

# In Text Citations: MLA 8<sup>th</sup> Ed. (2016)

## What is an in text citation, and how is it different from the citation I made for my Works Cited list?

In text citations allow you to briefly acknowledge the source of the idea or quotation used in your writing, and refer your reader to the complete citation for that source in your Works Cited list.

## When should I include an in text citation in my writing?

When you summarize, paraphrase or directly quote any source. If it isn't your original idea, cite it. The citation should be included or incorporated in your writing with as little interruption as possible to the flow of the text. The parenthetical citation is often put just before a comma or period.

## What is included in the in text citation, and where does it go?

1. The first word(s) of the works cited entry for that source. This is usually the author's last name. If there is no author given for the source, use the title (all or the first few words) instead. This is placed either within the text of your writing as a "signal phrase", or within the parenthesis just after the quotation or information you are citing.
2. The page number of the quote or information cited is also included, if available. It is put within parenthesis just after the quotation or information cited. See the many examples on this handout for more guidance.

## In what order do the quotation marks, parenthesis and period go?

The ending quotation mark goes right after the last word in the quotation, followed by the parenthetical citation, followed by the period.

*Example: "...in treatment" (Wall 809).*

**Example 1: Diagram of a parenthetical in text citation.** In text citations can look very different from each other, but usually contain 2 elements: the author and page number(s).

a child, a student, or an employee). Following this argument we could still use rewards to provide short-term motivation for performing an undesirable task if we are careful to use words that make it clear we aren't trying to control someone's behavior (Deci and Flaste 106-8).

Authors and page numbers often appear at the end of a sentence and enclosed in parenthesis, with a period following. No comma is placed between name and page.

**Example 2: Diagram of a signal phrase with parenthetical citation.** If either of the parts of the in text citation are given as part of the narrative, do not include them in the parenthetical citation. The page number is put in parenthesis after the specific quote or idea.

Author's last name as part of narrative refers readers to Works Cited entry

Page number (in parenthesis, after the quotation mark, before the period) refers readers to a specific idea or quote.

College professor Lanie Melamed echoes this perspective, finding through in-depth play interviews with other adult women that play "is an attitude or a way of being in the world rather than an activity. Unlike organized play which is instrumental and purposeful, the play they describe is intrinsically motivated and personally rewarding" (15). So allowing play to enter all parts of our lives and the

# Rules with examples

## One author, three examples

Brown based his book *Play* on research done by experts in many different fields of biology.

The study of play in humans has lately been informed by research in many different fields of biology (Brown 36).

Brown was a pioneer in incorporating zoological research into our understanding of human play (36).

## Two authors: cite each name

Bede and Xing found that the most commonly prescribed treatment was often ineffective (10).

Some experts disagree, claiming that global warming is nothing new. (King and Nguyen 22-23).

## Three or more authors: include the first name then "et al." (as it appears in your Works Cited entry)

...these symptoms don't appear until age 14 on average (South et al. 7).

## Group (corporate) authorship

1. If the corporate name is long, it is better to cite it in the signal phrase text rather than interrupting the writing with a long parenthetical citation.
2. Common abbreviations may be used when citing a corporate author parenthetically.

...United States Environmental Protection Agency found that river water quality is profoundly improved with the addition of wetlands in surrounding areas (42).

Another study found that water quality was improved by nearly 38% (U.S., Environmental Protection Agency 51).

## No author given

1. Use the title (or descriptive phrase used in place of title in Works Cited entry) in full or shortened to the first noun phrase. If the title doesn't start with a noun phrase shorten to the first word. However give additional words if needed for clarity.
2. Exclude initial articles (a, an, the)
3. Titles of short works go in quotation marks. Titles of longer works are italicized.

("Study" 301).

(*Depression* 48).

## Multiple works by the same author

1. To differentiate between the multiple works, include all or part of the title in addition to the author's last name in the in text citation.
2. In parenthetical references a comma is inserted after the author name.

...arrived, about 100 million years after the first reptiles" (Brown, "Through the Lens" 8).

In "Through the Lens of Play" Brown cites evidence that play has been around since "the earliest warm-blooded creatures" roamed the earth (8).

## No page numbers

1. If paragraphs are numbered use those instead with abbreviation par.
2. If sections are numbered use those with abbreviation sec.
3. If the parenthetical citation includes the author or title, a comma is inserted after the name.
4. If there are no page numbers, and paragraphs are not numbered, cite only the author or title.

...United States Environmental Protection Agency found that water quality is profoundly improved with the addition of wetlands in the landscape (par. 8).

...findings were inconclusive (Thomas, sec. 3)

## Citing indirect sources (second-hand quoting)

1. This should be avoided if possible by locating the original source of the quote.
2. If that isn't possible, the abbreviation **qtd. in** (for "quoted in") is used.

Mary Jones admitted that she had lied "to protect the honor of her father" (qtd. in Hammond 201).

**For more guidance from the *MLA Handbook* on in text citations, see pages 54-58 and 116-128.**

For this handout or more information on using MLA Style, see <http://guides.kirkwood.edu/citation>. Your Kirkwood instructor, Librarians, or Writing Center can help with citations. Created by Kirkwood Community College by Library Services. Updated 6/2016