



When writing college essays and research papers, writers use MLA (Modern Language Association) **in-text citation after all quotes, summaries, and paraphrases**, not footnotes as they once did. The purpose of **in-text citations** is to point readers to the sources on the essay's or research paper's Works Cited list on the last page or pages of the paper. The in-text citation also provides the page number from which the information was taken if the page number is available.

The following are a few *representative examples* based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 2008*. For more information, see <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/pdf/Hacker-MLAupdates.pdf> for the free pdf version from Bedford/St. Martin's Press. The MLA Handbook should be your final authority regarding proper citation format.

**Be sure to pick up and follow the handouts on formatting MLA Works Cited lists also.**

## Basic citation style: The first time you mention a source

### *Citation order:*

Signal phrase (including identification and author's first and last names); direct quote, summary, or paraphrase; citation (page number if applicable).

(The citation comes at the end of the sentence whether the direct quote appears there or not.)

### *Examples:*

San Francisco movie critic Mick LaSalle said, "Rourke's performance in 'The Wrestler' is an apotheosis" (E1).

Author: LaSalle

Page number: E1

(Find the information about this source under LaSalle on the Works Cited list at the end of the essay.)

Former U. S. President William Jefferson Clinton wrote, "I was a fat band boy who didn't wear cool jeans" about his early life as a child (69).

Author: Clinton

Page number: 69

(Find information about this source under Clinton on the Works Cited list at the end of the essay.)

Sacramento City College instructor Pat Henshaw tells her class, "Accurate citation and documentation of essays and research papers will prevent you from being accused of plagiarism" when she teaches sections on research basics.

Author: Henshaw

Page number: None (This is a personal interview, so there is no page number.)

(Find information about the interview under Henshaw on the Works Cited list at the end of the essay.)

## **The second, third, fourth, etc. times you mention a source**

### ***Citation order:***

**Signal phrase (with or without using the author's last name); direct quote, summary, or paraphrase; citation (author's last name and/or page number if needed).**

### ***Examples of the same quotes on the front of this handout:***

The reviewer added, "Rourke's performance in 'The Wrestler' is an apotheosis" (LaSalle E1).  
(Use the author's last name in the citation because it was not used in the signal phrase before the quote.)

Clinton stated, "I was a fat band boy who didn't wear cool jeans" about his early life as a child (69).  
(Use only the page number because the author's name—Clinton—was used in the signal phrase.)

She also tells her class, "Accurate citation and documentation of essays and research papers will prevent you from being accused of plagiarism" when she teaches sections on research basics (Henshaw).

## **MLA Long quotation style: First mention of the source**

### ***Citation order:***

**Signal sentence (including identification and author's name); direct quote; period; citation.**

(Use long quotation style after you type more than three lines of the quote into your essay or research paper. The quote itself could be six lines or more in newspaper columns or two lines in a large book with tiny print. For MLA long quotation style: Indent the entire quote. Do not use quotation marks. Put a period after the last sentence in the quote. Cite in parentheses after the period. If the author's last name is used in the signal sentence, then don't use it in the citation; use only the page number.)

### ***Example:***

In his article about the dumbest sports moments in history, reporter Steve Rushin explains the fourth pick on his list:

Let's see—The Indianapolis 500 is a beloved institution run damn near every Memorial Day since 1911. So in 1996, open-wheel racing splits into two factions, CART and IRL. As a result the best drivers leave for a race no one cares about, and the race people care about is left with no drivers. Gentlemen, start your angina. For no good reason you've ceded motor-racing supremacy in this country to NASCAR. (173)