

INCORPORATING SOURCES INTO YOUR PAPER (Lester 155ff)

To avoid plagiarism, you must cite the author and the page number for each direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary used in your paper. This type of citation, according to the MLA style guidelines, is called either parenthetical reference or parenthetical documentation.

The format for Parenthetical Documentation

MLA in-text documentation provides two basic ways to cite sources:

1. Cite the name of the author, often including his or her credentials, to introduce the borrowed material with the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

E.g. John Armstrong, a spokesperson for Public Electronic Access to Knowledge (PEAK), states, “As we venture into this age of biotechnology, many people predict gene manipulation will be a powerful tool for improving the quality of life” (467).

2. Place both the author’s name and the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

E.g. According to one source, “As we venture into this age of biotechnology, many people predict gene manipulation will be a powerful tool for improving the quality of life” (Armstrong 467).

Usually the first method is preferred. When would it not be preferred?

*When his name would be distracting as in the conclusion

Technical Details

1. Place the final period after the parenthetical reference.

*The exceptions would involve question marks or exclamation points that are part of a direct quotation; include these marks inside the quotation marks, while placing a period after the parenthetical reference.

E.g. The philosopher Thompson asks, “How should we order our lives?” (16).

2. Insert one space at the end of your source reference, before the parentheses.
3. Within the parenthetical reference, insert one space between your author’s name and the page number, without a comma.

Special Situations in Parenthetical Documentation

1. For an unlisted or anonymous author, use a shortened form of the title (or whatever comes first in the source’s bibliographic entry) in your in-text citation. (See Lester 157).