

# A Writer's Companion to MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION (MLA)

## IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Based on the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

*Intended Uses and Disclaimers:* Please note that consultants do not provide copyediting services for citation styles. Instead, this worksheet is intended to help prompt writers to learn for themselves how to work with citations appropriately. These are the basic rules for in-text citations; please be aware that there are other details (citing indirect sources, citing a source with multiple authors, etc) that may require consultation with the MLA handbook or your professor.

**When to Cite:** Writers provide citations to create a “paper trail” for other scholars: the citations enable other scholars to find and read any source cited in the text. You should always provide a citation for **quotations**, so that your readers can locate a quotation in its original source text. You should also always provide a citation for **paraphrased** information--information that you found in your research that isn't common knowledge to your target audience—so that readers can also locate that original source.

### In-text Citations

- Parenthetical citations use as little ink on the page as possible. There's thus **no comma** after the author's name and **no “p.”** to set off the page number in an in-text citation: i.e., (Smith 24).
- End-of-the sentence punctuation goes **after the final parenthesis** (unless it's a block quotation).
- **What goes in a parenthetical citation?** The **first information** presented for an entry on the Works Cited page (often, but not always, the author's last name), plus a **page number** (if available). Do NOT add page numbers for websites or html documents. i.e., (Smith 24)
- Check *each* parenthetical citation in the body of the paper and make sure it's **matched** to a listing in the Works Cited list.

### Working with Quotations In-Text

- If you have **removed any words** from the quotation, mark that erasure with **ellipses** (. . .) to notify readers of the change you have made.
- If you have **inserted any words** into the quotation, place **brackets** [ ] around the insertion to notify readers of the change you have made. Similarly, if you modify a portion of a word, place that modification in brackets (i.e., “notify[ing] readers of the change you have made” is important).

- If the quotation takes up more than **four lines** in your own text, format it as a **block quotation**.
- In a **block quotation**, the period at the end of the sentence is placed **before** the parenthetical citation.
- **No quotation marks** are placed around **block quotations**; the indentation marks the lines as a quotation.
- Quotations appear with **signal phrases** (i.e., all quotations should be embedded in a sentence of your own).