MLA In-Text Citations and Quotations: The Basics

Questions about different kinds of citations or have an article that doesn't fit into the format below? Go here: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/

Citations - The Basics:

Why we cite: Citations help readers understand the thoughtfulness and context of your argument, credit research and ideas that are not yours, give your thoughts and ideas a sense of legitimacy, and demonstrate your integrity.

When we cite:

• Any time you use a number or statistic.
• Whenever you are referencing an author or argument
• When you quote authors or texts
• Any time you make reference to something that is not your own original thought.

What is the difference between an in-text citation and a 'Works Cited' page?

• Yes, you have to have both.
• In-text citations are a short way to reference a source from your bibliography. The idea here is that someone could take the in-text citation, look the source up in your bibliography, and then go find the source in the same place you found it.
• Because of this, your in-text citation must reference the first part of your bibliographical citation – usually the author's last name, or first words of the article title.

How we cite in MLA format:

• Citations are in parenthesis after the quote, statistic, or idea.
• The are "inside" the period, meaning the sentence doesn't officially end until after the citation.
• If you are using quotes, your parenthesis and citations will be outside of the quotes, yet inside the period. I know this looks weird.
• Include the author's name.
• If author's name is not listed, include first words of the article title.
• Each of the above can be used to either in a quote introduction, or in the citation itself after the quote or statistic. You do not have to do both.

A correct example:

Matt Hughes, an expert in the field, declares that "all students should use MLA formatting for their Senior Project" (24).

Also correct:

MLA formatting is required by all students for their research papers (Hughes 24).

Citation Station!

Read the following in-text citations. Indicate if they are done correctly or incorrectly. If they are incorrect, state why.

- Human beings are savage. Many studies have uncovered cases of torture and cannibalism. (Renner)

- According to social anthropologist Hannah Starbuck, "Humans brains have been constantly growing larger, changing in both shape and flavor" (Starbuck 17).

- Research on the future of this topic is unclear, but Heerschap speculates that our ability to clone humans will have a positive effect on global food output (17).

- "The problem with cooking humans is that they are disproportionate: the legs cook much quicker than the torso. To counter this, try long hours at low heat (Hughes 246)."

- Interestingly, the study found "64 percent of individuals who tried human flesh for the first time found it to taste like chicken, whereas 22 percent of rookies equated the both the flavor and texture to pig products" (Edmondson 43).

- According to Pennington, using oregano and basil masks the bitterness often associated with teenagers (94).

Citations - Advanced

Indirect sources - An indirect source is a source cited in another source. Use "qtd. in" to indicate the source you actually consulted. For example:

> Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd. in Weisman 259).

Note that, in most cases, a responsible researcher will attempt to find the original source, rather than citing an indirect source.

Non-print Sources from the Internet - Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name). Do not include URLs in-text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like CNN.com or Forbes.com as opposed to writing out http://www.cnn.com or http://www.forbes.com.

Short Quotations

For short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse), enclose the quote within double quotation marks. Periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text.

> Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

With short (fewer than three lines of verse) quotations from poetry, mark breaks in verse with a slash, (/), at the end of each line of verse (a space should precede and follow the slash).

> Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

For quotations that are more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse, place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented **one inch** from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. **Only** indent the first line of the quotation by **an additional quarter inch** if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come **after** the closing punctuation mark.

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

> They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their
> room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs,
> hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted
> by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he
> found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got
> there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice
> and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

When adding your own words to a quotation, put them in brackets. When you edit words out of quotes use an ellipsis (...)

> "Heerschap laughed maniacally before turning on the drill ... Once it was over,
> however, the students were impressed with how good their teeth looked"
> (Hughes 45).

Footnotes and Endnotes

MLA discourages long explanatory footnotes. They are more appropriate if you are providing additional references related to your project. To format, you add a superscript and put your explanation in 10 point font below a line at the bottom of the page. Most word processing programs will do that work you.