

MLA Style: In-Text Citations

WHAT ARE IN-TEXT CITATIONS?

In-text citations are little tags that show your reader where you found the information you are quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing. Every in-text citation corresponds to the source's full citation, which is listed at the end of the paper in the Works Cited page.

WHY DO I NEED IN-TEXT CITATIONS?

In-text citations give credit to the authors that have helped you shape your ideas. They also help your reader find the full source citation in your Works Cited page. With your in-text citations and your Works Cited page, your reader can see how well you integrated research into your paper.

WHAT GOES INTO AN IN-TEXT CITATION?

An in-text citation includes the following two things. Note the color coding: we'll see it in some examples below.

- The author's **last name**
- The **page number**, if any *****(note: web sources do not have page #s; you may use paragraph #s instead)**

WHAT DOES AN IN-TEXT CITATION LOOK LIKE?

Well, you have some choices. In general, you can include the author's name in a signal phrase at the beginning of a sentence, or you can include both the author's name and the page number in a parenthetical citation at the end.

1. Signal Phrase Citation

A signal phrase helps you introduce the ideas of the author you quote, summarize, or paraphrase. You can make a basic signal phrase with nothing more than the author's last name and a verb (such as argues, notes, believes, suggests, etc.).

In a signal phrase citation, the author name shows up at the beginning of the sentence, and the page number (in parentheses) shows up at the end of the sentence.

Examples:

According to **Andrews**, in-text citations are easy to create **(4)**.

Bullock and Weinberg note that "if you mention the author in a signal phrase, put only the page number(s) in parentheses"**(139)**.

Snyder suggests that writers use a combination of in-text citation styles **(26)**.



In-Text Citations (Cont'd)

2. Parenthetical Citation

A parenthetical citation is one where the author's name and page number show up in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

This is a good option when you are summarizing or paraphrasing. It's also a good option when you've already mentioned/cited an author or source in your paper, since you don't need to introduce the author again through a signal phrase.

Examples:

In-text citations are easy to create (Andrews 4).

It is important to remember that "if you mention the author in a signal phrase, put only the page number(s) in parentheses" (Bullock and Weinberg 139).

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THESE RULES?

Here are a few little details to keep in mind:

1. Sometimes sources don't have **page numbers** (like in a website article), and that's okay—you don't need to include anything additional, unless your professor asks for a paragraph number (para #).
2. Sometimes sources don't have **authors** (like a governmental website or encyclopedia entry). Use the article title or organization name in place of the author in your signal phrase/citation.
3. The way you list author names for a source may change depending on how many authors there are:

One author: (Andrews)

Two to three authors: (Bullock and Weinberg)

Four or more authors: (Andrews et.al.)

4. Sometimes you will need to quote something that was quoted within the source you are citing (a research article that quotes an important theorist, for example). In that case, use the abbreviation "qtd. in", as in:

(qtd.. in Andrews 4)

WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

From Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL):

[In-Text Citations](#)

