

# Citing Sources in the Text

## Modern Language Association

### (MLA) Style

There are many different guidelines for formatting papers. Your professor may require you to follow a particular style for your assignments. Using a style guide lends consistency to how you show where your research came from.

The MLA citation style uses parenthetical in-text references to document sources used in the paper. In this style, sources are briefly identified within the text of a research pa-

per, using the author's surname and the page number of the specific material being used in the paper. At the end of your paper, you are to include a detailed list of all the sources (called a **Works Cited** list). References in your paper must point clearly to the corresponding entries in your Works Cited list.

The following examples briefly illustrate how to cite sources using the MLA style. For further clarification and examples of texts, please consult the [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#), 6th ed. (LB 2369 G53 2003).

For tips on citing electronic sources, consult the other side of this page. See our other handout on how to prepare your Works Cited list in MLA style. (Note: the numbers in square brackets refer to the rule number found in the manual.)

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## Examples of parenthetical documentation

### One author [6.3]

Give the author and page number in parentheses when citing a source. Note: If you include the author's name in your sentence, and it is clear which work you are referring to, you only need to give the page number in parentheses.

#### **Example:**

Leisure time should not be considered time wasted or an unproductive pursuit (Gower 2).

#### **OR:**

As Susan Gower argues, leisure time should not be considered unproductive or wasted time (2).

### Two or three authors [6.3]

Include each author's surname in the first and all subsequent citations to a source with two or three authors.

#### **Example:**

A recent study shows that many people plan their leisure time in advance in order to ensure that they allow time for it in their hectic schedules (Jackson and Mackaray 206).

### More than three authors [6.3]

If there are more than three authors, follow the format of the Works Cited list entry: either give all the last names or give the first name only, followed by *et al.*

#### **Example:**

A recent study supports the notion that people schedule specific leisure time into their work week (Smith et al. 35).

### No author [6.3]

For a source where there is no apparent author, cite by the full or shortened title of the work. (Put article titles in quotation marks and underline book titles.)

#### **Example:**

Those surveyed believed that all of the activities they chose as part of their leisure time were entertaining ("Fun to be had" 14).

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## Citing Quoted Material

### Short quotation (up to 4 lines of text) [3.7; 6.3]

If you are directly quoting a short passage from a source, place the quoted words in double quotation marks, with a citation at the end, inside a period to end the sentence. (See 6.4.8 for examples of citations to literary and religious works.)

#### **Example:**

Theories can shed light on how we view our leisure time activities: "No matter what we do, there is never enough time to accomplish everything on our 'to-do' lists" (Carlaw 24).

## Citing Quoted Material continued

### **Long quotation (over 4 lines of text) [3.7; 6.3]**

For a quotation that occupies more than 4 lines of text in your paper, indent one inch from the left margin and double space. This is called a block quotation. Long quotes do not require double quotation marks. Place the citation outside the final punctuation of the quoted passage.

#### **Example:**

Ralithan theorizes the causes behind our perceived loss of free time in the digital world:

Technology has undoubtedly increased the speed at which we can complete tasks. . . . However, it seems that just as we complete one assignment, another is added to our list. This speed has not liberated our schedules, but rather we have filled them with ever more work as our technological capabilities have grown. Yes, we can indeed complete twice the work in half the time, but we are not any more at leisure than we were before. (39)

**Note:** Ellipsis points (spaced periods) are used to indicate where you have omitted words, phrases, or sentences within a quotation. Use three periods for the ellipsis, and add a fourth if the omission includes the end of a sentence in the original. (See 3.7.5 for more instructions on how to format an ellipsis.)

### **Citing indirect sources [6.4.7]**

While it is always best to take material from the original source, not at second-hand, sometimes you may need to use indirect sources. If you quote or paraphrase from a quotation in your source, use *qtd. in* (“quoted in”) before the citation of the source you have used.

#### **Example:**

Even varsity athlete Joe MacDonald acknowledges that making time for relaxation, no matter how beneficial, “is pretty well impossible until exams are over for another term” (qtd. in Winters 165).

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## Citing Electronic Sources

### **Citing a source with page numbers [6.4.2]**

Cite by author’s surname and page number, where these are available (e.g., in a PDF document). Use the page numbers of the original document—not what your printer or browser adds to the bottom of each page. This will make the citation look just like one for a print source; the entry in the Works Cited list will document the electronic format.

### **Citing a source without page numbers [6.4.1; 6.4.2]**

When pages are not numbered, you should cite the entire work. For clarity, it is preferable to include in your text the name of the person (e.g., author) or the title of the work, whichever begins the corresponding entry in the Works Cited list. If your source uses paragraph numbers rather than page numbers, give the relevant number preceded by the abbreviation *par.* or *pars.*

#### **Examples:**

1. [with page numbers]: “The study of leisure time,” Alison Mulcahy asserts, “will become increasingly important as the population ages” (22).
2. [no page numbers]: Dr. Ian MacDonough points out that “relaxing during your leisure time cannot compensate for a generally unhealthy lifestyle.”
3. [no page numbers]: Not everyone includes the time they spend exercising as part of their overall leisure time (Institute for Leisure Research, par. 3).

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Gibaldi, Joseph. [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#). 6th ed. New York : Modern Language Association, 2003.