



## Basic Guide to MLA In-Text (also known as Parenthetical) Citations

MLA format uses the author-page style of citations within the body of your paper. This means you need to cite the author's last name and the page number of the source where you found the information.

You can put the last name of the author in either the parenthetical citation or somewhere in the sentence. The page number should always be in parentheses.

Common examples of how this will look are:

In Browning's poem, the heroine Onora cannot get married because she is not "permitted to love at all" (Leighton 35).

Leighton states that the heroine of Browning's poem, Onora, cannot get married because she is not "permitted to love at all" (35).

Leighton explores the reasons why Onora cannot get married, but instead must die (35).

The citation information lets the reader know that you found the information in a source written by Leighton on page 35.

Your Works Cited page entry for this book would look like this:

Leighton, Angela. *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986. Print.

### Unknown Author

If you are citing a source that has no author, use a shortened form of the source's title in place of the author's last name. For example:

Several United States citizens working for the Russians were caught and sentenced in the mid-1980's ("The Decade" 26).

Works Cited entry:

"The Decade of the Spy." *Newsweek* 7 Mar. 1994: 26-27. Print.

### Electronic Sources with no page number

Most sources from the web will not provide a page number, and many will not list the name of the author, either. (NOTE: If the website fails to list a title or a sponsor of the site, this may not be a reliable or credible source for a research paper!)

In place of the author, use a shortened form of the page title. If there is no fixed page numbering, do not include any.

## **Electronic sources (continued)**

### **Author with no page number**

To cite an electronic source without a page number, just use the author's last name in parentheses. For example:

An article from the Discovering Collection database:

The book *Speaker of the Dead*, sequel to *Ender's Game*, "demonstrates Card's mastery of character, plot, style, theme, and development" (Collings).

Works Cited entry:

Collings, Michael R. "Adventure and Allegory." *DISCovering Authors*. Gale, 2009.

*Discovering Collection*. Web. 19 Dec. 2009.

### **No author or page numbers**

If the electronic source has no author or page numbers, you simply use a shortened form of the title that begins the entry in the Works Cited page. Be sure to include punctuation.

Website with no author:

Chickenpox usually strikes young children and will cause immunity to the virus ("Varicella Disease").

Works Cited entry:

"Varicella Disease (Chickenpox)." *National Immunization Program*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15 Feb. 2001. Web. 17 Dec. 2009.

YouTube example with no author:

The video explains how to determine the number of calories you need in a day ("Basic Nutrition").

Works Cited entry:

"Basic Nutrition." *Nutrition for Life*. *YouTube*. 2007. Web. 27 Aug. 2009.

Consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, for more detailed information and examples.