Quick Guide from Writing Support Services

MLA QUICK GUIDE:


Each quote that you use in the body of your paper must be attributed to the source that it came from.

- a primary source is the novel, play or short story that is the subject of your paper

- a secondary source is also called a critical source (a journal article, book, or database source) that is about them in your primary source.

Starting on page 343, there are detailed examples of in-text citations.

MLA Examples:

In-text citations:

A complete listing of MLA format examples begins on page 350.

1. **Author Named in a Sentence**

   - As Thomas J. Hennessy explains, record deals were usually negotiated by “white middlemen” (127).

2. **Author Named in Parentheses**
- Armstrong easily reached difficult high notes, the F’s and G’s that stymied other trumpeters (Bergreen 248).

3. **Two or more works by the same author**

   If you use two or more works by the same author, you must identify which work you are citing, either in your sentence or in an abbreviated form in parentheses: (Collier, *Louis Armstrong* 330).


4. **Two or three authors of the same work**

   If a source has up to three authors, you should name them all either in your text, as the next example shows, or in parentheses: (Jones and Chilton 160, 220).

   - According to Max Jones and John Chilton, Glaser’s responsibilities including booking appearances, making travel arrangements, and paying the band members’ salaries (160, 220).

5. **Web site or other online electronic source**

   - Peter Davis gave Armstrong ‘basic musical training on the cornet’ (“Louis Armstrong”).

6. **Literary work**

   **Novels and literary nonfiction books**

   Include the relevant page number, followed by a semicolon, a space, and the chapter number.

   - Louis Armstrong figures throughout Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, including in the narrator’s penultimate decision to become a “yes” man who “undermine[s] them with grins” (384; ch.23).
Poems

Use line numbers, not page numbers.

In “Trumpet Player,” Hughes says that the music “is honey / Mixed with liquid fire” (lines 19-20). This image returns at the end of the poem, when Hughes concludes that “Trouble / Mellows to a golden note” (43-44).

Note that the word lines (not italicized), rather than I. or ll., is used in the first citation to establish what the numbers in parentheses refer to; subsequent citations need not use the word lines (again, not italicized).

Plays and long, multisection poems

Use division (act, scene, canto, book, part) and lines, not page numbers. In the following example, notice that Arabic numerals are used for act and scene divisions as well as for line numbers: (Ham. 2.3.22-27). The same is true for canto, verse and lines in the following citation of Byron’s Don Juan: (DJ 1.37.4-8). (The MLA Handbook lists abbreviations for titles of certain literary works.)

7. Religious text

Cite material in the Bible, Upanishads, or Koran by book, chapter, and verse, using an appropriate abbreviation when the name of the book is in the parentheses rather than in your sentence. Name the edition from which you are citing.

- As the Bible says, “The wise man knows there will be a time of judgment” (Holy Bible, Rev. Stand. Vers., Eccles. 8.5). Note that titles of biblical books are not italicized.

8. Historical document
For familiar documents such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, provide the document’s name and the numbers of the parts that you are citing.

- Judges are allowed to remain in office “during good behavior,” a vague standard that has had various interpretations (US Const., art. 3, sec. 1).

Books

1. Book with one author


2. Two or more works by the same author(s)


3. Book by an editor or editors


4. Book by an author and an editor


5. Work in an anthology or a chapter in an edited book

6. **Article from a collection of reprinted articles**


7. **Anthology**


8. **Religious text**


9. **Article in a monthly magazine**


10. **Article in a newspaper**


11. **Web sites or independent online work**
12. **Magazine article from an online database**


13. **Journal article from an online database**