

This short video tutorial will focus on the basic set up for in-text citations, also called parenthetical references, in MLA format.

It is first helpful to get an idea about why in-text citations are important and when they should be used.

In MLA, you should use citations in parentheses, within the text, to let your audience know when you have borrowed information and where that information has come from.

Most students know to cite direct quotes, but it is important to remember you must also include in-text citations for summarized and paraphrased information. You are not just citing words; you are citing ideas.

The basic in-text citation in MLA format includes the author's last name and the page number.

Here, you will see the basic version of an in-text citation. Here are two examples. In the first example, you see a citation for Nietzsche with a page number of 125 and then another basic citation with the last name LeGuin and a page number of 828. You should notice that MLA requires no commas between the author's name and the page number.

<points mouse to citation with number 827>

If you use the author's last name to set up your quoted or paraphrased material, you do not need to repeat the author's last name in the citation. You would just include the page number, as you see here, with the number 827 in the in-text citation.

<points mouse to citation with the name Brantlinger>

If you are citing an electronic source with no page numbers, as in this instance, you would just include the author's last name. However, some professors will prefer a paragraph number, so you would want to check on the requirements if you run into this situation.

Although we do not have an example here, if you find a credible source that does not have an author, you would simply place the title of the work in your in-text citation and follow the basic MLA rules from there.

In closing, the important thing to remember about in-text citations in MLA format is to cite any ideas you borrow and to include only the required information in your in-text citation. Full publication information will be saved for your works cited list.