MLA Quick Guide

In-Text Citation

When you use a source in your text, you also briefly tell us who said it (the author[s]), and where that information was found (page number, if you have it). It makes it easy for readers to find the source’s entry in the works cited page(s). Here are some examples of in-text citation:

**MY SOURCE HAS ONE AUTHOR**

Oluo explains cultural appropriation as “the adoption or exploitation of another culture by a more dominant culture” (146).

OR

When the dominant culture profits from or emulates characteristics of a historically oppressed or marginalized culture, this is called cultural appropriation (Oluo 146).

**MY SOURCE HAS TWO AUTHORS**

Cats can’t create a vacuum because their cheeks aren’t complete. This is why they lap up water with their tongues (Durrani and Kalaugher 117).

OR

Durrani and Kalaugher describe cats’ cheeks as “incomplete,” which is why they don’t suck up water with their mouths, but rather lap it up with their tongues (117).

**MY SOURCE HAS THREE OR MORE AUTHORS**

Most children who used the art therapy methods as a way to cope with the pain and stress of various medical procedures requested it again for future procedures (Favara-Scacco et al. 474).
Your Works Cited Page

This is an alphabetical list of your sources that goes on a separate page at the end of your project. Each type of source (book, journal article, film, etc.) has its own special citation format. Note these somewhat tricky things:

- Books, journals, and collections of smaller works are italicized.
- Smaller works that are found in larger collections (for example, an article in a journal, or an essay in a book) have quotation marks around the titles.
- Works cited entries are formatted with a hanging indent (see examples below).

**MY SOURCE IS A BOOK**


**MY BOOK HAS TWO AUTHORS**


**MY BOOK HAS MORE THAN THREE AUTHORS**


**MY BOOK IS AN E-BOOK**


**MY SOURCE IS A JOURNAL ARTICLE I FOUND ONLINE (WITH A DOI)**


**MY SOURCE IS A JOURNAL ARTICLE I FOUND ONLINE (WITHOUT A DOI)**

**MY SOURCE IS A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE I GOT ONLINE**


**MY SOURCE IS A WEBPAGE**


**More Questions:**

**Q. What if my source doesn’t have an author?**

Most scholarly articles and books will have this information, but there are some resources out there without a clear author. If you can’t find an author listed, you might either use the organization as author, or, if the organization and publisher are the same, you can start your reference with the title of the work. Here are those two examples:

In-text citation: (National Senior Service Corps 24-28).


In-text citation: (“A Brief History of Opera”).


**Q. I don’t have a date anywhere on my source. Can I still use it?**

Yup. Just skip that part of the works cited entry. If you found the source online, however, do include an accessed date.
Q. My source is just a PDF I found online. How do I cite that?

In-text citation: (Ryan, 2016).


Q. Two of my sources have the same surname. How will people know who I’m referring to in my text?

Your in-text citation can include the author’s first initial.

(P. Hemsley 92).

Q. I’ve got a source-within-a-source situation. How do I cite that?

This is called an indirect source. While you should try to cite the original work, here’s what that looks like if you can’t:

Kjesrud argues that content is always more important than correct grammar, “whatever that is” (qtd. in Winningham 14).

Q. What does a reference look like for a podcast?


Q. This handout doesn’t answer my question; where can I go for more help?

Try the MLA Style Center at https://style.mla.org. It has many more examples you can view.
Q. Why should I care about citation anyway?

Here are just a few reasons:

• Proper citation allows other scholars to find your resources if they want to learn more.
• It’s important to give credit where credit is due. If you use other people’s ideas and words, you should identify who they are and acknowledge their work.
• When you incorporate others’ opinions and research into your work, it gives you credibility; it shows you’ve done the research and that there are experts that back up your claims.
• If you fail to properly cite your sources, that could be considered plagiarism, even if your intentions are good.

Notes: