

While you are studying liberal arts or the humanities, you may be asked to put papers into Modern Language Association (MLA) format. MLA is a uniform format that makes it easier for readers to locate the information they are looking for.

In all academic papers, quotes or paraphrased material from outside sources need to be cited within the text. MLA format uses a type of in-text citation, called “parenthetical citation,” to identify information from other sources. Parenthetical citations help the reader locate the source’s complete information on the works cited page.

## Basic Format

In most cases, include author’s name and the page number on which the cited material can be located in parentheses. Place the parentheses after the quote and before the period.

*Example:*

The governess realizes that she is “under a charm apparently that could smooth away” the children’s strange behavior (James 37).

## Placement Rules

- Without interrupting sentence flow, place the citation as close the quoted/paraphrased information as possible.
- When information from the same source is used multiple times within a paragraph, only one citation is needed at the end of the paragraph.
- Although information is usually placed after the material and before the period, there is an exception for block quotes (quotes with more than four lines of material). In these situations, place the citation after the period.

## Basic Rules Dealing with the Authors’ Names

- If the author was already introduced in the sentence, his/her name does not need to be included in the parenthetical citation.
- If there is **more than one work by the same author cited throughout the paper**, include an abbreviated version of the title, along with his name and relevant page numbers within the citation.
- If **more than one author has the same name**, include the first names within the text or within the citation.
- If there are **two or three authors**, place all of the authors last names in the text before hand, or in the parenthetical citation.
- If there are **four or more authors**, place the first author’s last name followed by et al. either in the text or in the citation.
- If there is **no author**, use the title or, if it’s long, an abbreviated title in the text or citation.

## Works Cited

Russell, Tony, Allen Brizee, and Elizabeth Angeli. “MLA Formatting and Style Guide.” *The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 4 Apr. 2010. Web. 20 July 2010.

“MLA Format.” *Library Guide: University Library*. California State University, Mar. 09. Web. 17 Oct. 2013.

“MLA Parenthetical Documentation.” *MLA Parenthetical Documentation*. Literacy Education Online, 16 Mar. 2004. Web. 27 Oct. 2013.