

USING MLA STYLE

USING IN-TEXT CITATION

This brief handout was compiled using the *MLA Handbook*, seventh edition. For further information, please refer to Chapter 6 in the handbook.

In-text citation is a brief reference to the source of other writers' words or ideas you use in your text. This reference is meant to help the reader locate the corresponding bibliographic entry in the Works Cited section at the end of your paper.

- When you borrow other writers' words or ideas, **indicate the author and page number** of the source in parentheses.
 - One of the paradoxes of democracy is that "individual freedom is possible when there is discipline regulated by the society" (Doe 23).
 - Do not insert a comma between the author's **last name** and **page number**; place the punctuation sign after the parenthetical reference.
- If you have already mentioned the author's name before the quotation, you only need to write the **page number** in the parentheses.
 - John Doe discusses this paradox of democracy when "individual freedom is possible when there is discipline regulated by the society" (23).
- Give the name of the author of an **article or chapter** and not that of the editor, compiler, or translator when you use works from an anthology or compiled volume.
- If two or more last names are similar, add the **first initial**; if the initials also coincide, write **full names**.
 - (J. Doe 23)
 - (John Doe 23) (Jimmy Doe 141)
- If you quote more than once **from the same page of the same work** within the same paragraph in your essay and if no quotation from another source intervenes, you may give a single parenthetical citation **after the last quotation**.
- If you cite **two or more works by the same author**, add the title of the work between author name and page reference. Shorten a long title the using key word(s). Note the comma here.
 - (Doe, *Policy* 87)
- For **two or three authors** of the same work, cite all last names. There should be a comma before "and."
 - (Doe, Smith, and Williams 183-84)
- For **more than three authors**, you have two options: either write the first author's last name followed by "et al." or list all names. Do not use a period after "et" or a comma after "al."
 - Doe et al. argued that technology is not value-free (122).

- Technology is not value free (Doe et al. 122).
- Treat the name of **corporate author** like the name of a person.
 - (United Nations Commission for East Asia 12-15)
 - If a name is long, try to shorten the common terms.
 - (UN Commission for East Asia 12-15)
- If the source has only a title but **no author**, as with web pages that do not mention their creator, give that title, shortened or in full. Note that “no author” can raise a credibility issue.
 - (“Green Day” 12)
 - If you cite an entire work, you need not include page number.
 - John Doe’s *Fifty Simple Things for a Greener World* is a handy pocket guide for everyone.
- For **electronic** and other **nonprint sources** that do not have page numbers, try to give the section or paragraph number and indicate that the number does not refer to a page. You need not give a page number of a one-page source. Note the use of punctuation when a word or phrase comes between author name and page number.
 - (Doe par. 3)
 - (“Myth of Poverty” pt. 3)
- Try to **avoid interrupting the flow** of your writing by placing the parenthetical citation where a pause or punctuation occurs in the sentence; also try to place the parenthetical citation where it will best **distinguish the idea** taken from another source and your own idea.
 - It is true that in a democracy individual freedom is possible when discipline is regulated by the society (Doe 23), but the question is not whether we can have one or the other; the question is how we can have both.
- If you cite from **multiple volumes** of a work, **mention the volume number** and use a **colon** before the page number.
 - (Doe 2: 173)
 - If you cite the entire work and do not have the page number within the parentheses, you should indicate volume (“vol.”) because readers can confuse volume number with page number. Note the comma.
 - (Doe, vol. 2)
- Whenever possible, take material from the **original source**. If you can only find an indirect source, for example a published account of what someone said, and you have to quote a quotation, put the abbreviation for “quoted in” before the source citation.
 - Individual freedom “should not take precedence over social welfare” (qtd. in Doe 4).
- For works like the **Bible** or literary **classics** that are available in multiple editions, try to give more than the page number. For instance, include the section, chapter, or verse number, after the page number and a semi-colon.
 - (Doe 143; pt. 1 ch. 1)
- When you cite **more than one work** within the same parenthetical reference, separate the authors with a semicolon.
 - (Doe 30-43; Admin. and Research Dept. 25-35)