

## MLA Format: Quoting (p. 100)

Quoting can be effective when someone else's words are the focus of analysis or perfectly express an idea. Quotations are most effective in research-based writing when used selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Always explain the relevance of the quotation to your point. Your project should be about your own ideas, and quotations should help you explain or illustrate those ideas and how you arrived at them.

## In-Text & Parenthetical Citations (pp. 228-230)

An in-text citation is one where a signal phrase is used to introduce the author name or source name along with a quote and ending with a page number. A parenthetical citation must be used if the author or source name is not used in a signal phrase along with a quote. Additionally, a parenthetical citation should be used when paraphrasing to give proper credit.

### Examples:

#### In-Text Citation

Naomi Baron broke new ground on the subject.

#### Parenthetical Citation\*

At least one researcher has broken new ground on the subject (Baron).

#### In-Text Citation (incorrect)

According to Naomi Baron, reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (Baron 194).

#### In-Text Citation (corrected)

According to Naomi Baron, reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (194).

#### Work Cited

Baron, Naomi S. “Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media.” *PMLA*, vol. 128, no.1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

\* In parenthetical citations, use only the part of an author's name, usually the surname only.

### Types of Quoting (pp. 255-256 & pp. 272-277)

How you integrate quotations and paraphrases into your prose and where you place in-text citations can help you distinguish the words and ideas of others from your own and maintain fidelity to the source.

**Short Quotations:** If a quotation runs no more than four lines in your paper and requires no special emphasis, place it in quotation marks and incorporate it into prose. Always add the punctuation mark after the parenthesis at the end of the citation if using a page number or parenthetical citation.

**Examples:**

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” wrote Charles Dickens of the revolutionary moment during the eighteenth century.

For Charles Dickens the revolutionary moment during the eighteenth century was both “the best” and “worst” of times.

“He was obeyed,” writes Joseph Conrad of the company manager in *Heart of Darkness*, “yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect” (87).

**Long Quotations (Block Quotations):** A quotation that runs more than four lines in your prose should be set off from the text as a block indented half an inch from the left margin. Do not indent the first line an extra amount or add quotation marks not present in the source. Add the punctuation mark before the page number at the end.

**Example:**

In *Moll Flanders*, Defoe follows the picaresque tradition by using a pseudoautobiographical narration:

My true name is so well known in the records, or registers, at Newgate and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there relating...

It is enough to tell you, that... some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm... know me by the name Moll Flanders...(1)

**Modifying Quotes:** If working with quotes, especially long ones, consider using only parts of a quote or paraphrasing. You can modify a quote while keeping true to its source in a number of ways. The most common method is to use short quotations or to use ellipses. As long as you maintain fairness to the source you are using and are grammatically correct, modifications to quotes can occur as necessary. Long quotes can also include ellipses. Brackets can also be used to indicate changes you made to a quote to better fit your grammar or point or to clarify details.

**Examples of Quote Modifications:**

Short Quote

In his inaugural address, John F. Kennedy spoke of a “new frontier”.

Quotation with an Ellipsis in the Middle of the Quote

According to Jennifer Homans’s ballet history, *Apollo’s Angels*, “Americans trained by Balanchine... engaged in all manner of distortions to achieve speed and a long, aerodynamic line” (xvii).

Quotation with an Ellipsis at the End of the Quote

Commenting on the techniques of different national schools of ballet, Homans remarks, “Americans trained by Balanchine, for example, raised their hip in *arabesque* and engaged in all manner of distortions...” (xvii).

Brackets for Clarification\*

1. He claimed he could provide “hundreds of examples [of court decisions] to illustrate the historical tension between church and state.”
2. Following Bartleby’s refusal, the narrator sits at his desk in “deep study [contemplation].”

\*Brackets can be used to make additions for clarification, including what a quote may be referring to.

### Paraphrasing (pp. 98-100)

This method is highly recommended for students to use and uses important information from a source but in your own words.

#### Examples of Paraphrasing:

##### The source says:

“American Exceptionalism as our founders conceived it was defined by what America *was*, at home. Foreign policy existed to defend, not define, what America was.”

##### Paraphrase (unacceptable)

American exceptionalism as the founding fathers envisioned the concept was given meaning by America as a homeland. Programs focused on other countries were there to protect America, not delineate it.

##### Paraphrase (acceptable)

As conceived, American exceptionalism was based on the country’s domestic identity, which foreign policy did not shape but merely guarded.

##### Example of Paraphrasing with Citation

As Walter A. McDougall argues, for the founding fathers American exceptionalism was based on the country’s domestic identity, which foreign policy did not shape but merely guarded (37).

### Citation Scenarios (pp. 230-250)

**One Author:** If you do not give the author’s name in a signal phrase, put the last name in parentheses with the page number (if the source has one). Use no punctuation between the name and the page number if using a parenthetical citation, such as (Moran 351).

Ex: “Small changes in your eating habits can lower your risk for man of the diseases associated with aging” (Parker-Pope), so it’s never too early to evaluate you diet.

**Two Authors:** Name the authors in a signal phrase, as in the following example, or include their last names in the parenthetical reference, such as (Gostin and Gostin 214).

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Ex: As legal scholars Gostin and Gostin explain, “[I]nterventions that do not pose a truly significant burden on individual liberty” are justified if they “go a long way towards safeguarding the health and well-being of the populace” (214).

**Three or More Authors:** In order to avoid using all the listed names, you can shorten the accredited authors by using the first name that appears in the source followed by “et al.”. This signals to the reader that there are more than 1 collaborators, but you won’t be listing them in your sentence.

Ex: The authors Hecate et al. believed that society did not have good morals during that time period.

Ex: So, “the organization fell because of its hubris” made sense as the story alluded to the destruction of the group earlier on (Kirsten et al. 67).

**No or Unknown Author:** If a source has no author, the works cited entry will begin with the title. In your in-text citation, either use the complete title in a signal phrase or use a short form of the title in parentheses. If you are still unsure about what to do or use in this situation, such as if you get your information from a government website, then consider using the name of the organization as the author instead (as seen on the next page).

Ex: As a result, kids see nearly four thousand ads per year encouraging them to eat unhealthy food and drinks (“Facts”).

**Organization as Author:** When the author is a corporation or an organization, name that author either in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation.

Ex: The American Diabetes Association estimates that the cost of diagnosed diabetes in the United States in 2012 was estimated at \$245 billion (Amer. Diabetes Assn.).

**Website as Author:** When you find a source on a website, you can either treat it as a “No Author” or “Organization as Author” situation depending on the amount of information you have about your source. Using “Organization as Author” is recommended, though. This suggestion should be followed especially when the essay indicates that the website holds/wrote the source being discussed.

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**Sources with 1 or No Page Number:** If the source is one page long, it is a good idea to include the page number; without it readers may not know where your citation ends or, worse, may not realize that you have provided a citation at all. If there are no page numbers to provide, then you don't have to add in the information unless your professor says otherwise.

Ex: Sarah Conly uses John Stuart Mill's "harm principle" to argue that citizens need their government to intervene to prevent them from taking harmful actions—such as driving too fast or buying unhealthy foods—out of ignorance of the harm they can do (A23). But government intervention may overstep in the case of food choices.

In addition, if there are no page numbers given, but there are details such as numbered lines, chapters, sections, or paragraph numbers, then you must cite accordingly. You can shorten them as par./pars. for paragraphs, sec./secs. for sections, ch./chs. for chapters, and line/lines for lines.

Ex. In sonnet 73, Shakespeare compares the branches of trees in late autumn to "[b]are ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang" (line 4).

Ex. "What is it about us human beings that we can't let go of lost things?" asks the author (Silko, ch. 2).

**Citing Multiple Pages:** If a quote or paraphrase is based off a portion that spans more than 1 page, then you can use a dash to indicate the range. If the pages are out of order, then you include them in the order they were cited as. The same goes for whether there are no page numbers: use the appropriate label (such as "chs") and add in the names or values accordingly and in the order of use.

Ex. The narrator smugly asserts that liars have the fullest understanding of the world around them: "For just a moment I saw the truth in her eyes, and the truth was that she hated me for what she thought I was, the agent of an oppressive regime" (Nguyen 9-10).

Ex. Louis Menand notes that we have "very litter hard information" and that "data on graduate education are notoriously difficult to come by" (29, 28).

**Citing Audio or Video:** These sources tend to be time-based so use a relevant timestamp including hours, minutes, and seconds to identify your citation.

Ex. Buffy's promise that "there's not going to be any incidents like at my old school" is obviously not one that she can keep ("*Buffy*" 00:03:16-17).

**Citing an Indirect Source:** An indirect source is one that is cited within another source. So, we'll use "qtd. in" to indicate that you are citing a source, but not the original one.

Ex. Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd. in Weisman 259).

**Citing an Image:** If there are images in your essay that you would like to refer to, then you can refer to them as figures, such as "Fig. 1". Before that, you must label them appropriately and fill out their information to prevent plagiarism. Then, you can refer to the images in your paper and cite them according to the artist or source author of the image.

Examples of image captions:

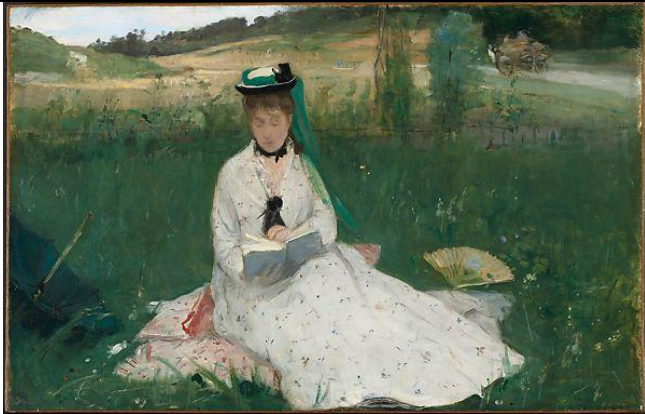


Fig. 1. Berthe Morisot. *Reading*. 1873, Cleveland Museum of Art.

(This would not require a Works Cited entry because the information is complete and in proper format)



Fig. 4. Edward Topsell, *Manticore*, woodcut, 1658.

(This uses commas, is not complete, and would require a Works Cited entry at the end of the paper)

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**Plays / Poetry:** For verse plays, give act, scene, and line numbers, use Arabic numerals, and separate the numbers with periods. For a poem, cite the part, stanza, and line numbers, if it has them, separated by periods. Make sure to you a forward slash, “/”, to signal a line break in the source.

Examples:

Play

In Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Gloucester learns a profound lesson from a tragic experience: “A man may see how this world goes / with no eyes” (4.2.148-49).

Poem

The Green Knight claims to approach King Arthur’s court “because the praise of you, prince, is puffed so high, / And your manor and your men are considered so magnificent” (1.12.258-59).

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### References:

“MLA in-Text Citations: The Basics.” *MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University*, The On-Campus Writing Lab & The OWL at Purdue and Purdue University.,  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_in\\_text\\_citations\\_the\\_basics.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html).

*MLA Handbook*. 9th ed., The Modern Language Association of America, 2021.

**Disclaimer:** We did not include all of the resources conferred to formulate this handout. We encourage students to conduct further research to find additional resources. The format of this list is not commensurate with a standard format.