

Parenthetical Documentation

A simplified type of documentation often replaces footnotes with a short parenthetical reference in the text. It includes the author's name and the page number. When a reader wants to know more about the source, he turns to the list of Works Cited (similar to a bibliography) at the end of the paper. Like a bibliography, the Works Cited includes the author's full name, the title, date, and other publishing information.

Guidelines for using parenthetical documentation:

1. Use only the author's last name and the page number.
2. If using electronic sources, use only the author's last name and type "np" – indicating there is no page number.
3. Do not write the word page or the abbreviation for it.
4. Do not put a comma between the name and the page.
5. If there is no author, use a short version of the title. Underline if it is a book; use quotation marks if it is a short work.
6. If you have used the author's name in the text of your paper, put only the page number inside the parentheses.
7. If you are using two works by the same author, include a brief reference to or shortened form of the title after the author's name.
8. Put the period outside the parenthesis, not inside.
9. Use the same format when you paraphrase information.
10. To avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur (preferably at the end of a sentence), as near as possible to the material it documents.
11. When the material you are citing has been quoted in the source you are using, handle it this way:

Others, including David Burnham, author of The Rise of the Computer State, have predicted the loss of personal autonomy as computerized data banks track information about citizens (qtd. in Moskwitz 14).

Readers will know that your "Works Cited" entry will be under Moskwitz.

Some examples of parenthetical documentation from the MLA Handbook follow:

Author's name in text

Frye has argued this point before (178).

Author's name in reference

This point has been argued before (Frye 178).

Author's name in text

It may be true, as Robertson writes, that "in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance" (136)

Author's name in reference

It may be true that "in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance" (Robertson 136).

Authors' names in text

Others, like Wellek and Warren (310), hold an opposite point of view.

Author's name in reference

Others hold an opposite point of view (Wellek and Warren 310).

One-page article with no author

The nine grades of mandarins were "distinguished by the color of the button on the hats of office" ("Mandarin").

Anonymous work

According to the Handbook of Korea, much Korean sculpture is associated with Buddhism (241).

Multi-volume work with author or editor

In November of 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated (Parker and Nelson II: 262).

Multi-volume work with no author or editor

In November of 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated (Great Events 3: 262).