

In-text citation: The MLA Style (9th edition/2021)**1. Narrative Citation (Citation in Prose) versus Parenthetical Citation:**

In-text citation directs your reader to the entry in the works-cited list. Thus, it begins with whatever comes first in the entry: the author's name or the title of the work. The citation can appear in your prose or in parentheses; **e.g.**

Naomi Baron broke new ground on the subject (5).

Narrative citation

At least one researcher has broken new ground on the subject (Baron 5).

Parenthetical citation

Work cited

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193–200.

Note: state the page number when a specific part of a work is quoted or paraphrased. **e.g.**

Quote:

According to Naomi Baron, reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

Narrative citation

Reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (Baron 194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

Parenthetical citation

Paraphrase:

As Walter A. McDougall argues, for the founding fathers American exceptionalism was based on the country's domestic identity, which foreign policy did not shape but merely guarded (37).

Narrative citation

Work cited

McDougall, Walter A. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*. Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Note: Use shortened titles in parenthetical citations when there is no author; **e.g.** the book's title is *Reading at Risk*. In parenthetical citations write (Reading).

2. In-text Citation Format: One Author

When stating an author's name for **the first time** in prose, use his/her first and last names in your sentence. For **subsequent citations**, use only the last name in your sentence or in a parenthetical citation. **For example:**

According to Xingjian Gao, "Literature in essence is divorced from utility" (7). Gao adds, however, that the market for publishing works is constricted by politics (13).

Narrative citation

Literature's aesthetic and social roles have been debated in the West at least since Plato. The global landscape in which so much literary production takes place, however, has revealed just how diminished—if not "wretched" (Gao 15)—the individual creator has become.

Parenthetical citation: only last name/surname

3. In-text Citation Format: Two Authors

If you are mentioning the authors **for the first time** in prose, include both first names and last names. In a parenthetical citation connect the two last names with 'and'. **For example:**

Jay Lemery and Paul Auerbach note that doctors have not yet adequately explained the effects climate change will have on human health (4-5). Lemery and Auerbach's book focuses on the human, not the environmental, risks.

Narrative citation

Some authors note that doctors have not yet adequately explained the effects climate change will have on human health (Lemery and Auerbach 4-5).

Parenthetical citation: only last names

4. In-text Citation Format: Three Authors or More (Coauthors)

If you refer to the coauthors in your prose rather than in a parenthetical citation, you may **list all** the names **or** provide the name of **the first author followed by “and others” or “and colleagues.”** In a parenthetical citation, list the last name of the first author and ‘et al.’ **For example:**

Raymond Nickerson and colleagues argue that the truth value of statements—their premises and conclusions—is one factor that affects how people are persuaded by arguments (135).

The authors argue that the truth value of statements—their premises and conclusions—is one factor that affects how people are persuaded by arguments (Nickerson et al. 135).

5. Organisation as Author (Corporate Author): the name of the organisation is shortened in parenthetical citations to the shortest noun phrase, while initial articles (a, an, the) are excluded.

According to a study by the National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society, the “speed of warming is more than ten times that at the end of an ice age, the fastest known natural sustained change on a global scale” (9).

According to one study of climate change, the “speed of warming is more than ten times that at the end of an ice age, the fastest known natural sustained change on a global scale” (National Academy 9).

Note: the Modern Language Association of America **can be shortened to** Modern Language Association. However, the American Historical Association **cannot be shortened**.

6. Two Authors with the Same Last Name: use the first name of each author in prose and initial letter of first name in parenthetical citations; **e.g.** the two authors Jaimie Baron and Naomi Baron share the same last name:

Having read Naomi Baron’s argument that writing is the “other half” of literacy (194), one might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

Reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (N. Baron 194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.

Works cited

Baron, Jaimie. *Reuse, Misuse, Abuse: The Ethics of Audiovisual Appropriation in the Digital Era*. Rutgers UP, 2020.

Baron, Naomi S. “Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media.” *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193–200.

Exception: if the two authors share the same first name initials, use first names in parenthetical citations; **e.g.**

As one scholar notes, reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (Naomi Baron 194). Scientists must be able to successfully communicate why their research matters—and not just with one another. A recent study argues that the way scientists have been trained to communicate “leaves policymakers out of the loop” (Nancy Baron 90). Training scientists to write for a general audience is therefore just as important as promoting science literacy among our political leaders.

7. Two or More Works by the Same Author (s): you have to include a shortened title of the work you are citing from in one of the following three forms:

A-Author’s Name in Prose and Title in Parenthetical Citation

According to Horner and colleagues, “Growing numbers of U.S. teachers and scholars of writing recognize that traditional ways of understanding and responding to language differences are inadequate to the facts on the ground” (“Language Difference” 304).

B-Author’s Name and Title in Prose

In “Language Difference in Writing”, Horner and colleagues suggest that “[g]rowing numbers of U.S. teachers and scholars of writing recognize that traditional ways of understanding and responding to language differences are inadequate to the facts on the ground” (304).

C-Author's Name and Title in Parenthetical Citation

According to a recent article, "Growing numbers of U.S. teachers and scholars of writing recognize that traditional ways of understanding and responding to language differences are inadequate to the facts on the ground" (Horner et al., "Language Difference" 304).

Works cited

Horner, Bruce, et al., editors. *Cross-Language Relations in Composition*. Southern Illinois UP, 2010.

Horner, Bruce, et al. "Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach." *College English*, vol. 73, no. 3, Jan. 2011, pp. 304–21.

Note: if you have **two or more works by the same author that have the same title** use square brackets for information supplied to distinguish them in in-text citation such as an edition number or the name of a contributor like an editor/editors; **e.g.** (Curse [3rd ed.] 45)

8. Unknown Author: A Work Listed by Title: write the title either in prose or in a parenthetical citation; **e.g.**

Reading at Risk notes that despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, "the number of people doing creative writing—of any genre, not exclusively literary works— increased substantially between 1982 and 2002" (3).

Despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, "the number of people doing creative writing—of any genre, not exclusively literary works—increased substantially between 1982 and 2002" (*Reading* 3).

Work cited

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America. National Endowment for the Arts, June 2004.

Note₁: in parenthetical citations shorten the title if it is longer than a noun phrase. For example, *Faulkner's Southern Novels* consists entirely of a noun phrase and cannot be shortened. By contrast, *Faulkner's Novels of the South* can be shortened to its initial noun phrase, *Faulkner's Novels*. Do not forget to exclude any initial articles (a, an, the).

More examples about shortening titles:

"Traveling in the Breakdown Lane: A Principle of Resistance for Hypertext"	"Traveling"
"You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media"	"You"
How to Avoid Huge Ships	How to Avoid
In the Time of the Butterflies	In the Time
So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish	So Long
"I Wonder Whether Poor Miss Sally Godfrey Be Living or Dead"	"I wonder"

Note₂:

-**Titles of books** are italicized. **e.g.** (*Teaching Speaking* 7)

-**Titles of articles, chapters, essays, and web pages** are in quotation marks. **e.g.** ("Impact of Global Warming" 6).

Note₃: Instead of using shortened titles in parenthetical citations, you may use abbreviations. **For example:**

The narrator in Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer* (*Sym.*) smugly asserts that liars have the fullest understanding of the world around them: "For just a moment I saw the truth in her eyes, and the truth was that she hated me for what she thought I was, the agent of an oppressive regime" (*Sym.* 9-10).

In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*MND*) the couples' many troubles exemplify Lysander's remark that "[t]he course of true love never did run smooth" (*MND* 1.1.134).

-**Note that** 1.1.134 in the above parenthetical citation stand for act 1, scene 1, line 134. If you use more lines write their numbers ; **e.g.** 1.1.134-36

Note₄: Do not use abbreviations in prose. Instead, use a shortened title, such as *Midsummer* for *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

9. Multiple Citations/Sources (the same idea/statement is stated by many authors)

When a single fact or paraphrased idea is attributable to more than one source, you should provide all the sources in the parenthetical citation, separating them with semicolons. The order of the sources (alphabetic, by importance, by date) is up to you. **e.g.** (Baron 194; Jacobs 55)

In a citation of multiple works by the same author, the titles (shortened if necessary) are joined by ‘and’ if there are two; otherwise, they use the serial comma and ‘and’.

(Gluück, “Ersatz Thought” and “For”)

(Gluück, “Ersatz Thought,” “For,” and Foreword)

10. Multivolume Works

A-If you borrow from only one volume of a multivolume work that does not have a unique title: the number of the volume is specified in the entry in the works-cited list and does not need to be included in the in-text citation. **e.g.,**

“In a few short months,” Rampersad explains, “Hughes had become virtually the house poet of the most important journal in black America” (48).

Work cited

Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes*. 2nd ed., vol. 1, Oxford UP, 2002

B-If you borrow from more than one volume: include a volume number and page number in the in-text citation, separating the two with a colon and a space. It is not necessary to use the words volume and page or their abbreviations. **e.g.,**

“The contributions to criticism of semantics, sociology, psychoanalysis, and anthropology are largely new,” writes Wellek, acknowledging that the problems addressed by criticism in the modern era have historical specificity, too (1: 5). Ultimately, he asserts, “An evolutionary history of criticism must fail. I have come to this resigned conclusion” (5: xxii).

Work cited

Wellek, René. *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750–1950*. Yale UP, 1955–92. 8 vols.

Exception:

If you refer parenthetically to an entire volume of a multivolume work, place a comma after the author’s name and include the abbreviation vol. **e.g.**

During World War II, Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt experienced marital troubles (Cook, vol. 3).

Work cited

Cook, Blanche Wiesen. *Eleanor Roosevelt*. Penguin Books, 1992–2016. 3 vols.

11. Indirect Sources

Use the abbreviation ‘qtd. In’ (quoted in) when you cannot find the original source.

Samuel Johnson claims that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 289).

Note: The abbreviation qtd. in is not needed if your prose makes it clear that the source is secondhand.

Example:

In a speech urging listeners to reject physical destruction and to seek mutual understanding, Robert F. Kennedy quoted Aeschylus: “In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God” (16).

12. Short Quotations

If a prose quotation runs no more than four lines in your paper and requires no special emphasis, place it in quotation marks and incorporate it into your prose. **e.g.**

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” wrote Charles Dickens of the revolutionary moment during the eighteenth century (87).

Note₁: You may quote just a word or phrase instead of a complete sentence. **e.g.** For Charles Dickens the revolutionary moment during the eighteenth century was both “the best” and “worst” of times (87).

Note₂: If a quotation is inserted within a quotation use single quotation marks. **Example:**

In *Bilingual*, François Grosjean explains that “in the sentence ‘Look at the corns on that animal,’ the meaning of the French word cornes (horns) has been added to that of the English word ‘corn’” (70).

13. Long/Block Quotations

A quotation that runs more than four lines of prose (or more than three lines of verse) should be set off from the text as a block indented half an inch from the left margin, without quotation marks. The punctuation mark (the dot) comes before the parentheses. **For example:**

In *Moll Flanders*, Defoe follows the picaresque tradition by using a pseudoautobiographical narration:

My true name is so well known in the records, or registers, at Newgate and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there relating to my particular conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work. . . .

It is enough to tell you, that . . . some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm . . . know me by the name of Moll Flanders. . . . (1)

Encouraged by technology, we have developed

a notion of reading that structurally privileges locating information over deciphering and analyzing more-complex text. This structural bent becomes increasingly important in planning educational curricula as the number of online courses (along with online readings) skyrockets and as readers flock to e-books because they are nearly always less expensive than their print counterparts. We must not let pedagogical and economic pressures cause us to lose sight of the question of whether a new notion of reading is emerging, in which deep and sustained reading (for work or pleasure) runs second to information gathering and short-term distraction. (Baron 200)

Note₁: Your explanation of how you altered a quotation is separated from the citation by a semicolon. When you put a word in *Italics* you write: ‘emphasis added’ or ‘my emphasis’. **Examples:**

Lincoln specifically advocated a government “*for* the people” (emphasis added).

“When drafting his speech, Lincoln *doubtlessly* recalled the language of Daniel Webster and Theodore Parker” (Baron 194; my emphasis). However, when the word is already italicised in the original source you write: (Baron 194; emphasis original).

Note₂: A quotation introduced by a verb of saying (e.g., writes, says, states, exclaims) is introduced by a comma when integrated into your prose and by a colon if set as a block quotation.

In *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo writes, “We have all had those moments of distress when everything falls apart inside us. We say the first thing that occurs to us, which is not exactly what should be said” (1246).

Note3: Use square brackets to indicate change or for clarification. **For example:**

Of our personal belongings, Hilary Mantel writes, “[T]hey will be our witnesses when we are gone.”

He claimed he could provide “hundreds of examples [of court decisions] to illustrate the historical tension between church and state” (35).

Note4: Whenever you omit a word, a phrase, a sentence, or more from a quoted passage use dots/ellipses or three spaced periods.

14. Enumerating paragraphs, sections, and lines: when a source has no page numbers or any other kind of part number, no number should be given in a parenthetical citation. Do not count unnumbered paragraphs or other parts. The same for quotations.

Paragraph	<i>par./pars.</i>
Section	<i>sec./secs.</i>
Chapter	<i>ch./chs.</i>
Line	<i>Line/lines</i>

Examples:

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft recollects many “women who, not led by degrees to proper studies, and not permitted to choose for themselves, have indeed been overgrown children” (185; ch. 13, sec. 2). **Note that the page number is mentioned first**

“What is it about us human beings that we can’t let go of lost things?” asks the author (Silko, ch. 2).

In sonnet 73, Shakespeare compares the branches of trees in late autumn to “[b]are ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang” (line 4).

Willy Loman admits to his wife, “I have such thoughts, I have such strange thoughts” (Miller 9; act 1).

15. Citing a personal communication (including emails, telephone conversations, interviews...)

-In a phone conversation with Robert Santiago last month, he indicated that...

Works cited: Santiago, Robert. Personal communication with author. 11 Feb. 2017.

-In his last email, Collette Pierson explained that...

Works cited: Pierson, Collette. E-mail to the author. 1 June 2019.

16. Citing a Dictionary/Encyclopaedia

1-If the author/editor is known, use it, **e.g.**(Barber 67).

2-If there is no author, use a shortened title of the entry (one, two or three words), **e.g.**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, racism is.....(“Racism”).

17. Time Stamps

For works in time-based media, such as audio and video recordings, cite the relevant time or time span if it is displayed. Give the numbers of the hours, minutes, and seconds as displayed in your media player, separating the numbers with colons, with no space on either side. **For example:**

Buffy’s promise that “there’s not going to be any incidents like at my old school” is obviously not one that she can keep (“Buffy” 00:03:16–17).

Source: *MLA Handbook*. 9th ed., e-book ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2021.