

# MLA In-Text Parenthetical Citations

The Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines require that you cite the quotations, summaries, paraphrases, and other material used from sources. To cite within text, use parentheses placed at the end of the sentence in which the quoted or paraphrased material appears. These in-text parenthetical citations correspond to the full bibliographic entries found in your works cited page.

## Structure of the citation:

Databases are an excellent tool for academic research (Smith 23).

No punctuation here. One space, then parenthesis.

Punctuation comes at the very end.

Author name and page number

## Single author named in parentheses:

One researcher has found that dreams move backward in time as the night progresses (Dement 71).

## Single author named within the sentence:

Freud states that "a dream is the fulfillment of a wish" (154).

## Two or three authors:

Psychologists hold that no two children are alike (Gesell and Smith 68).

## Three or more authors:

To identify the source of a quotation, place the author's last name in parentheses (Blake et al. 64).

## Web page:

*Note: Internet citations follow the style of printed works. Personal or corporate author and page number should be given if they exist on the website.*

Abraham Lincoln's birthplace was designated as a National Historical Site in 1959 (National Park Service).

"Use research databases to find valid, academic information for a project or paper" ("Research Databases").

Fish won't stick to the grill if you oil the fish and the grill (Flay).

## Corporate author (organization, association, etc.):

The federal government has funded research concerning consumer protection and transactions with online pharmacies (Food and Drug Administration 125).

## Works with no author: (Use the title or a shortened version of the title: 4-5 words)

Random testing for use of steroids by athletes is facing strong opposition by team owners ("Steroids" 22).

## Secondary source of a quotation (someone quoted within the text of another author).

As Erickson reminds us, the early psychoanalysts focused on a single objective: "introspective honesty in the service of self enlightenment" (qtd. in Weiland 42).

## Two or more works by the same author:

In his investigation of social identity, *The Uses of Disorder*, Sennett defines adulthood as a stage where people "learn to tolerate painful ambiguity and uncertainty" (108).

In a surprising move, one researcher combines the idea of power with that of virtue: "the idea of strength is complex in ordinary life because of what might be called the element of its integrity" (Sennett, *Authority* 19).

## Work found in an anthology or edited collection: (Such as the Language Arts textbook)

*For an essay, short story, or other document included in an anthology or edited collection, use the name of the author of the work, not the editor of the anthology or collection, but use the page numbers from the anthology or collection.*

William Blake artfully uses the phrase "fearful symmetry" in the poem "The Tyger" (641-642).

## Bible passage:

Ezekiel saw "what seemed to be four living creatures," each with faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Ezek. 1.5-10).

## Play:

Hamlet, conflicted about his purpose, ponders. "To be, or not to be, that is the question" (*Hamlet* 3.2.56).

## Several sources for a single passage:

There are negative implications to computerizing commercial art (Parker 2; "Art Nonsense" 43).

## Citing a long quotation:

*A long quotation is four typed lines or more, indented by one inch, doubled-spaced, and without quotation marks. Note: This is the only citation where the period comes before the parentheses.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, then twenty five, wanted to communicate his idea of the sanctity of all life on earth in his epic poem. After it was published sailors who thought it was a maritime songbook often purchased *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Soon it caught on with the popular interests of the day. It has since never been out of print. (daSilva 3)

## Tips:

- The titles of large works are italicized, not underlined. (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Prov. 20-22).
- Smaller works, such as articles, pamphlets, etc. are put in quotation marks. ("Steroids" 22).
- When citing a website, use author and page number if available.
  - If no author, use the title of the article. If the title is long, you can shorten to 4-5 words. Use quotation marks.
  - If no title, use the name of the website. Use quotation marks.
- If you need help, ask your teacher or a media specialist, or try Purdue's MLA Guide at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.