

MLA: Parenthetical Documentation

Whenever you use information or ideas from another text in your paper, you must indicate what work you used and where in the text you found it. Parenthetical documentation (or references) also must clearly point to specific sources in the Works Cited list. References such as the ones below can be found in the 9th edition of the MLA Handbook, available at the UWC.

1. Typical reference: single author

In medieval art appreciation, “the attitude of the observer is of primary importance” (Robertson 136).

2. Author’s name in text

In medieval art appreciation, Robertson states that “the attitude of the observer is of primary importance” (136).

3. A work by two authors

Write out both last names, either in the citation or in the text

The death penalty is not warranted because of all the innocent people who have been found on death row (Jacobsen and Waugh 210).

4. A work by three or more authors

Only list the first author, followed by et al. (which means “and others”)

The European powers believed they could change the fundamentals of Moslem existence (Bull, et al. 395).

5. A work in multiple volumes

If more than one volume listed in works cited page, include volume number: page number

The French Revolution had a great influence on William Blake (Raine, 1: 52).

6. A work without an author

Use a shortened version of the title beginning with the first word on works cited page

Ralph Ellison is “a writer of universal reach” (“Death” A18).

7. An indirect source

Use the abbreviation qtd. in

Wagner stated that myth and history stood before him “with opposing claims” (qtd. in Thomas 65).

8. Information from more than one place in a work

Separate page numbers with a comma

Although the two lovers are part of the world of romance, their language of love nevertheless becomes “fully responsive to the tang of actuality” (Zender 138, 141).

9. Same information in more than one work

Separate references with a semicolon

The Brooklyn Bridge has been used as a subject by many American artists (McCulloch 144; Tashjian 58).

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10. An article in a reference work, print or online

Titles of works that appear in something larger (a book, magazine, newspaper, reference database) always appear in quotation marks

Through innovative research and design, Honda is a contender in the hybrid vehicle industry (“American Honda”).

11. An article in an online journal

Journal citations include the last name of the author. If the source lacks page numbers, use a paragraph or section number if available, or omit numbering in your citation

Among recent trends in youth music culture, perhaps none has been so widely reviled as the rise of a new generation of manufactured “teenybopper” pop acts (Wald, par. 1).

12. A website

If possible, always use the author, rather than the title, of the site. If no author is given, use a shortened version of the title beginning with the first word on works cited page. Use page, paragraph, or section numbers only if they are given in the text.

The utilitarianism of the Victorians “attempted to reduce decision-making about human actions to a ‘felicific calculus’” (Everett).

13. A work with a corporate author

The population of China around 1990 was increasing by more than 15 million annually (National Research Council 15).

14. A direct quote which runs more than four lines (block quotation)

Indent entire quote two tabs (1 inch), double spaced, with no quotation marks. Note that the punctuation comes before the citation.

The pseudo autobiographical narration typical of the picaresque tradition is shown here:

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. (Defoe 1)

For more information, please refer to:

MLA Handbook. 9th ed., The Modern Language Association of America, 2021.