

MLA IN-TEXT CITATIONS

When a writer either quotes a specific source or refers to information from a specific source, he gives credit to that source either by directly naming the author or book, or by putting that info in parentheses at the end of the quote or sentence. These are called in-text citations. The first method uses a “signal phrase” to indicate that something taken from a source (such as a quotation, summary, or paraphrase) is about to be used. (Usually the signal phrase includes the author's name). The parenthetical reference includes at least a page number (unless the work has no page number or is organized alphabetically).

Any sources the writer uses in the text of her paper will be listed in the “Works Cited” page(s) at the end of the work. Citations in parentheses should be as concise as possible but complete enough so that readers can find the source in that list. The following models illustrate the form for the MLA style of citation.

1. Author named in a signal phrase

Ordinarily, you should introduce the material being cited with a signal phrase that includes the author's name. In addition to preparing readers for the source, the signal phrase allows you to keep the parenthetical citation brief.

Turback claims that "regulated sport hunting has never driven any wild species into extinction"
(74).

The signal phrase — "*Turback claims*" — provides the name of the author; the parenthetical citation gives the page number where the quoted words may be found. By looking up the author's last name in the list of works cited, readers will find complete information about the work's title, publisher, and place and date of publication.

Notice that the period **follows** the parenthetical citation.

2. Author not named in a signal phrase

If the signal phrase does **not** include the author's name (or if there is no signal phrase), the author's last name must appear in parentheses along with the page number.

Though the number of lion attacks on humans is low, the rate of increase of attacks since the 1960s is cause for serious concern (Rychnovsky 43).

N.B. Use no punctuation between the name and the page number.

3. Two or more works by the same author

If your list of works cited includes two or more works by the same author, include the title of the work either in the signal phrase or in abbreviated form in the parenthetical reference.

In his article "California and the West," reporter T. Christian Miller asserts that from 1990 to 1997, California spent roughly \$26 million on conservation lands "to provide habitat for exactly 2.6 mountain lions" (A3).

According to T. Christian Miller. "Mountain lions, also called pumas or cougars, range vast territories in search of food, sometimes as large as 100 square miles" ("Cougars" 1).

The **title of an article** from a periodical should be put in **quotation marks**, as in the examples. The **title of a book** should be **underlined or italicized**.

In the rare case when both the author and a short title must be given in parentheses, the citation should appear as follows:

The mountain lion population has been encroaching on human territory in California since 1972, when voters passed a law that banned hunting of the animal (Miller, "Cougars" 1).

4. Two or three authors

If your source has two or three authors, name them in the signal phrase or include them in the parenthetical reference.

Reyes and Messina report that the adult mountain lion population in California is now estimated at four to six thousand (B1).

5. Four or more authors

If your source has four or more authors, include only the first author's name followed by "et al." (Latin for "and others") in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical reference.

The study was extended for two years, and only after results were duplicated on both coasts did the authors publish their results (Doe et al. 137).

6. Corporate author

When the author is a corporation or organization, either name the corporate author in the signal phrase or include a shortened version in the parentheses.

The Internal Revenue Service warns businesses that deductions for "lavish and extravagant entertainment" are not allowed (43).

7. Unknown author

If the author is not given, either use the complete title in a signal phrase or use a short form of the title in the parentheses.

In California, fish and game officials estimate that since 1972 lion numbers have increased from 2,400 to at least 6,000 ("Lion" A21).

8. Authors with the same last name

If your list of works cited includes works by two or more authors with the same last name, include the first name of the author you are citing in the signal phrase or parenthetical reference.

At least 66,665 lions were killed between 1907 and 1978 in Canada and the United States (Kevin Hansen 58).

9. A multivolume work

If your paper cites more than one volume of a multivolume work, indicate in the parentheses the volume you are referring to, followed by a colon.

Terman's studies of gifted children reveal a pattern of accelerated acquisition (2: 279).

10. A novel, a play, or a poem

In citing literary sources, include information that will enable readers to find the passage in various editions of the work. For a novel, put the page number first and then, if possible, indicate the part or chapter in which the passage can be found.

Fitzgerald's narrator captures Gatsby in a moment of isolation: "A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host" (56: ch. 3).

For a verse play, list the act, scene, and line numbers, separated by periods. Use arabic numerals unless your instructor prefers roman numerals.

In his famous advice to the players, Hamlet defines the purpose of theater, "whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature" (3.2.21-23).

For a poem, cite the part (if there are a number of parts) and the line numbers, separated by periods.

When Homer's Odysseus comes to the hall of Circe, he finds his men "mild / in her soft spell, fed on her drug of evil" (10.209-11).

11. The Bible

If the book of the Bible that you are citing does not appear in the signal phrase, include it in parentheses along with the chapter and verse numbers.

Consider the words of Solomon: "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink" (Prov. 25.21).

If it is relevant, you may also include the version of the Bible you are citing: (Prov. 25.21, RSV).

12. A work in an anthology

Put the name of the author of the work (not the editor of the anthology) in the signal phrase or in the parentheses.

*At the end of **Kate Chopin's** "The Story of an Hour," Mrs. Mallard drops dead upon learning that her husband is alive. In the final irony of the story, doctors report that she has died of a "joy that kills" (25).*

13. An indirect source

When a writer's or speaker's quoted words appear in a source written by someone else, begin the citation with the abbreviation "qtd. in."

"When lion sightings become common," says Fjelline, "trouble often follows" (qtd. in Robinson 30).

14. An entire work

To cite an entire work, use the author's name in a signal phrase or a parenthetical reference.

Robinson succinctly describes the status of the mountain lion controversy in California.

15. Two or more works

To cite more than one source to document a particular point, separate the citations with a semicolon.

The dangers of mountain lions to humans have been well documented (Rychnovsky 40; Seidensticker 114; Williams 30).

16. A work without page numbers

You may omit the page number if a work has no page numbers. Some electronic sources use paragraph numbers instead of page numbers. For such sources, use the abbreviation "par." or "pars." in the parentheses: *(Smith, par. 4).*

17. An electronic source

To cite an electronic source in the text of your paper, **follow the same rules as for print sources**. If the source has an author and there is a page number, provide both.

Using historical writings about leprosy as an example, Demaitre argues that "the difference between curability and treatability is not a modern invention" (29).

Electronic sources often lack page numbers. If the source uses some other numbering system, such as paragraphs or sections, specify them, using an abbreviation ("par.," "sec.") or a full word ("screen"). Otherwise, use no number at all.

A clip of the film Demolition d'un mur demonstrates that "cinema is all about transformation, not mere movement" (Routt, sec. 1).

Volti writes, "As with all significant innovations, the history of the automobile shows that technological advance is fueled by more than economic calculation."

If the electronic source has no known author, either use the complete title in a signal phrase or use a short form of the title in parentheses.

According to a Web page sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund, fourteen American children die from gunfire each day ("Child").