sources for familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge. Remember, this is a rhetorical choice, based on audience. If you're writing for an expert audience of a scholarly journal, for example, they'll have different expectations of what constitutes common knowledge.

SOURCE:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2012. Web. 7 Mar. 2013.
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>>