In-text citations: How to give credit to (cite) sources inside your paper (the narrative) (MLA style – Modern Language Association)

MLA style uses the author and page number when citing sources within the text/narrative, whether you’re paraphrasing or making a direct quotation.

- If you include the author’s name in the narrative you only need to include the page number in parentheses. Ex. Walker compared reaction times in 2001 tests (379).

- If you don’t include the author’s name in the narrative then put it and the page number in parentheses, no comma. Ex. He found it in a 2001 study of reaction times (Walker 379).

- If you use two or more sources by the same author, pick one keyword from title (instead of author’s name) and give the page number. Ex. That meat from cows fed on grass is more nutritious … is just one of the many arguments Pollan makes (Omnivore 68).

Paraphrasing one work by multiple authors or a corporate/government author:
If your article, book or web site has 2 or 3 authors you must always use both of them in your in-text citations. Ex. … as has been shown (Joreskog and Sorbom 119).

If your work has 4 or more authors you may cite all the authors OR list only the first author and et al. Ex. … this was found to be true (Wasserstein, Zappulla, Rosen, Gerstman, and Rock 22).

Ex. The testing was concluded in 1985 (Wasserstein, et al. 324-6).

If your work has a corporate author or is a government document, use the full name of the corporation or government office, unless there is a common shortened form of it.
Ex. In a pamphlet published by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, the Keweenaw National Historic Park is described as giving a “view of the birth of an industrialized society” in the United States.

Direct quotations:
If you use a direct quotation or image in your paper, you must state what page (if an article, book) or paragraph (if a web site) the quotation or image came from.
Ex. “……..” (Cheek and Buss 332). Ex. “……..” (Myers 5).

Short in-text samples:

In her article on two nineteenth-century women preachers, Patricia Bizzell argues that “a conjunction between the female sex and moral activism is traditional in Methodism” (379).

One writer on nineteenth-century women preachers argues that “a conjunction between the female sex and moral activism is traditional in Methodism” (Bizzell 379).

To “watch the rejects crash and burn” is why we watch American Idol, according to RollingStone magazine (“Idol Worship” 28).

As “much an activist as an analytical method” is how two online reviewers describe McAllister’s approach to computer games (Moeller and Mobery 195).
Works Cited


Food, Inc. Los Angeles: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2008. DVD.


