

**MLA Formatting: In-text Citations**

It is important to cite your sources within the text of your document. In-text citations are required when you use information from a source, whether that information is quoted or paraphrased. In-text citations, whether narrative or parenthetical, are meant to tell your reader when you use source information, and it is a link to your Works Cited page. This link makes it easier to find your sources, and it is helpful to those who want to duplicate your research.

MLA uses the author-page system for citing sources.​ This can be done two different ways:​

**Parenthetical Citation**: When the author is not named in the sentence, you must include the author’s name in the parentheses.

* Example:

…By implementing “more complex and nuanced view[s] of religion, literacy, and identity” in English classes, we are better able to encourage students to explore these controversial issues in-depth (Reyes 263).

**Narrative Citation**: The author's name may appear in the sentence with the page number written in parentheses at the end.​ When an author is named in the sentence, you do not need to repeat the author’s name in the parentheses.

* Example:

…As Reyes explains, after encouraging her students to explore issues of religion in their writing, she now finds it beneficial to use a “more complex and nuanced view of religion, literacy, and identity” in English classes (263).

\*Note: The end punctuation should be placed AFTER the parenthetical citation.

**Basic in-text citation ​**

* **One Author**

(Author Last Name page number). [Note:  no comma between author and page number]​

(Langhamer 235). ​

* **Two Authors**​

(Author Last Name and Author Last Name page number). ​

(Langhamer and Cruz 345). ​

* **Three or More Authors​**

(First Listed Author Last Name et al. page number)​

(Jones et al. 345)​

* **If citing multiple sources in one citation, use semicolons to separate the citations.** ​

(Fukuyama 42; McRae 101-33). ​

* ​**Unknown Author:**

When the author is unknown or not given, cite this work by the title. You can use the full title in a signal phrase or an abbreviated version of the title in parentheses.

* Example 1 (Narrative Citation):

…“Squaresville, USA VS. Beatsville” makes the Midwestern small-town home seem boring compared with the West Coast’s artist’s “pad” (31).

* Example 2 (Parenthetical Citation):

…The Midwestern small-town home seems boring compared with the West Coast artist’s “pad” (“Squaresville” 31).

\*Note: Use quotation marks for short works (articles, poems, web pages, etc.)​. Use italics for longer works (books, websites, plays, etc.)​

​

**Indirect Sources**

Citing indirect sources involves taking material cited in another source and using it within your own work. Whenever possible, you should take material from the original source; however, sometimes only an indirect source is available. For example, someone’s published account of another’s spoken remarks.

* Example:

…Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 450).

****

**MLA Formatting: In-text Citations**

**Internet Sources**

* Page numbers are not required if not provided by the source.​
* Include in the in-text citaton the first item that appears in the corresponding Work Cited entry. (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).​
* Do not provide 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](http://www.cnn.com/) or [http://www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com/).​

The information for this handout was compiled from the following sources:

Modern Language Association. *The MLA Handbook.* 8th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2016. Print.

*The Purdue OWL Family of Sites*. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2021, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl.