MLA PARENTHESETICAL CITATIONS

The purpose of the parenthetical (in-text) citation is to let your reader know that you are using another author’s works, and where those works are located. You must cite your source when you use a direct quote, and also when you rewrite information (paraphrasing). A good rule is: If in doubt, cite it.

- Ensure that your parenthetical citations clearly point to specific sources in your works cited. The information in your citations must match the information in your works cited page.
- Use as few references as possible, and keep them brief.
- Identify the location of the borrowed information as specifically as possible.
- 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), but as near as possible to the material documented: Machiavelli contended that humans were “ungrateful” and “mutable” (1240), and Montaigne thought them “miserable and puny” (1343).

Examples:

✴ If the author is listed in the text, put the page number (or page number range) in parentheses at the end of the sentence. (Note: the period is outside the parentheses.)
  Miller states that every college student needs to own a dictionary (95).
  Jones has an optimistic view of life (27-32).

✴ If the author is not listed in the text, list the author’s last name with the page number. (Note: there is no punctuation between the last name and the page number.)
  Every college student needs to own a dictionary (Miller 95).

✴ If there are two authors for a source, list them both.
  Michael was furious over the rejection of his work (Jones and Smith 102).

✴ If there are more than three authors listed for one source, abbreviate.
  Joshua Norton was not a citizen of the United States (Thompson et al. 5).

✴ If there is more than one author with the same last name, include the first initial.
  Gaedel was the only midget ever to play in a major league baseball game (K. Holloway 63).

✴ With a corporate author, it is preferable to cite the name in the text.
  The RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company published the article about the dangers of smoking.

✴ If you are citing an author with more than one work listed, use the title of the work referenced.
  By 1931, Will had over five thousand photographs (Eccentrics 62).

✴ When citing a whole work, it is preferable to document the source in the text.
  James Joyce's Ulysses is an example of modern literature.

✴ When citing a volume number as well as a page, separate the two by a colon and a space.
  Johnny always felt completely at ease in the wilderness (Wellek 2: 1-10).

✴ When citing an entire volume or multi-volume work, there is no need to cite pages.
  Johnny always felt completely at ease in the wilderness (Wellek, vol. 2).

✴ When using a journal or magazine article, cite the quoted article in parentheses.