How to Write In-Text Citations

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th ed.

WHAT ARE IN-TEXT CITATIONS?

In-text citations are brief references included in the body of your paper to indicate the book, magazine, or other source you consulted for quotations or facts. They are used to provide additional information without breaking the logical development of the thoughts in your paper. In-text citations are used in place of footnotes.

WHY ARE IN-TEXT CITATIONS NEEDED?

Any information you borrow from other authors must be acknowledged in your paper. In-text citations provide the exact source of the quotation (somebody else’s words), or of facts that were gathered by someone else. They give added authority to your paper. They also provide your reader with leads to other sources and permit the reader to check (verify) the sources that you used to come to your conclusions.

HOW ARE IN-TEXT CITATIONS PREPARED?

In-text citations are brief references, enclosed by parentheses, within the text of your paper. They refer the reader to your works cited list. In-text citations usually include the author’s last name and the page number. The reader can then turn to your list of works cited for complete publishing information.

PLEASE NOTE:

References in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited. Keep in-text citations as brief and as few as clarity and accuracy permit.

If you include the author’s name in your text, you need only put the page number in the reference.

If you have two authors with the same last name in your bibliography, include their first name initial in the in-text citations.

If you have two works by the same author in your bibliography, include the title of the work in your sentence or in the in-text citation in abbreviated form.

If you are citing an entire work rather than a specific passage or section, omit the in-text citation and give the author’s name in your sentence.
EXAMPLES:

See our other handout called “Guide to MLA Works Cited List” to learn how these examples should be formatted in the works cited list at the end of your paper.

**Single author named in parentheses** “Libraries house treasures” (Ellis 135).

**Author’s name included in your sentence**
Warren Kuehl believes it “possible to be exceedingly negative about the future when discussing peace” (566).

**Two authors**
“Many students are convinced that all material on the Internet is free to copy” (Lathrop and Foss 121).

**More than two authors**
Thousands of bird species visit the United States every year during their seasonal migration (Robbins, et al. 255).

**Book or periodical article with no author**
Women’s studies programs were started in the 1960s (*College Board* 22).

When your source has no named author, use the title of the source in full or abbreviated form.

**Government publication**
The U.S. Department of Labor expects employment opportunities for teachers to range from good to excellent depending on the grade and subject taught (235).

**Work found in an anthology or edited collection**
“In India, smoking triples the risk of death from tuberculosis in men and women” (Jha 77).

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.

**Web site**
Wikipedia’s “freewheeling ethos is about to be curbed” (Cohen).

Works on the World Wide Web are cited just like printed works. Web documents generally do not have fixed page numbers or any kind of section numbering. If your source lacks numbering, you do not need to include numbers from your in-text citations. If your source includes fixed page numbers (such as on a PDF) or section numbering (such as numbering of paragraphs), you should cite the relevant numbers.

For additional information on citing sources you may consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th ed.* in the Library at REF LB 2369.G53 2016 or visit the DVC library Citation Guide at [http://dvc.libguides.com/citations](http://dvc.libguides.com/citations).

Please come to the Reference Desk with additional questions, call us at 925-969-2595, or chat with us at [http://dvc.libanswers.com/](http://dvc.libanswers.com/).