**MLA In-Text Parenthetical Citation**


**Readability**  (MLA 6.3 216-217) {All samples from 6.3 except as noted}

Keep parenthetical references as brief—and as few—as clarity and accuracy permit. Give only the information needed to identify a source, and do not add a parenthetical reference unnecessarily. Identify sources by author and, if necessary, title; do not use abbreviations such as ed., trans., and comp. after the name. If you are citing an entire work, for example, rather than a specific part of it, the author’s name in the text may be the only documentation required.

Remember that there is a direct relation between what you integrate into your text and what you place in parentheses. If, for example, you include an author’s name in a sentence, you need not repeat the name in the parenthetical page citation that follows, provided that the reference is clearly to the work of the author you mention.

**Single Author’s Name in Text**

Tannen has argued this point (178-85).

**Single Author’s Name in Reference**

This point has already been argued (Tannen 178-85).

**Two-Three Authors’ Names in Text**

Others, like Jakobson and Waugh (210-15), hold the opposite point of view.

**Two-Three Authors’ Names in Reference**

Others hold the opposite point of view (e.g., Jakobson and Waugh 210-15).

**Note:** Note: If two or three names begin the entry, give the last name of each person listed: “(Rabkin, Greenberg, and Olander vii).”

**More Than Three Authors’ Name in Reference**  (MLA 6.2 214-215)

Note: If the work has more than three authors, follow the form in the bibliographic entry: either give the first author’s last name followed by *et al.*, without any intervening punctuation—“(Lauter et al. 2601–09)”—or give all the last names.
6.4.4. Citing a Work Listed by Title

In a parenthetical reference to a work alphabetized by title in the list of works cited, the full title (if brief) or a shortened version precedes the page, paragraph, section, or reference number or numbers (if any; see 6.2), unless the title appears in your text. When abbreviating the title, begin with the word by which it is alphabetized. If you are citing two or more anonymous works that have the same title, find a publication fact that distinguishes the works in their works-cited-list entries, and add it to their parenthetical references (see the “Snowy Owl” example). This fact could be the date of publication or the title of the work that encompasses the cited work. If you wish to cite a specific definition in a dictionary entry, give the relevant designation (e.g., number, letter) after the abbreviation def. (see the “Noon” example).

The nine grades of mandarins were “distinguished by the color of the button on the hats of office” (“Mandarin”).

International espionage was as prevalent as ever in the 1990s (“Decade”).

Even *Sixty Minutes* launched an attack on modern art, in a segment entitled “Yes . . . but Is It Art?”

In winter the snowy owl feeds primarily on small rodents (“Snowy Owl,” *Hinterland*), but in spring it also feeds on the eggs of much larger waterfowl, such as geese and swans (“Snowy Owl,” *Arctic*).

Milton’s description of the moon at “her highest noon” signifies the “place of the moon at midnight” (“Noon,” def. 4b).

*Voice of the Shuttle* has links to many helpful resources.

Works Cited


A presidential commission reported in 1970 that recent campus protests had focused on “racial injustice, war, and the university itself” (Report 3).

A New York Times editorial called Ralph Ellison “a writer of universal reach” (“Death”).

The classical Greek tragedy Medea, one of the most successful Broadway plays of the 1990s, made a lasting impression on me.

The database Duecento is an invaluable source for texts of medieval Italian poetry.

Perseus 1.0 revolutionized the way scholars conduct research on ancient civilizations.

In fresco painting, “the pigments are completely fused with a damp plaster ground to become an integral part of the wall surface” (“Fresco Painting”).

Works Cited


Citing Indirect Sources (MLA 6.4.7 226)

Whenever you can, take material from the original source, not a secondary one. However, sometimes only the indirect source is available. If the quoted/paraphrased material is itself a quotation, put the abbreviation *qtd. in* (“quoted in”) before the indirect source cited in the parenthetical reference. The indirect source (the work you have in hand) is listed in the Works Cited list.

Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” *qtd. in* Boswell 2:450.


Author’s Name in Text

It may be true, as Robertson maintains, that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance . . .” (136).

Author’s Name in Reference

It may be true that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance . . .” (Robertson 136).

Note: To avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur (preferably at the end of a sentence), as near as possible to the material documented. The parenthetical reference precedes the punctuation mark that concludes the sentence, clause, or phrase containing the borrowed material.

Example:
In his *Autobiography*, Benjamin Franklin states that he prepared a list of thirteen virtues (135-37).

A reference directly after a quotation follows the closing quotation mark.

Example:
In the late Renaissance, Machiavelli contended that human beings were by nature “ungrateful” and “mutable” (1240), and Montaigne thought them “miserable and puny” (1343).