

Parenthetical Citations

When you refer to information found in works written by other people, you must give credit to the author of those works. Failure to do so can result in charges of plagiarism. Whether you use the author's direct words (quotations), summarize their words or ideas, or paraphrase them, you must give credit to the author. In other words, you must give credit (document) anything that is not *common knowledge*. This is done directly following the information taken from the source. Because the credit is given in the text of your essay/paper, MLA provides a method of referring the reader to the source in an abbreviated fashion. This abbreviated or "*parenthetical citation*" then refers the reader to the detailed information on the source found on your Works Cited page.

General Guidelines

- Provide the author's last name and the page number(s) in parentheses directly following the information.
- If you used the author's name in the sentence, simply place the page number in the parentheses.

For example:

Edward Fiske stated that we live in an "increasingly competitive global economy" (63).

Or

We live in an "increasingly competitive global economy" (Fiske 63).

Note that the parenthetical citation precedes the closing period for the sentence but follows the ending quotation mark. Obviously, Edward Fiske did not say (Fiske 63); therefore, the name and page number should not be inside the quotation marks. Also note that there is no punctuation between the author's name and the page number in the parenthetical citation.

If the work you are referring to does not have an author, use an abbreviated version of the work's title.

For example:

One critic argued that Wordsworth's poems were overly emotional ("Wordsworth Is a Loser" 100).

Or