

MLA

Parenthetical Citations

(Adapted from Mr. Aitcheson)

Use these three strategies:

- Quoting
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing



To blend source materials in with your own, making sure your own voice is heard.

Quoting

Quotations are the exact words of an author, copied directly from a source, word for word. Quotations must be cited!

Use quotations when:

- You want to add the power of an author's words to support your argument
- You want to disagree with an author's argument
- You want to highlight particularly eloquent or powerful phrases or passages
- You are comparing and contrasting specific points of view
- You want to note the important research that precedes your own

Carol Rohrbach and Joyce Valenza

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means rephrasing the words of an author, putting his/her thoughts in your own words. When you paraphrase, you rework the source's ideas, words, phrases, and sentence structures with your own. Like quotations, paraphrased material must be followed with in-text documentation and cited on your Works-Cited page.

Paraphrase when:

- You plan to use information on your note cards and wish to avoid plagiarizing**
- You want to avoid overusing quotations**
- You want to use your own voice to present information**

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Summarizing

- **Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) of one or several writers into your own words, including only the main point(s). Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material. Again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to their original sources.**

Summarize when:

- **You want to establish background or offer an overview of a topic**
- **You want to describe knowledge (from several sources) about a topic**
- **You want to determine the main ideas of a single source**

Practice #s 4, 5 & 6

- Numbers 4, 5, and 6 all refer to the following passage from Martin Luther King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail":
- You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

#4

- **4. Martin Luther King was certain that nobody would want to be contented with a surface type of social analysis that concerns itself only with effects and doesn't deal with root causes.**
- **Plagiarism?**



5

- **5. Martin Luther King wrote that the city of Birmingham's "white power structure" left African-Americans there "no alternative" but to demonstrate ("Letter from the Birmingham Jail" 5).**
- **Plagiarism?**



#6

- **6. In "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," King writes to fellow clergy saying that although they "deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham, your statement fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations."**
- **Plagiarism?**

MLA documentation

- **Purpose--to give immediate source information without interrupting the flow of paper or project.**
- **The academic world takes in-text documentation seriously.**
- **Inaccurate documentation is as serious as having no documentation at all.**
- **Brief information in in-text documentation should match full source information in Works Cited**



Use in-text documentation when:

- You use an original idea from one of your sources, whether you quote or paraphrase it
- You summarize original ideas from one of your sources
- You use factual information that is not common knowledge (Cite to be safe.)
- You quote directly from a source
- You use a date or fact that might be disputed



How do I cite using MLA style?

- **Parenthetical citations are usually placed at the end of a sentence, before the period, but they may be placed in the middle of sentence**
- **Cite the author's last name and the page number**
- **In the absence of an author, cite the title and the page number**
- **If you are using more than one book by the same author, list the last name, comma, the title, and the page**
- **If you identify the author and title in the text, just list the page number**



But, what about the Web?

When citing a Web source in-text, you are not likely to have page numbers. Just include the first part of the entry.

(Valenza)

or

(“Plagiarism and the Web”)



Typical example:

“Slightly more than 73% of Happy High School students reported plagiarizing papers sometime in their high school careers” (Smith 203).

For more information and specific examples see me, check with the MLA manual (7th Edition) or OWL Perdue MLA on the Web.



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