

## MLA In-Text Citations Overview

There are three essential elements to MLA in-text citations in academic writing.

- Signal Phrase
- Cited/Quoted Material
- Location Information

The **signal phrase functions as an indicator** or flag, signaling the fact that the material to come is drawn from an outside source.

- This helps to distinguish your own ideas from those of your sources, giving proper credit to the author(s) being cited and thus avoiding plagiarism.
- Signal phrases also help a reader to locate and verify the material you are citing by providing information that links to items on your works cited page.

Example signal phrases:

- According to legal expert, John Dawes...
- In *Hammers and Nails*, Clark argues...
- Scholars have suggested that...
- Author JOHN DOE claims...

### Types of Citations:

When citing a source, you have the option of creating a **direct quotation** or a **paraphrased citation**.

- **Direct quotation:** Use quotation marks and do not change the language of the quotation.
- **Paraphrased Citation:** Do not use quotation marks. Maintain the original idea from the source, but change all the language so that you are not borrowing any phrasing from the original source.

**Quoted and paraphrased citations follow the signal phrase.**

And finally, any other necessary **location information is provided in parenthesis at the end of the sentence** to guide a reader to the exact place the citation is being pulled from.

- A reader should be able to take the information from your in-text citation, match it to the information provided on the works cited page and track down the specific text (and portion of the text) being paraphrased or quoted.

If the author's name is not included in the signal phrase, it should be included inside parenthesis at the end of the sentence along with a page number or numbers.

- This last bit is true, of course, only if the source text has page numbers.
- Many online texts do not have page numbers. This is one reason that some MLA in-text citations do not need parenthesis at all.

One last thing: When an article has no author name provided, use the title of the article as your authorial information by either presenting the title in the signal phrase or in parenthesis with the location information at the end of the sentence.

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## MLA In-Text Citations In Action

### **Example:**

In an article for *Reel Magazine*, film critic Jeffrey Denardo argues that “there is no objective way to determine what film might be the greatest of all time” (15).



### **More Examples:**

Experts in the field of sports medicine have claimed that athletes are no more likely to play to the age of fifty today than they were in 1950 (“Age Barriers in Sports”).

Getting into college is easier than ever, which seems to be a trend running parallel to what Greaves notes as a “rapidly growing market for higher education fueled partly by federally-guaranteed student loans.”

According to Dr. Perkins, physical health is only one way to look at “the complex interplay between mind, body and environment” (3).

Journalist Megan Ripley proclaims, “The rights of individuals are increasingly at risk in a media culture devoted to fostering fear of nameless and faceless enemies.”

## MLA In-Text Citation Exercises

1. Insert a signal phrase to introduce the quotation.

In "Breaking Out of Childhood," \_\_\_\_\_ "adults often forget how prolonged the transition can be from dependence to independence" (9).

Source:

Carter, James. "Breaking Out of Childhood." *Journal of Developmental Studies*.  
69.3 (2015). Web.

2. Select material from the following excerpt to cite as a direct quotation in the sentence below.

Studies show that good communication and good parenting are closely associated. The same skills and attitudes that lead to clarity in communicating ideas are necessary for successfully expressing limits, expectations, approval and support to children. ("Having Good Talks with Children" 53)

Parenting scholars like Aubrey McNeal claim that " \_\_\_\_\_ " (53).

3. Using the following excerpt and bibliographic information, create a complete **paraphrased** MLA formatted in-text citation (signal phrase, cited/quoted material, and location information).

The age-old wisdom that children crave clear limits and actually want rules from their parents is supported by numerous studies. While some parents may fear that children will resent a strict parent, it is important to note that the data suggest children will also resent a parent that does not offer behavior guidelines *and* will be more likely to adopt anti-social tendencies. This does not mean that parents should accept resentment from their children as inevitable. The important idea here is that failing to enforce rules and norms in the household can have negative effects on child development without providing any promise of improved emotional connection.

Source:

Martin, Riley. "Behaviors Are Us: Reasons for Rules at Home." *Contributing Parents*. 25 May, 2016. Web.

Original Sentence with In-Text Citation: \_\_\_\_\_

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