

MLA IN-TEXT CITATIONS – THE BASICS

The works cited list is one half the necessary documentation for academic work in MLA style. In-text citations complete your documentation by identifying the exact places where you used specific sources. In-text documentation may be by **direct reference**, by **parenthetical note**, or by combination of **direct reference and note**. In-text citations point the reader to the first element of the alphabetized works cited list and often provide specific location information. For more detail see *MLA Handbook* pp. 54-58, 116-28 and our handout on advanced in-text citations.

General Rules:

The parenthetical note becomes part of the sentence, usually at the end, followed by the period.

In direct references in your work, use full names of authors on first reference, then use just last names. For parentheticals where names are necessary, use only last names unless you have multiple authors with same last name.

Do not use p. or pp. in notes. Those abbreviations only appear on the works cited list.

PRINT AND PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT (PDF) SOURCES

One author source, first direct mention:

Harvard language expert Steven Pinker warns that when multiple readers comment on a problem, the writer should revise (75-76).

One author, note only:

When multiple readers comment on a problem, the writer should revise (Pinker 75-76).

Two authors, second or later direct mention of these authors:

Pinker and Chomsky suggest . . . (24).

Two authors, note only:

(Pinker and Chomsky 24).

Three or more authors, direct mention:

Pinker et al. say . . . (45).

Three or more authors, note only:

(Pinker et al. 45).

Print sources without named authors (alphabetized by title in works cited list):

"Sticker Shock" confirms the increase in college costs in all fifty states in the US (21).

A Vanderbilt University report confirms college cost increases across the US ("Sticker Shock" 21).

Work Cited

"Sticker Shock." *Vanderbilt*. Summer 2016, pp. 21-23.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Most Web and other electronic sources do not have established, uniform pagination or other division markers. Do NOT number paragraphs or add divisions if you find none in the original (*MLA Handbook* 56, 123). If you give the first element information in your text, you will not need any parenthetical at all.

Follow the author/title pattern for print sources. For most Web sources, that information completes the documentation:

"Affording Vanderbilt" confirms that over half the students attending Vanderbilt University receive financial aid.

Over half the students attending Vanderbilt University receive financial aid ("Affording Vanderbilt").

For time-based media, for example, DVDs, CDs, *Netflix*, and *YouTube*, the parenthetical information includes specific times or range of times: hour, minutes, and seconds. Colons separate these elements.

Asked if he might return for the 2020 Olympic games, Usain Bolt said, "Definitely not" ("Usain Bolt" 00:00:25-28).

ONE SOURCE QUOTED IN ANOTHER SOURCE (The Indirect Source)

Sometimes one source quotes another source. For example, a periodical may report a spoken remark by an unidentified person at a meeting. For indirect sources, use a *qtd. in* note whether you quote or paraphrase:

At a FrackingSENSE meeting, audience members were asked to employ a new form of protest called "fully licensed respiratory protest," sighing, gasping, and snorting rather than blocking the free speech of others with shouts (qtd. in Limerick 18).

Asked to express themselves in a way that didn't block the free speech of others, protesters at a FrackingSense meeting were encouraged not to shout but to express themselves through an approved form of protest breathing, using sighs, gasps, and snorts (qtd. in Limerick 18).

Work Cited

Limerick, Patricia. "Fractured." *High Country News*, 22 Feb. 2016, pp. 14-18.