The KSU Writing Center

MLA STYLE

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

WHAT IS IT?

Modern Language Association (MLA) style is used for formatting and documenting work in English and other disciplines, particularly in the humanities. In MLA style, parenthetical citations are used to document sources in-text. Using MLA style correctly increases your credibility as a writer and avoids accidental incidents of plagiarism. Always defer to instructor or publication requirements.

For more information, consult our MLA Style "FORMATTING" and "WORKS CITED" handouts; an *MLA Handbook*, 8th edition; the *MLA Style Center* at style.mla.org; or visit the KSU Writing Center for one-on-one help.

IN-TEXT (PARENTHETICAL) CITATIONS

In-text citations accompany *all* paraphrased, summarized, or quoted material. In-text citations direct readers to the complete source information on the Works Cited page and thus must "match" the first term in the source's entry on the Works Cited page. (Typically, this term is the author's last name.)

- In-text citations provide the author's name and page number in one of two ways:
    1) Typically, you will integrate source information into your sentences through signal phrases ("According to Bacon,"). Signal phrases provide readers with useful author and/or context information. Place page number(s) in parentheses at the end of the sentence (or immediately after the source information if the rest of the sentence is your original idea).
    2) If no signal phrase is used, place the author's last name *and* the page number(s) in parentheses at the end of the sentence or immediately after the source information.

Verbs Commonly Used in Signal Phrases

acknowledges	claims	defines	hypothesizes	presents	remarks
adds	comments	delineates	illustrates	points out	replies
admits	compares	denies	implies	proposes	reports
advances	concludes	discloses	indicates	reasons	responds
affirms	confirms	discounts	insists	recounts	reveals
agrees	contends	disputes	maintains	refers	states
alludes to	contrasts	documents	narrates	reflects	suggests
argues	creates	explains	negates	refutes	supports
asserts	declares	expresses	notes	reiterates	theorizes
characterizes	emphasizes	highlights	observes	relates	writes

- Use quotations only when the author's exact wording is uniquely powerful or necessary for accuracy or context.
- Use your own words and voice to summarize and paraphrase but remember to cite and introduce (with a signal phrase) this material as well.
- If a source has no author, use the first term in the source's Works Cited entry.
- If a source has no pagination but has consistent numbering across editions (for example, chapters), include that identifying information (ch. 5). Do *not* use page numbers from website printouts.
- The parenthetical citation is always placed *before* a sentence's concluding punctuation except in the instance of a block quotation (see "Use of Sources" on our MLA "FORMATTING" handout).

IN-TEXT CITATION EXAMPLES

CITATION WITH A SIGNAL PHRASE

As literary theorist Bacon argues, "the vampire is in fact a manifestation brought into existence by the hero" (157).

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CITATION WITHOUT A SIGNAL PHRASE

Negative perceptions of the vampire in literature remain the norm despite the arguments of scholars that "the vampire is not trying to destroy the adolescent hero but is in fact a manifestation brought into existence by him" (Bacon 157).

INDIRECT CITATION (You are referencing another author/work cited within your source.)

According to Alan Meier, a researcher with Berkeley Laboratories, appliance power supplies are considered "energy vampires" due to their tendency to "consume power even when the appliance is switched off" (qtd. in Knapp 81).

TWO AUTHORS

Include last names of both authors.

(Strielkowski and Welkins 829) *or* Strielkowski and Welkins note, "…" (829).

THREE OR MORE AUTHORS

Include last name of first author followed by "et al."

(Carter et al. 52).

AUTHORS WITH THE SAME LAST NAME

If your sources include two or more authors who have the same last name, include the author's first name in a signal phrase or *first initial in the parenthetical citation.*

Based on the conclusions of researcher Stephen Smith, today's aspiring novelists would do well to remember the power the vampire figure still holds over readers (96).
The lure of the mysterious hero-villain is not the purview of vampires alone, however; the rise of the "handsome zombie" may give these princes of the night serious competition (J. Smith 315).

MULTIPLE WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

In in a signal phrase, mention both the author's name and the work's title. In a parenthetical citation, follow the author's name with a comma and a shortened version of the work's title.

In *Villain Prince*, Cruz refutes Smith's contention that literary vampire-heroes will grow in popularity (237).
Even detractors of zombie literature acknowledge the "appeal of the unlovable" (Cruz, "Zombie Decline" 19).

NO AUTHOR

Use the work's title. In a signal phrase, include the complete *title; use a shortened version in a parenthetical citation.*

According to "My Secret Life in the Coffin," many teachers are actually vampires.
Some autobiographical accounts suggest many teachers are actually vampires ("My Secret Life").

NO PAGE NUMBERS

Sources that don't provide numbering must be cited as a whole.

Even the CDC uses the current vampire craze to promote healthy eating ("Vampire Nutrition").

If the source has consistent numbering across editions (e.g., chapters or paragraphs), include those numbers with an identifier such as chapter or paragraph number.

Harker is dismayed to find no escape: "doors, doors everywhere, and all locked and bolted." (Stoker, ch. 2).

TIME-BASED MEDIA (i.e., video and audio recordings)

Include hour, minute, and second numbers separated by colons when citing time-based media.

Joyce tells Buffy she is proud to "have a daughter who thinks of others in a crisis" ("School Hard" 00:41:08-15).

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