

How (and Why) to Make Parenthetical Citations:

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism means taking the ideas of another person and presenting them as your own ideas. Plagiarism is considered to be a form of theft. If you are caught, the penalties can be severe: receiving no credit, a failing grade for a class, expulsion from college, or loss of a job.

To avoid plagiarism, you must tell the reader where you found the information you use in your paper, unless the information is common knowledge! (If you are not sure, ask your teacher or librarian.) Parenthetical citations are an easy way to tell your reader where you got the info.

Parenthetical citations are used whenever:

- √ You use a direct quotation from another source
- √ You paraphrase information from another source
- √ You summarize information from another source

A parenthetical citation often looks something like this: **(Stein 60)**. It usually lists just the author's last name and the page number where the information is located. (Exceptions will be described below.) It is kept as brief as possible. The parenthetical citation gives the information that the reader needs to find complete publication information on the Works Cited page.

Examples of Parenthetical Citations

The parenthetical citation should be located close to the information to which it is referring. It is placed just before the period at the end of the sentence. The example below shows a paraphrase from a magazine article by Joel Stein:

The legal systems of several states are starting to recognize pets as companions rather than property. City councils have started listening as pet owners demand more pet-friendly facilities (Stein 60).

Sometimes you can work the author's name into the text of the paragraph to make your writing flow more smoothly. In this case, you do not repeat the author's name in the parenthetical citation; just put the page number.

Stein notes that the legal systems of several states are starting to recognize pets as companions rather than property. City councils have started listening as pet owners demand more pet-friendly facilities (60).

No Author's Name - If there is no author's name, list the title of the work, followed by the page number:

Contrary to popular belief, the literacy rate in the United States of America is not 100% (Almanac of the World 167).

Two Authors for a Single Source - If you are citing a source that has two authors, include them both in the parenthetical citation.

“Computer programming languages have changed dramatically over the last decade, but C++ will never become obsolete” (Wade and Giles 10).

Two or More Titles by One Author - If you are using several different works by the same author, include a recognizable part of the title in the parenthesis.

“...don’t be a wet blanket, man, *this is 1928*. Even the garbage collector has got the goods on an ‘inside tip,’ and he can tell you a sure way to make some heavy sugar—fast.” (Smith Roaring Twenties 168). By 1932, this view of the stock market had changed to a more negative one (Smith Whimpering Thirties 35).

More than One Source - If you are using two sources in the same sentence, cite both of them.

Many leading experts in the field of education agree that simply adding more days to the school year will not increase student achievement unless the curriculum is changed and made more interesting and relevant to students (Williams 47; Sonoma 103).

Using Several Pages from One Source - If you are citing separate parts of a single work in one sentence list the page numbers after the author’s name.

Scientists have not yet discovered a way to prove beyond all doubt that global warming is caused by emissions from factories and exhaust fumes from automobiles (Gasper 23, 59-60).

Source Has No Page Numbers - Some sources do not have page numbers, **most web pages**, for example. When making a parenthetical citation for this source, just use the author’s last name, or the title of the page if there is no author, without page numbers.

In less than ten years, all banking will be done online (Wells).

In the slang of the 1920s, a “face stretcher” meant an older woman who was trying to look younger (“It’s All News”).

Source is a Poem – Poems are often printed in many different poetry collections. Your reader may find a poem you are quoting in a different book than the one you used. To help your reader find the lines in a poem you are quoting, give the line numbers, rather than the page number. (The author and title of the poem will usually appear in your text; the other publication information will appear on your Works Cited page. See the previous section on quotations.)

Women and men(both little and small)
 cared for anyone not at all
 they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
 sun moon stars rain (Cummings 5-8)

Source is a Play – Plays are often printed in many different editions, with different page numbers (in fact, if you are quoting from a play written by Shakespeare, it may be impossible for your reader to find exactly the same edition you are using.) To help your reader find the part of the play you are quoting, give the section (act, scene) and the line number(s), instead of page numbers. Many publishers number every five or ten lines of the play so you may not have to actually count each line. If you do have to count them yourself, start at the beginning of each scene, or act (if acts are not divided into scenes.) Do not start at the beginning of the play, unless it is a one act, one scene play. Use Arabic numerals for acts and scenes, rather than Roman numerals, unless your teacher tells you otherwise.

In the following example the play has both acts and scenes: (Note: Hamlet is used in the parenthetical citation because the paper compares several works by Shakespeare.)

Enter GHOST.

MARCELLUS. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

BERNARDO. In the same figure, like the king that's dead. (Hamlet1.1.34-36)

The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde has acts, only (no scenes):.

MISS PRISM. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

CECILY. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

MISS PRISM. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means. (Wilde 2.31-34)