

MLA In-Text Citations

MLA CITATIONS IN THE BODY OF YOUR PAPER

MLA citations follow specific conventions that distinguish them from other styles. In-text citations are known as “parenthetical citations” because they are enclosed in parenthesis. The author’s last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in parentheses at the end of the sentence:



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Click on the listings below to see how in-text citations work depending on the number of authors and/or publications.

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Single Author

When you quote or paraphrase a source, list the last name of the author, followed by the page number.

Example:

According to some experts, Marx used “class” in “two different ways” (Calvert 11).

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Two Authors

Separate their last names with the word “and”. The authors’ names should be listed in the order they appear in the published work.

Example:

Marx used “class” in “two different ways” (Calvert and Sennett 11).

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Three Authors

Separate their last names with commas with the word “and” preceding the last author. The authors’ names should be listed in the order they appear in the published work.

Example:

Marx used “class” in “two different ways” (Calvert, Sennett, and Olmsted 11).

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Four or More Authors

It is correct to either list all of the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page or to include only the principal author’s last name followed by the abbreviation “[et al.](#)” (The principal author is the first one listed in the original source.) Note: The in-text format should match the format in your Works Cited entry.

Example:

Marx used “class” in “two different ways” (Calvert et al. 11).

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Anonymous or Unknown Author

Use an abbreviated version of the work’s title if the author is unknown.

Example:

An anonymous source claimed that the Iraq invasion was a bad idea from the beginning (“Bush Cannot Win” 104).

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Multiple Works by the Same Author

If more than one work by an author is cited, include shortened titles for the works to distinguish them from each other.

Example:

Author’s name is mentioned:

Obama has argued that the invasion was a bad idea (“Too Soon” 42), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that it led to much good (“A Stronger Country” 13).

If the author’s name is not mentioned in the sentence:

Photography, because it is both science and art, seems to be “a bridge discipline” (Barthes, “Of Loss and Cameras” 45).

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Citing Indirect Sources

For indirect quotations, use “qtd. in” to indicate the source consulted.

Example:

Jones claimed that runners who “drank regularly usually stopped running after a few months” (qtd. in Salazar 212).

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No Page Numbers

If a work, such as a website, does not include page numbers, then omit this portion of the in-text citation.

Example:

Marx used “class” in “two different ways” (Calvert).

If a work has numbered sections or paragraphs, then use “sec.” or “par.” in the in-text citation. **Note:** The author’s last name is followed by a comma in this case.

Example:

Marx used “class” in “two different ways” (Calvert, par. 4).

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Sacred Texts

Provide the book, chapter, verse, etc. separated by periods. Common abbreviations are acceptable.

Example:

And he wrote, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (New Jerusalem Bible, Ezek. 18.4-20).