In-text Citation: MLA style

When do I cite?

Cite when you are using information from another source that is not your own. You'll do this by either quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing from an outside source. A proper citation has **two parts**:

1. **The Works Cited page (for MLA)** is an alphabetical list of citations for the sources you used in your work. This list appears at the end of your work.

2. **In-text citations**. In-text citations are used in the body of your research project *each time* you use material from outside sources. In-text citations correspond to their entries in the Works Cited list, meaning each in-text citation has a citation in the reference list and vice versa.

In-text citation examples in MLA style

In-text citations include the author and page number, if provided, in parentheses.

Quoting

When you quote from a source, use the source's exact words and enclose them in quotation marks. You also include an in-text citation. The examples below include in-text citations with author and page number for the source used.

❖ **Rule and example:** Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name. Put the page number in parentheses at the end of the quotation before the ending punctuation mark.

As Davis reported, "If the existence of a signing ape was unsettling for linguists, it was also startling news for animal behaviorists" (26).

❖ **Rule and example:** When the author's name does not appear in the signal phrase, place the author's name and the page number in parentheses at the end of the quotation.

"If the existence of a signing ape was unsettling for linguists, it was also startling news for animal behaviorists" (Davis 26).

Paraphrasing

When paraphrasing from a source, express in your own words the ideas presented in the original source. A paraphrase is generally as long as than the passage you are paraphrasing. You do not use quotation marks since you are not quoting from the source. The in-text citation should include the author of the source and page number(s), if provided.

Paraphrasing Examples:

According to Davis, when they learned of an ape's ability to use sign language, both linguists and animal behaviorists were taken by surprise (26).

When they learned of an ape's ability to use sign language, both linguists and animal behaviorists were taken by surprise (Davis 26).

Continue…

Additional MLA rules and examples for in-text citations

❖ **Work with up to two authors:** List both authors by their last names.

Patterson and Linden agreed that the gorilla Koko acquired language more slowly than a normal speaking child (14).

Koko acquired language more slowly than a normal speaking child (Patterson and Linden 14).

❖ **Work with three or more authors:** List the first author's last name followed by "et al."

The study noted a fluctuating divorce rate in Middletown between the 1920s and the 1970s (Caplow et al. 25).

❖ **Work with no author:** List the title of the work in parentheses, along with page number, if present.

Communes in the late 1960s functioned like extended families, with child-rearing responsibilities shared by all adult members ("Commune living").

❖ **Indirect source:** In this scenario, an author's words are quoted in another author's source. Note this by using 'qtd. in' in the in-text citation.

Shakespeare's "To be or not to be" remains one of the most enduring lines from literature and strikes at the heart of the article's theme of self-exploration (qtd. in Tapp and Moore 13).

❖ **A work in an anthology or compilation (like an essay, poem, or short story)**

Poe, Edgar Allan. "Hop-Frog." *American Short Stories*, edited by Rosetta Buck. Random House, 2016, pp. 12-15.

❖ **Government agency as author:** List the government agency as author but precede it with the country's government, just as in the Works Cited entry for the source.

(United States, National Institute of Mental Health 154)

❖ **Two or more works in one citation:** If you quote or paraphrase from two different sources in the same sentence, list details of both in the same in-text citation.

(Myers 5; Smith 14)

❖ **Personal communication (interview) and social media:** Include the last name of the person being interviewed or the author of the social media post in your in-text citation, as you would for any other source.

(Hernandez)

Summarizing

When summarizing, state the main ideas of the original source in your own words. What makes a summary different than a paraphrase? While a paraphrase captures a small passage from a source, a summary captures the main idea(s) of an entire article, book, or book chapter, for example. The summary itself is much shorter and condensed than the original source. You still need to provide an in-text citation using the author, but there is no need for a page number.

❖ The example below is a summary of an article. Notice its brevity – only two sentences.

Smith argues that clear writing depends upon not making assumptions about the audience's knowledge of a subject. Otherwise, communication will not be effective.