



## MLA Style Parenthetical Documentation or In-text Citations

It sounds painful, but it doesn't have to be! Basically parenthetical documentation or in-text citations means that you are telling the reader where you got any and all information that did not come from inside your own head. This is more obvious when you are directly quoting from a source, but it is also needed when you have summarized or paraphrased from a source and even if you got an idea from somewhere else.

So how do you do it? As the names imply, you are going to put the information about the source in parentheses in the text of your paper as opposed to a footnote where the source information is at the bottom of the page or an endnote where it goes at the end of your paper. There are slight differences depending on which style you are using - APA or MLA.

Basically you only need to list the author's last name and the page numbers to which you are referring or quoting. Make sure the source information in parentheses matches with your works cited. If an entire portion of your paper is referencing one source, you only need to cite the author the first time and then the page numbers are enough after that. If you are going back and forth between different sources, you need to cite the author each time you switch. In order to avoid plagiarism, it is extremely important that you cite all words and ideas that you got from somewhere else. If your quote is longer than four lines, set it off in a block text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch, and do not add quotation marks. At the end of the quote put the period after the last word of the sentence followed by the parentheses.

\*\*Note that the punctuation for the sentence goes AFTER the parenthesis.

Examples:

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| ▪ Author's name in text  | Smith states that, "....." (112).                    |
| ▪ Paraphrasing several spots in a source                         | Smith stated these facts, too (112-3, 146).          |
| ▪ Author's name in reference                                     | This fact has been stated (Smith 112-3).             |
| ▪ Cite an entire work - no page number                           | Smith's <u>This Long Story</u> has many stories.     |
| ▪ No author - give title of work abbreviated to first major word | These stories are true ( <u>Long</u> 112).           |
| ▪ Website - no author and no page numbers                        | <u>This Long Story</u> has given evidence.           |
| ▪ More than one book by the same author                          | Is Smith's, <u>This Long Story</u> , a memoir (112)? |
| ▪ More than one author in text                                   | Smith and Lee agree that (146-150)                   |
| ▪ More than one author in reference                              | This is agreed upon (Smith and Long 146).            |
| ▪ More than one work   | We all agree (Smith 112; Lee 146).                   |

Please see the following handbook on reserve in the Library for more information:

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003.