



Writing Research Papers

MLA In-Text Citation (Print and Electronic Sources)

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The **Modern Language Association (MLA)** has provided a system of citing source material in research papers and in any paper for general publication. The MLA system is used in the arts, humanities, religion, philosophy, communications, English, foreign languages, and in some of the historical sciences. The other major form of documentation is **APA (American Psychological Association)**, mainly used in the sciences and social sciences.

Copyright laws state that anyone, under the fair use doctrine, can use printed material for research and educational purposes as long as credit is given for specific ideas and thoughts.

MLA in-text documentation is not the same as listing the entire source and publication facts on a **Works Cited** page. **In-text documentation** refers to a **specific page or to a very specific fact or idea within the entire work**.

The cited material can be paraphrased (reworded) or direct quotations. Paraphrasing is strongly recommended to avoid random quotations or excerpts that sometimes do not need quoting. **Failure to paraphrase or reword the exact phrasing in the source is a form a plagiarism.** Plagiarism also means failure to give credit to the original source (author and/source).

The credit usually consists of naming the author and/or source and the specific page(s) from which the idea or fact was taken. If a source has no author, use an abbreviated title in quotation marks (for books, underline).

This documentation is included in parentheses at the end of sentences and/or short paragraphs. Generally, remember that the documentation refers to the idea in the sentence, not to an entire long paragraph, except in short summaries.

**The basic standard form for a source with an author is:
(Jones 5).**

**The basic standard form for a source without an author is:
("Biology Today" 5).**

(Note that the period for the entire sentence is after the last parentheses, not after the sentence. Also, the abbreviations **p.** or **pg.** or **pgs.** are not used.)

In a **paraphrased sentence**, the in-text documentation would be:

A recent research study at Harvard has concluded that the human genome project needs more modification in order to be applied to medical practices (Jones 5).

If the sentence contains any **quoted material coming at the end of the sentence**, the in-text documentation would be:

A recent research study at Harvard has concluded that the human genome project "...needs extensive field testing, laboratory modification, and replication modeling" (Jones 5).

If the **source or author is actually named or mentioned within the paraphrased material**, the in-text documentation lists only the page number:

Henry Jones in "Biology Today" from Harvard University has concluded that the human genome project needs more modification (5).

For electronic sources, the page numbers (or lack of any) from the printing are not the same as the original, published pages, so page numbers are not included.

Printed Sources (Basic Types without Mention of Source in Paraphrased Material)

- ▶ **Book, Single Author** (Renwick 6).
- ▶ **Book, Multiple Works by Same Author** (Renwick Biology 6). **OR** (Renwick “Genome” 6).
(needs shortened title)
- ▶ **Book, Two or More Authors** (Smith, Jones, and Renwick 6). **OR**
Names in text: Smith, Renwick, and Jones found a different conclusion (6).
- ▶ **Book, Four or More Authors** (Renwick et. al. 6).
- ▶ **Government Publications** (Investigation of Safety 28). **Note: Author of these publications is a government agency; use shortened title**
- ▶ **Pamphlet (same as book)** (Renwick 8). **OR** (IRS Exemptions 8).
- ▶ **Multivolume Work** (Renwick 9: 235). (name + volume number : page number)
(each volume by different author)
- ▶ **Author Quoted in Another Source** (qtd. in Renwick 6).
- ▶ **Newspaper or Magazine Article, No Author** (“Korea’s Bomb” 6).
- ▶ **Encyclopedia or Dictionary (terms)**
Author (Barnes 646).
No Author (“Cryonics”). **(Note: Listed in Works Cited first as term)**
- ▶ **Play or Drama** (Coriolanus 1.6.45). **(Note: Act I, Scene 6, line 45)**
- ▶ **Poetry** (lines 5-8).
- ▶ **Work in an Anthology** (O’Connor “Good Man” 45).
- ▶ **Sacred Texts** (Bible Acts 2.38). **(Note: Not listed in Works Cited)**
(Koran 2.6).

Non-Print and Electronic Sources (No Mention of Source in Paraphrased Material)

- ▶ **Film or Video** (Gone With the Wind).
- ▶ **Play or Drama** (Coriolanus 1.6.45). **(Note: Act I, Scene 6, line 45)**
- ▶ **Radio or Television Program** (Amazon Explorations).
- ▶ **Interview** (Hodges). **(Note: Last name of person interviewed)**
- ▶ **Lecture or Public Address** (Hansworthy). **(Note: Person giving lecture)**

Electronic and Internet Sources (No Mention of Source in Paraphrased Material)

Sources taken from the Internet through various search engines require some additional information. Since the purpose of an in-text documentation is to refer the reader to the Works Cited page, the complete entry requires the URL address at the end.

For in-text documentation, however, the **Internet sources are basically treated the same as print sources with one major exception.**

Electronic sources will have no page numbers since the page numbers on the printed copy will not match the original pages of the source. Also, some sources, such as websites or listings for organizations, may not even have page numbers. Give only the author's last name (Johnson); if there is no author, list an abbreviated title, books underlined (Science Today), articles in quotation marks ("Levy Taxes).

Note: Some course instructors may want you to number the paragraphs in the printed version and use these instead of page numbers: ("Civil War" parag. 2).

Finally, many electronic sources do not have authors but are published by organizations (Dept. of Labor, "Medicine") With no authors, **use an abbreviated title in quotation marks (Evolution)**

**For more details, examples, and explanations, consult the most recent edition of
the grammar handbook used in ENC 1101 or ENC 1102.**

