How to Create In-Text Citations (MLA 8th ed.)

For more information about MLA format, visit sunyjcc.libguides.com/MLA8Guide

According to the *MLA Handbook*, when you cite a source in the text of your paper, the citation should interrupt the text as little as possible; you want to lead the reader to the correct long-form citation in your Works Cited page with a minimum of fuss (116). There are two ways to do this – with a **signal phrase**, meaning the in-text citation will have only the page number(s), or with a **parenthetical citation**, meaning the in-text citation will include the author’s last name (or the title, for an authorless work) and the page number(s) (Howard 289).

**SIGNAL PHRASE**

The first sentence of the first paragraph on this page contains a signal phrase - "According to the *MLA Handbook*..." - with a page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. The signal phrase lets your reader know that you are paraphrasing or quoting an idea from someone else’s work. If your paper deals with a particular work of literature, or if you are relying heavily on the work of one or more sources, a signal phrase introducing the source is recommended.

Note that if you are quoting a source, the in-text citation always comes **after** the closing quotation mark.

**PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS**

The last sentence of the first paragraph on this page contains a parenthetical citation. Because the author’s name was not included in the text of the paragraph, a complete parenthetical citation was necessary. Note that when you quote from a source, your paper will flow better if you integrate the quote into a sentence.

**QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, & SUMMARIZING SOURCES**

When you quote a source, you include the author’s exact words in your text. Use "quotation marks" around the author's words. Include signal phrases and an in-text citation to show where the quote is from.

When you paraphrase or summarize a source, you restate the source’s ideas in your own words and sentence structure. Select what is relevant to your topic, and restate only that. Changing only a few words is not sufficient in paraphrasing or summarizing. Instead, you need to completely rephrase the author’s ideas in your own words. Since you are **rephrasing** the idea in your own words instead of quoting it, do not use quotation marks.

Always use in-text citations when you paraphrase or summarize so that the reader will know that the information comes from another source. Continue to use signal phrases as well.

For examples, see the next page.
AUTHOR NAMED IN YOUR PAPER

Format: Signal phrase with author's name, "quote" or paraphrase (page).

Duhigg argues that we can change our habits, but it can be a struggle to do so (20).

ONE OR TWO AUTHORS NOT NAMED IN YOUR PAPER

Format: Signal phrase, "quote" or paraphrase (Author page).

We can change our habits, but because they are deeply ingrained into the brain, it can be a struggle to do so (Duhigg 20).

THREE OR MORE AUTHORS NOT NAMED IN YOUR PAPER

Format: Signal phrase, "quote" or paraphrase (Author et al. page).

Although "research is a collective process, one shared and added to by all researchers," it is unacceptable to plagiarize someone else's work (Upson et al. 90).

NO AUTHOR

If the source has no named author, use the first main word in the title (or for a very short title, use the entire title).

Format: Signal phrase, "quote" or paraphrase (Shortened Title page). OR Signal phrase with title, "quote" or paraphrase (page).

Full Title: The Right to Die

One book states that "a death row inmate may demand his execution for notoriety" (Right 135).

The Right to Die states that "a death row inmate may demand his execution for notoriety" (135).

SOURCE WITH NO PAGE NUMBERS

When citing an article without page numbers in your paper, you will use paragraph numbers instead. Paragraph is abbreviated to par. (for one paragraph) or pars. (for 2 or more paragraphs).

Format: Signal phrase, "quote" (Author par. #).

According to DeRuy, a baby's caretakers “have an enormous role in creating an environment where children have both the freedom and support to learn” (par. 5).

Works Cited


