**Basic In-Text Citation Rules**

**In-Text Citations: Author-Page Style**

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence. For example:

**Author’s name appears in the sentence:**

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

**Author’s name doe NOT appear in the sentence:**  
Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

**Paraphrase:**

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Both citations in the examples above, (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tell readers that the information in the sentence can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth.

**In-Text Citations for Print Sources with Known Author (books, magazines, scholarly journal articles, and newspapers)**

For Print sources like books, magazines, scholarly journal articles, and newspapers, provide a signal word or phrase (usually the author’s last name) and a page number. If you provide the signal word/phrase in the sentence, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical citation.

**Author’s name appears in sentence:**

Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3).

**Author’s name doe NOT appear in the sentence:**

Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

**In-Text Citations for Print Sources with No Known Author**

When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work (e.g. articles) or italicize it if it's a longer work (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire websites) and provide a page number.

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has "more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . ." ("Impact of Global Warming" 6).

In this example, since the reader does not know the author of the article, an abbreviated title of the article appears in the parenthetical citation. Thus, the writer includes the title in quotation marks as the signal phrase in the parenthetical citation.

**Citing Authors with Same Last Names**

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even the authors' full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. For example:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

**Citing a Work by Multiple Authors**

For a source with **three or fewer authors**, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

**or**

The authors state "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

For a source with **more than three authors**, use the work's bibliographic information as a guide for your citation. Provide the first author's last name followed by et al. or list all the last names.

Jones et al. counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (4).

**Citing Non-Print or Sources from the Internet**

**Note: When using an electronic version of a newspaper, magazine or journal article, follow the rules for Print Sources.**

Sometimes writers are confused with how to craft parenthetical citations for electronic sources because of the absence of page numbers, but often, these sorts of entries do not require any sort of parenthetical citation at all. For electronic and Internet sources, follow the following guidelines:

* Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry that corresponds to the citation (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).
* You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser’s print preview function.
* Unless you must list the website name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, 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>.

Film

The movie, American History X, explores the complicated relationships between different races in America.

Internet Video

The *You Tube* clip, “Week 6: Colons and Semicolons,” distinguishes the difference between using a colon and a semicolon in a sentence.

Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/>