

MLA Conventions for Using Parenthetical Citations Worksheet

This series of exercises is the work of Media Specialist M. Davis at the Yeshiva High School University for Girls

Use parentheses to denote the citation within the text itself. The citation should include the first element in the Works Cited citation (usually the author's last name) and the page number of the cited material (if applicable). These two elements should be separated by a space, not by a comma or any other punctuation mark.

Examples:

Quotation: "Quoted material" (Author's last name Page number).

Paraphrase: Paraphrased sentence / passage. (Author's last name Page number)

Quote from a web source with no author or page numbers:

"Quoted material" ("Article/Section Title").

Notes:

- 1) The item appearing **first** in the citation on the Works Cited page should designate the parenthetical citation. Usually, this is the author's last name or the title of the article or section.
- 2) In the case of a long article or section title, use a shortened version in the parenthetical citation. You should shorten the citation to the first noun in the entry. The title "Screaming Japanese Schoolgirls Overturn Greenspan's Bus" can be cited as ("Screaming Japanese Schoolgirls"), for example.

Exercise A:

Examine each of the following pairs carefully. Indicate the passage that handles MLA in-text citations correctly and briefly explain what is wrong with the citation in the other passage.

- 1) _____
 - a. In "Death and Justice," Edward Koch, former mayor of New York City argues that "life is precious, and . . . the death penalty helps to affirm this fact (857)."
 - b. In "Death and Justice," Edward Koch, former mayor of New York City, argues that "life is precious, and . . . the death penalty helps to affirm this fact" (857).

- 2) _____
 - a. "Arguing about whether nontraditional families deserve pity or tolerance is a little like the medieval debate about left-handedness as a mark of the devil" (Kingsolver 168).

- b. Kingsolver points out that "arguing about whether nontraditional families deserve pity or tolerance is a little like the medieval debate about left-handedness as a mark of the devil" (168).
- 3) _____
- a. "There is a Chinese word for the female, which is slave, " writes Maxine Hong Kingston (191). "Break the women with their own tongues!" (191). She means that since women had no other word to use to refer to themselves than one meaning slave, they eventually lost any sense of dignity and independence they might once have had.
- b. "There is a Chinese word for the female, which is slave, " writes Maxine Hong Kingston. "Break the women with their own tongues!" She means that since women had no other word to use to refer to themselves than one meaning slave, they eventually lost any sense of dignity and independence they might once have had (191).

Exercise B:

Read over each the following passages, and respond to whether or not it uses citations accurately. If it does not, what would you do to improve the passage so it's properly cited? All refer to the following passage from Martin Luther King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail":

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

- 1) Martin Luther King was certain that nobody would want to be contented with a surface type of social analysis that concerns itself only with effects and doesn't deal with root causes.
- 2) Martin Luther King wrote that the city of Birmingham's "white power structure" left African-Americans there "no alternative" but to demonstrate ("Letter from the Birmingham Jail" para. 5).
- 3) In "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," King writes to fellow clergy saying that although they "deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham, your

statement fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations."

Exercise C:

Using the information set below, write correct parenthetical citations for each example.

Note: remember where the punctuation goes!!

Pretend this is your Works Cited page:

Donaldson, Sam. *Bantering on Watergate*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985. Print.

Jennings, Peter. *Pushing the Limits of Political Journalism*. Washington: Greater Politics Press, 1994. Print.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. New York: Vantage International, 1934. Print.

Xavier, Jason. *Somewhere in the Political Realm*. New York: Ballantine, 2002. Print.

- 1) "He spoke to us in German and then left us behind" ()
--from Donaldson's *Bantering on Watergate*, page 45

- 2) "I never thought of myself as proud", says Jennings in his book Pushing the Limits of Political Journalism ()
--This source was located on page 107.

- 3) "Enraged is how he felt after the episode" ()
--From Jason Xavier's book *Somewhere in the Political Realm*, page 233.

4) *Note: This is an excerpt from Ulysses.*

This thought brings forth the Victorian tradition previously mentioned of the lovers' coded floral communiqué. With this in mind, Bloom

read the letter again, murmuring here and there a word. Angry tulips with you darling manflower punish your cactus if you don't please poor foregetmenots how I long violets to dear roses when we soon anemone meet all naughty nightstalk wife Martha's perfume ()

