

MLA Format, 9th Edition: In-Text Citations

In MLA format, in-text citations take the form of a parenthetical citation and, often, a signal phrase. In parentheses, place relevant information about the source from which a particular paraphrase, summary, or quotation comes to clearly distinguish your ideas from the ideas, information, words, images, etc. taken from others.

General Guidelines

- Name the author either in a signal phrase (Brooks argues...) **or** in a parenthetical citation (Brooks 35).
- Include a page number in the parentheses whenever possible. The abbreviation “p.” is **not** used. If no page numbers are given, do **not** use numbers that result from printing out a document. In the case of audiovisual references, use the timestamp in place of the page numbers (e.g., *Spotlight* 0:01-03:12).
- Do **not** use punctuation between the author’s name and the page number. An exception would be two or more works by the same author (e.g., Gilbertson, *Selected Speeches* 38).
- Place the citation as close to the cited material as possible. Punctuation marks typically follow parentheticals; block quotes are an exception.
- Italicize *containers* (e.g., books, magazines, journals, web sites, databases, album titles, movies, TV shows, and plays). Use quotation marks around “elements” (e.g., articles, web pages, song titles, and short poems).

Format	Instructions	Example(s)
Sources with one or two authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give name(s) in the text or in the parenthetical citation. • Then, give the page number(s) in the parenthetical citation. 	<p>According to Basu and Amin, the people of West Bengal and Bangladesh are not limited by political borders; a common language enables them to communicate political and religious difference (765).</p> <p>The people of West Bengal . . . and religious difference (Basu and Amin 765).</p>
Source with three or more authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the first author’s name and the phrase “and others” in the text or give the first author’s name followed by <i>et al.</i> (the Latin phrase meaning “and others”) in a parenthetical citation. 	<p>Bowers and others argue that due to similarities in the plot development of each play, both <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>Chushingura</i> could be played by the same set of actors from any given company (182).</p> <p>Due to similarities in the plot . . . given company (Bowers et al. 182).</p>
Sources with two authors with the same surname	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the first name of each author in prose to eliminate ambiguity. Use the author’s first initial in a parenthetical citation. 	<p>For one, Rauch is “adamant about identifying his native tongue as Pennsylvania Dutch” (as opposed to German), saying “We like it because it is emphatic, simple, and expressive, and everybody knows just what it means” (206).</p>

Format	Instructions	Example(s)
Two or more works by the same author/authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a title to the in-text citation so that the reader knows which work you are citing. You can also add the author's name and title in prose and parenthetical citations. 	<p>Louden is astute in pointing out the irony that, in stark contrast to the blue-collar agrarian identity of Pennsylvania Dutch language and culture, all of these important figures in the history of the language were highly educated white-collar professionals (<i>Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language</i> 201).</p> <p>Louden points out in <i>Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language</i> the irony that, in stark contrast to the blue-collar agrarian identity of Pennsylvania Dutch language and culture, all of these important figures in the history of the language were highly educated white-collar professionals (201).</p> <p>The use of the term "Pennsylvania Dutch" is grounded both in the 18th century folk equivalence of "Dutch" with "German" and "in the usage of the majority of the speakers themselves, especially those residing in Pennsylvania" (Louden, <i>Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language</i> 9).</p>
Source with an unknown author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention the full title in the signal phrase or use an appropriate abbreviated version in the parenthetical citation. Avoid using "Anonymous." 	<p>SVSU's students are encouraged to document every source they use in their writings to avoid violating the Student Code of Conduct, which was adopted by the Student Association in 2005 ("Academic Integrity").</p> <p>The "Academic Integrity" page of SVSU's Web site encourages students to document every source they use in their writings to avoid violating the Student Code of Conduct, which was adopted by the Student Association in 2005.</p>
Source from a corporation, organized group, government agency, or association that is not also the publisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat the organization as the author. Essentially, this should match what is found on your Works Cited page. • If the name is long, identify it in the text rather than in parentheses. • When a corporate author or organization is named in a parenthetical citation, shorten and abbreviate the name to the shortest noun phrase 	<p>According to the U.S. Department of Education, successful charter schools "operate with a clear mission, defined intentions, and thoughtful goal setting" (4).</p> <p>Local boards of education and other committees should consider that successful charter schools "operate with a clear mission, defined intentions, and thoughtful goal setting" (U.S. Dept. Education, 4)</p>
Source where the author and publisher are the same	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the source by its title both in the parenthetical citation and on the Works Cited page. 	<p>Sometimes a parenthetical does not include a page number. According to the MLA Association, writers should supply paragraph numbers in a parenthetical citation only when the source numbers the paragraphs for its reader (<i>MLA Handbook</i> 56).</p>

Format	Instructions	Example(s)
Quotation or paraphrase found in another source (an indirect source)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put “qtd. in” before the author’s name. • Include only the source you used (e.g., Healy) in the Works Cited page. 	When planning to continue his interview process, Kauffman expressed his “degree of apprehension about coming back to Laramie” (qtd. in Healy A1).
Block quotes (longer than three typed lines of verse or four lines of prose in your paper’s margins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the quote apart from the text by indenting the entire quotation half an inch from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. • Use a colon to introduce a block quote unless the grammar of the quotation requires otherwise. • Do not use quotation marks around the block quote. • Include the parenthetical citation after the ending punctuation. 	<p>Connie’s intuition directs her to make judgments about Arnold Friend that she wouldn’t have made otherwise:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Connie stared at him, another wave of dizziness and fear rising in her so that for a moment he wasn’t even in focus but was just a blur standing there against his gold car, and she had the idea that he had driven up the driveway all right but had come from nowhere before that and belonged nowhere and that everything about him and even about the music that was so familiar to her was only half real. (Oates 2598)</p>
An entire work (a film or book)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to it in the text of your paper, not inside parentheses. • Include the full citation on your Works Cited page. 	Jason Reitman’s film <i>Juno</i> , about the free-spirited, sharp-tongued Juno McGuff, provides a look into one teenager’s experience with pregnancy that dispels many stereotypes.
Two or more sources in the same sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a parenthetical citation after each author’s paraphrased idea or quote. • If sources are cited in the same parentheses (making the same paraphrased point), use alphabetical order and separate with a semicolon. 	<p>Studies have shown that children younger than eight are “unable to critically comprehend televised advertising messages” (“Television Advertising”) and that children between the ages of four and five generally can’t tell the difference between commercials and television programs (Ramsey).</p> <p>Children who watch more than four hours of television a day are more likely to be obese (Lewis 49; Richards 23).</p>