MLA In-Text Citation Tips

English and humanities instructors will often ask students to use the Modern Language Association (MLA) system for citation. MLA style citation requires both in-text citations and a works cited page at the end of the document. This handout explores in-text citations only. For more information about MLA style, please refer to your *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker.

1. What does MLA in-text citation look like?
MLA in-text citation notation is fairly simple to remember. When a source has one author and the portion that you reference comes from one page number, enclose the author’s last name and page number in parentheses: (Delpit 34).

If the author’s name is mentioned in a signal phrase (a phrase introducing the quotation or paraphrase), list only the page number in the parenthetical citation.

**MLA In-Text Citation Rules:**
- NO comma between the author’s last name and the page number
- NO “p.” before the page number
- NO parenthesis after the period

**AUTHOR IN PARENTHESSES:** Researchers note that students resist help “out of a strong, possibly misplaced desire for autonomy (‘I can do it myself’) or because they are reluctant to display a perceived weakness or lack of confidence” (Light, Cox, and Calkins 64).

**AUTHOR IN SIGNAL PHRASE:** Light, Cox, and Calkins note that students resist help “out of a strong, possibly misplaced desire for autonomy (‘I can do it myself’) or because they are reluctant to display a perceived weakness or lack of confidence” (64).

2. Do I have to include an in-text citation every time I refer to the same source?
When you are writing about a single work, you do not need to include that author’s name each time you quote from or paraphrase the work. After you mention the author’s name at the beginning of a paragraph, you may include just the page number in your parenthetical citations **only if you do not introduce any additional sources within the paragraph**. Once you introduce another source, you must use each author’s name.

**ONE SOURCE:** In Susan Glaspell’s short story “A Jury of Her Peers,” two women accompany their husbands and a county attorney to an isolated house where a farmer named John Wright has been choked to death in his bed with a rope. The chief suspect is Wright’s wife, Minnie, who is
in jail awaiting trial. The sheriff’s wife, Mrs. Peters, has come along to gather some personal items for Minnie, and Mrs. Hale has joined her. Early in the story, Mrs. Hale sympathizes with Minnie and objects to the way the male investigators are “snoopin’ round and criticizin’” her kitchen (Glaspell 200). In contrast, Mrs. Peters shows respect for the law, saying that the men are doing “no more than their duty” (201).

**TWO SOURCES:** Rowhani makes it clear that “no one is alarmed by the unusual issue” associated with this economic event (17). The results of his investigation illustrate that the “greatest number of losses” occurred during the third quarter of last year (22). Others, however, find the quarter’s shortcomings “discouraging and indicative of a larger financial crisis” (Bergstrom 2).

3. **What if I’m using a source that contains quotations from other people or resources?**

When someone’s quoted words appear in a source written by a third party, begin the parenthetical citation with the abbreviation “qtd. in.”

**EXAMPLE:** Researchers Botan and McCreadie argue, “Workers are objects of information collection without participating in the process of exchanging the information . . .” (qtd. in Kizza and Ssanyu 14).