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Spiders

Across the world spiders are known as dangerous creatures (McGee 5). However, that is not the case with all spiders. Many spiders can be friendly pets, especially to science lovers (“Spiders Are Our Friends”). They love to play and crawl on people’s arms. According to Tiffany Schwartz, they can be “a man’s best friend” (35).

***NOTE***: The paragraph above has a parenthetical citation with author and page, a parenthetical citation from a website with no author, and a parenthetical documentation of a quote that already introduced the author, so only a page number was needed in parentheses.

# MLA Parenthetical Reference

#### Example for your source

A parenthetical reference to this **Web Site** might look like this:

|  |
| --- |
| ...the end of your sentence ("What To Do If You Get Sick:"). |

**Note:** This is not the only way to write this parenthetical reference. For example, you might include the author or title of the work in your sentence already (see Rule 2). Please read the additional rules below to be sure you are writing your reference correctly.

#### What is a parenthetical reference?

A parenthetical reference is a reference within the body of your paper to one of the sources listed in your Works Cited list. It indicates to your reader exactly what you derived from the source, and specifically where they can find it. You need to write a parenthetical, or "in-text" reference, whether you quote the material directly from the source, paraphrase it in your own words, or refer to an idea derived from the material.

#### What typically goes in an MLA-style parenthetical reference?

The information that you need to include depends on what type of source the material comes from. For printed material, you normally only need to include the ***author(s)*** (or ***title*** if there is no author) and ***page number(s)*** in your reference. For multi-volume works like encyclopedias, you may also need to include a ***volume number*** (see Rules 6 and 7 below). For Internet sources, sometimes ***paragraph numbers*** are provided.

The information described above can be either included in the sentence that you write, or added in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

#### What other rules do I need to know to write a parenthetical reference?

**Rule 1: Placement**   
The parentheses are usually placed at the end of a sentence, between the last word and the period. If you are quoting material directly, the parentheses should go between the closing quotation mark and the period:

|  |
| --- |
| **"**The chicken came before the egg **" (Smith 21).** |

**Rule 2: Sentence vs. parentheses**   
Only information that is not already contained in your sentence is necessary in the parenthetical reference. For example, in the following example the author's last name, Smith, is already stated, so only the page numbers are necessary within the parentheses:

|  |
| --- |
| **Smith** theorizes that the chicken came before the egg **(21-33).** |

**Rule 3: When author names are similar or the same**   
Information you provide in the parenthetical reference should distinguish exactly which work in your source list you are referring to. Add a first initial or whole first name if the last name is not unique in your source list, or add the title of the work if there is more than one work by the same author. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| It has been proven that the chicken came before the egg ( **J. Smith** 21-33).  It has been proven that the chicken came before the egg ( **John Smith** 21-33).  It has been proven that the chicken came before the egg ( **Smith, *Eggs*** 21-33). |

**Rule 4: When there is no author**   
If the work is listed and alphabetized in your source list by its title (no author), then you should refer to it in the parenthetical reference by its title as well. The title may be shortened to just the first word (not including articles like "The" and "A"), and should be quoted or underlined if it is quoted or underlined in your source list. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| Experts believe that the chicken came before the egg ( ***Chicken*** 21-33).  Experts believe that the chicken came before the egg ( **"Egg"** 2-4). |

**Rule 5: When there are two entries with the same author (or no author) and title**   
If you have two entries with the same author (or no author) and title, find a publication fact that distinguishes the works and add it to their parenthetical references. For a nonperiodical print source, use the date of publication if possible. For an article in a periodical, use the title of the periodical. For a Web page, use the title of the overall Web site. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| Experts believe that the chicken came before the egg (Smith, **2006** ).  Experts believe that the chicken came before the egg ("Egg," ***Student Resource Center*** ). |

**Rule 6: Page numbers and other numbering systems**   
Sources sometimes use alternate numbering systems like sections (sec.), chapters (ch.), books (bk.), parts (pt.), verses, lines, acts, or scenes. Online sources sometimes provide paragraph numbers. If an alternate numbering system is used, include that information in your reference. Note that a comma is used after the author (or title) in this case.

|  |
| --- |
| Experts believe that the chicken came before the egg (Smith **, pars. 3-7** ).  In "Egg Poem" Smith asks "how do we know, which came first?" ( **lines 5-6** ). |

Occasionally, you may find that page numbers are available **in addition to** these other numbering systems. In this case, it is helpful to include both; provide the page number first, followed by a semicolon, and then the other identifying information. An example follows:

|  |
| --- |
| One novel reports a different theory (Smith **55; pt. 1, sec. 3, ch. 1** ).  In "Egg Poem" Smith asks "how do we know, which came first?" ( **6; lines 5-6** ). |

An exception to this rule is that when you are citing a classic verse play or poem, it is standard to omit page numbers even if they are given, and instead cite by division (act, scene, canto, book, part) and line. Divisions and the line number(s) are separated with periods, as in the following examples:

|  |
| --- |
| In his classic play, Smith jokes about the egg ( *Egg* **1.4.55-56** ).  In "Egg Poem" Smith asks "how do we know, which came first?" ( **4.5-6** ). |

**Rule 7: When to cite the volume number**   
If you are referring to a multi-volume work like an encyclopedia **AND** you used more than one volume of that work in your paper, then your parenthetical reference should include the volume number you used, as in the following example where we are referring to pages 2-4 of the third volume:

|  |
| --- |
| Experts believe that the chicken came before the egg ("Egg" **3:2-4** ). |

**Rule 8: Referring to an entire work**   
If you are referring to an entire work (like an opera or an entire novel) and not a specific section of the work, state the author and/or title within the sentence, and do not add any further information in parentheses. For example:

|  |
| --- |
| **Smith's** opera **"Chicken and Egg"** is a light-hearted comedy. |

An exception to the rule above is that if you are citing an entire volume of a multi-volume work, you should include the volume number (either within the sentence, or in parentheses as shown below). Note that we use the abbreviation **vol.** when page numbers are not provided, unlike the example for Rule 5.

|  |
| --- |
| **Volume 2** of **Smith's** book solves the chicken and egg mystery.  *Eggs* solves the chicken and egg mystery (Smith **, vol. 2** ). |

**Rule 9: Quoting or paraphrasing a quotation**   
If what you quote or paraphrase in your paper is itself a quotation in the source, add the phrase "qtd. in" to the parenthetical reference as shown here:

|  |
| --- |
| "I have proven that the chicken came before the egg" ( **qtd. in** J. Smith 21). |

**Entire Website**

*The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 2008. Web. 27 Dec. 2008.

**Individual Resources**

Purdue OWL. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 10 May 2008. Web. 15 Nov. 2008.

**In-text Citations for Print Sources with No Known Author**

When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work (e.g. articles) or italicize it if it's a longer work (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire websites) and provide a page number.

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has “more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . . ” (“Impact of Global Warming” 6).

In this example, since the reader does not know the author of the article, an abbreviated title of the article appears in the parenthetical citation which corresponds to the full name of the article which appears first at the left-hand margin of its respective entry in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes the title in quotation marks as the signal phrase in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader directly to the source on the Works Cited page. The Works Cited entry appears as follows:

“The Impact of Global Warming in North America.” *GLOBAL WARMING: Early Signs*. 1999. Web. 23 Mar. 2009.

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

For a source with more than three authors, use the work's bibliographic information as a guide for your citation. Provide the first author's last name followed by et al. or list all the last names.

Jones et al. counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (4).

Or

Legal experts counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (Jones et al. 4).

* Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry that corresponds to the citation (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).
* You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser’s print preview function.
* Unless you must list the website name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, do not include URLs in-text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like *CNN.com* or *Forbes.com* as opposed to writing out http://www.cnn.com or http://www.forbes.com.

**Electronic Sources**

One online film critic stated that *Fitzcarraldo* is "...a beautiful and terrifying critique of obsession and colonialism" (Garcia, “Herzog: a Life”).

The *Purdue OWL* is accessed by millions of users every year. Its “MLA Formatting and Style Guide” is one of the most popular resources (Stolley et al.).

In the first example, the writer has chosen not to include the author name in-text; however, two entries from the same author appear in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes both the author’s last name and the article title in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader to the appropriate entry on the Works Cited page (see below). In the second example, “Stolley et al.” in the parenthetical citation gives the reader an author name followed by the abbreviation “et al.,” meaning, “and others,” for the article “MLA Formatting and Style Guide.” Both corresponding Works Cited entries are as follows:

Garcia, Elizabeth. "Herzog: a Life." *Online Film Critics Corner*. The Film School of New Hampshire, 2 May 2002. Web. 8 Jan. 2009.

Stolley, Karl. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." The OWL at Purdue. 10 May 2006. Purdue University Writing Lab. 12 May 2006 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557