Preparing Parenthetical References
MLA Format – Sample Citations

Parenthetical reference notes are brief acknowledgments within your research paper wherever you incorporate another’s words or ideas. They identify the source of the information for the reader and enable the reader to locate the source in the works cited at the end of your paper. Authors’ names and page numbers are given in parentheses within the running text or at the end of block quotations. In all cases, the first name or word listed in the parenthetical reference must correspond with the first name or word in the list of works cited.

EXAMPLE OF PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras in the sixth century BC (Marcuse 197).

The parenthetical reference above indicates that the information on the monochord comes from page 197 of the book by Marcuse included in the alphabetically arranged works cited page that follows the text of your research paper. It enables the reader to find the complete publication information for the source as listed below:


Author as used in the following sample references means the name under which the work is alphabetized in the works cited page and may refer to an editor, compiler, organization, or group of authors. The abbreviations “ed.” and “comp.” are not given in the text references but do appear in the works cited entries.

When the list of works cited contains only one work by the author cited, you need to give only the author’s last name to identify the work (though you would, of course, have to indicate the first initial, if two authors in the list of works cited had the same last name).
• If the list of works cited contains more than one work by the author, add the cited title, or a shortened version, after the author’s last name.

Identify the location of the borrowed information as specifically as possible. Give relevant page numbers(s) or, if citing from more than one volume of a multivolume work, the volume and page number(s).

**WORK WITH SINGLE AUTHOR**

(Harrison 37)

**WORK WITH TWO OR THREE AUTHORs**

(Berelson and Ritchie 19)

(McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil 42)

List the authors in the order in which they appear on the title page.

**WORK WITH MORE THAN THREE AUTHORs**

(Greenberger et al. 51)

**CORPORATE AUTHOR**

(United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa 79-86)

**WORK LISTED BY TITLE**

(New York Times Atlas 39)

If the work is listed by title, use the title or a shortened version.

**AUTHOR’S NAME LISTED IN THE TEXT**

Frye has argued this point before (178-85)

If you include the author’s name in the sentence, you need not repeat it in the parenthetical page citation that follows. It will be clear that the reference is to the work of the author you have mentioned.
CITING A WORK LISTED BY TITLE
In a parenthetical reference to a work alphabetized by title in the list of works cited page, the full title (if brief) or a shortened version precedes the page or section number or numbers, unless the title appears in your text. When abbreviating the title, begin with the word by which it is alphabetized.

International espionage was as prevalent as ever in the 1990s (“Decade”).

The entry in the works cited page looks like this:


WEB PUBLICATIONS
When citing a Web publication that has no pagination, it is often preferable to include the author’s name in the text rather than in a parenthetical reference.

Example:

Elizabeth Rappe observes that Frank Miller can’t be blamed for thinking visually; “he is a comic book man, after all.”

The works cited page entry looks like this:


Text and sample citations were prepared using the following sources:


If you do not find an appropriate citation format for a source you are using or if you have any other questions, please ask for help at the Reference Desk.

Updated 5/02 PC, 8/09 PCR