



Citing Within a Text

The *MLA Handbook* recommends parenthetical citations, and prefers limited use of endnotes to footnotes. Other citation guides might prefer notes. It's best, in an academic setting, to follow the guidelines your instructor has set forth. The following is a guide to parenthetical citations and notes in MLA style.

Parenthetical Citations

For parenthetical citations, “[u]sually the author’s last name and a page reference are enough” (Gibaldi 184). Note that the punctuation follows the parenthesis, within which there is no punctuation.

If you need to cite several different works by the same author, include an abbreviated form of the title. For example, “if this quotation came from a Nicholson Baker novel and you were citing two of his books in your paper, you might cite like this” (Baker *Vox* 69).

If two authors you are citing have the same last name, cite using their first name or first initial in addition to their last name (C. Bronte 43).

The author’s name may appear either in the sentence or in the parenthetical citation, but the page number should always appear in the parenthesis:

Paula LaRocque considers the reasons “dense and arcane phrasing seems to flourish everywhere” (17).

Even though simple writing communicates ideas more effectively, “dense and arcane phrasing seems to flourish everywhere” (LaRocque 17).

Footnotes and Endnotes

Number notes consecutively, beginning with 1. Do not use asterisks or any other symbol; use a superscript Arabic numeral after the punctuation mark, like this.¹ Note that MLA style discourages explanatory notes, but does allow bibliographic notes which refer your readers to related publications. For example:

1. See LaRocque chapter 13 for examples of storytelling devices.
2. On simplicity in American academic writing, see LaRocque 5-34; and Williams 54-66.

In MLA style, parenthetical citations and notes refer the reader to the Works Cited page, which contains the detailed citation. The basic citation format in MLA style for a book:

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Text*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

More detailed information about citing sources in MLA or other styles is available at style.mla.org and at owl.purdue.edu (search for *MLA style* or *research and citation*).

¹ For more information on using footnotes and endnotes in MLA style, see “MLA Endnotes and Footnotes” at the Purdue OWL: owl.purdue.edu

