

# MLA

## Quotation and Parenthetical Citation

The following is adapted from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2016.

Use quotations selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. The accuracy of quotations in research writing is extremely important. They must reproduce the original sources exactly. Unless indicated in brackets or parentheses, changes must not be made in the spelling, capitalization, or interior punctuation of the source. You must construct a clear, grammatically correct sentence that allows you to introduce or incorporate a quotation with complete accuracy. You may paraphrase the original, and you may choose to quote only fragments.

When quoting an author for the first time in your text, be sure to give the author's first and last names as well as the full title of the work to which you are referring. From that initial point on, the author may be referred to by his or her last name only. If you refer to the author in the sentence, you need to add only a page number at the end of the quotation, but if you do not mention the author in text, then you must include the author's last name and page number in the parenthetical reference.

Examples for common in-text citations are listed below.

### **A parenthetical citation when the author's name is shown in text:**

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.

### **A parenthetical citation when the author's name does not appear in text:**

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

**A quotation consisting of forty or more words (Note that the period comes before the parenthetical citation in this circumstance):**

The forms of writing that accompany reading

can fill various roles. The simplest is to make parts of a text prominent (by underlining, highlighting, or adding asterisks, lines, or squiggles) More-reflective responses are notes written in the margins or in an external location—a notebook or a computer file. (Baron 194.)

All these forms of writing bear in common the reader's desire to add to, complete, or even alter the text.

**A parenthetical citation when the author shares the same last name as the author of another source:**

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.

**A parenthetical citation when the author has contributed more than one work:**

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

**A parenthetical citation when information is combined from more than one source:**

While reading may be the core of literacy, literacy can be complete only when reading is accompanied by writing (Baron 194; Jacobs 55).

**A parenthetical citation from a source with an anonymous author (Use a shortened version of the title of the work):**

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary reading in America 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 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).

**A parenthetical citation from a source with paragraph numbers instead of page numbers:**

There is little evidence here for the claim that “Engleton has belittled the gains of postmodernism” (Chan, par. 41).

**A parenthetical citation from a source with no page or paragraph numbers:**

“As we read we . . . construct the terrain of a book” (Hollmichel), something that is more difficult when the text reflows on a screen.

**A parenthetical citation from an audio or video source with a time or range of times:**

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

**A parenthetical citation for an indirect source:**

Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 2: 450).