Any time you refer to, comment on, paraphrase, or quote another writer’s information, you must document this in your essay through the use of a citation. The purpose of an MLA in-text citation, sometimes called a parenthetical reference, is to help readers easily find the sources in the Works Cited page that correspond to your referenced passage. You will want to make this process as easy as possible for the reader, so the citations are always placed at the end of the sentence and should always correspond with the **first word of the matching Works Cited** page entry. Let’s suppose that this is a sentence from your essay:

The author explains, “Record deals were usually negotiated by elite businessmen” (Hennessey 127).

Your reader should be able to turn to the Works Cited page and easily find the bibliographic information for this source. It might be listed like this:

Hennessey, William. *The Making of Records in Memphis*. Atlanta: Capital Book Press, 2001.

Notice that the author’s name in the citation corresponds to the first word of the Works Cited entry. This makes it really easy for the reader to find and match up information, which is the purpose of in-text citations.

Two primary elements of a quoted passage should be given to the reader:  **1) the author’s last name and 2) the page number** where the referenced passage is found. The page number is always included in the citation at the end of the sentence, but the author’s last name can be placed either in the citation or in the sentence. Here are a few items to remember concerning in-text citations:

**No “page” or “pg.” or “p.#” or any other variant is used to indicate the page number.**

**End punctuation goes at the end of the citation, not at the end of the passage.**

**Author’s name can either be placed in the citation or in the sentence.**

**No comma or other punctuation mark is needed to separate the author’s name and the page number.**

**Here are a few of the most common in-text citations that you might need to write in your essay:**

**One author:**

Example 1: Louis Armstrong easily reached difficult notes, the F’s and G’s that hindered so many other trumpeters (Bergreen 258).

Example 1a: Bergreen explained, “Louis Armstrong easily reached difficult notes, the F’s and G’s that hindered so many other trumpeters” (258).

* Note: If the work has no page numbers (i.e. website) simply put the author’s last name in parentheses.

**Two or three authors of the same work**:

*Example 3*: In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson suggest that metaphors “actually structure our perceptions and understanding” (57).

*Example 3a*: In Metaphors We Live By, the authors suggest that metaphors “actually structure our perceptions and understanding” (Lakoff and Johnson 57).

* Note: If the work had three authors the citation would read (Lakoff, Johnson, and Smith 57). Remember that there is no comma between the names and the page number, and all authors must be listed either in the sentence or in the citation.

**Four or more authors of the same work:**

*Example 4*: Changes in social regulations are likely to cause new fears among voters (Carber et al. 64).

*Example 4a*: Carber et al. claim that changes in social regulations are likely to cause new fears among voters (64).

* Note: Only the first author, followed by the term "et al." is listed either in the sentence or in the citation. Don't forget to place a period after "al" since it is an abbreviation of a Latin word, but no period is used after “et.”

**A work with no author (an organization or website):**

*Example 5:*According to The Center for Contemporary Cultural studies, “There is nothing concrete about hierarchy” (10).

*Example 5a*: “There is nothing concrete about hierarchy” (Center 10).

* Note: When we don’t have a known author or editor, we can use the book title (in italics), the article title (in quotation marks), or the Web site title (in italics).  If we include this title in our sentence, we should write out the entire title. If we include it in our citation, we can shorten it using the first keyword (just be sure that your reader can still find the corresponding entry in your Works Cited page).

**Quick Reference Examples:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Author's name in text** | Dover has expressed this concern (118-21). |
| **Author's name in reference** | This concern has been expressed (Dover 118-21). |
| **Multiple authors of a work** | This hypothesis (Bradley and Rogers 7) suggested this theory (Sumner, Reichl, and Waugh 23). |
| **Two locations** | Williams alludes to this premise (136-39, 145). |
| **Two works cited** | (Burns 54; Thomas 327) |
| **Multi Volume - References to volumes and pages** | (Wilson 2:1-18) |
| **Multi Volume - References to an entire volume** | (Henderson, vol. 3) |
| **In text reference to an entire volume** | In volume 3, Henderson suggests |
| **Corporate authors** | (United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa 51-63) |
| **Works with no author**When a work has no author, use the work's title or a shortened version of the title when citing it in text. (If abbreviating a title, omit initial articles and begin with the word by which it is alphabetized in the Works Cited list.): | as stated by the presidential commission (*Report* 4). |
| **Online source with numbered paragraphs** | (Fox, pars. 4-5) |