

In-Text Citations

In scholarly writing, any time you use another's words, facts, or ideas, you must provide "sufficiently detailed and precise documentation" about the source of the information (Gibaldi 230). In order to provide this detailed documentation, you must "indicate to your readers not only what works you drew from but also exactly what you derived from each source and exactly where in the work you found the material" (230-1). MLA style uses a form of documentation that includes parenthetical acknowledgements after each borrowed piece of information.

Once you identify the information you want to use, you must decide whether you want to paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote the source. Paraphrasing is rewording an idea into your own words and then incorporating it into your text. Summarizing is much like paraphrasing but involves reducing a larger amount of text into one or more sentences that relay any main ideas. Quoting is reproducing the exact words from a source in quotation marks, but you must consider its length and position in your sentence in order to use proper punctuation and formatting. Which of these forms you choose to utilize in your writing calls for some judgment on your part as a writer, depending upon, among other things, how significant the source is, how unique its language is, and how much you wish to condense it. (Note that all examples in this handout have been single-spaced to conserve space.)

PARAPHRASING

✓ **Within one sentence:**

Gibaldi writes that parenthetical references should be kept as brief and few as permitted for reasons of accuracy and clarity (232).

✓ **Two or more pieces of information in one sentence:**

A works cited list is not detailed enough to show where a specific piece of information comes from (Gibaldi 230-1), which makes failing to properly document an original idea plagiaristic (151).

✓ **Two or more sources in one sentence:** (NOTE—If you use two or more works by the same author, in parenthetical documentation you must use the author(s)'s name and the title (shortened if long) if the information is not present in the sentence.)

MLA style documentation is used generally in the humanities because its simplicity distracts the reader less (Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual* 152), yet it has similarities with other styles in that parenthetical citations correspond to a works cited list at the end of the work (Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook* 115).

SHORT QUOTATIONS

✓ **Beginning the sentence:** (NOTE—In scholarly writing, beginning sentences with quotations is normally avoided.)

"In your writing," writes Gibaldi, "you must document everything that you borrow: not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas" (151).

✓ **Ending the sentence:**

Besides plagiarism breaking copyright laws, it is also "a moral and ethical offense" (Gibaldi 151).

✓ **In the middle of the sentence:**

When paraphrasing sources, we are allowed to "quote only fragments" of the original text (Gibaldi 102).

✓ **Two or more quotations in one sentence:** (NOTE—For readability and clarity, you may want to avoid incorporating more than one quotation per sentence.)

When incorporating a quotation into your text, remember to "construct a clear, grammatically correct sentence that allows you to introduce or incorporate a quotation with complete accuracy" and in the parenthetical citation you should include "only the information needed to identify a source" (Gibaldi 102, 232). (See Sample References)

LONG QUOTATIONS

✓ Long quotations:

When we occasionally use long quotations for support in our papers, there are a number of rules to follow:

If a quotation runs to more than four lines in the manuscript, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting it one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a quotation displayed in this way, though sometimes the context may require a different mark of punctuation or none at all. (Gibaldi 103-4)

MAKING CHANGES TO QUOTATIONS

✓ Adding, changing, and deleting words:

Gibaldi writes that "present[ing] [quotations] in a way that could cause a reader to misunderstand [. . .] the original source" is wrong (107).

NOTE: present[ing] = changing the form of a word; [quotations] = adding a word; [. . .] = deleting words

Original: "A quotation should never be presented in a way that could cause a reader to misunderstand the sentence structure of the original source."

MORE SAMPLE REFERENCES

✓ Citing works:

Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Style Manual* explains the guidelines used for scholarly writing. The chapter "Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text" is particularly helpful in describing how to use parenthetical references within the body of a text.

✓ Citing a work by title:

Gibaldi illustrates the various rules for scholarly writing (*MLA Style Manual*).

✓ Citing portions of a work:

Gibaldi gives many examples of parenthetical documentation in his book (230-54).

✓ Citing a single idea from multiple works:

Gibaldi writes that the information within the parenthetical citations should directly correspond to the works cited page at the end of the paper (*MLA Style Manual* 231; *MLA Handbook* 204-5).

✓ Citing two or more works by the same author (or authors):

Research builds on earlier research, and any time original work from another is used, it must be cited (Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook* 114), but familiar proverbs, quotations, or common knowledge do not (Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual* 151).

✓ Citing indirect sources:

The famous writer, Charles Dickens, once wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (qtd. in Gibaldi 103).

Sources:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 2nd ed. Modern Language Association of America: New York, 1998.

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