

## Writing Parenthetical References

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 1999.

### WHAT ARE PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES?

Parenthetical references refer the reader to specific pages in a book, magazine or other source from which quotations or facts are taken. They are used to provide additional information without breaking the logical development of the thoughts in your paper. Parenthetical references are used in place of footnotes.

### WHY ARE PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES NEEDED?

Any borrowed information in your paper must be acknowledged. Parenthetical references provide the exact source of the quotation (somebody else's words), or of the facts that were gathered by someone else. They give added authority to your paper. They also provide the reader with leads to other sources and permit the reader to check (verify) the sources that you used to come to your conclusions.

### HOW ARE PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES PREPARED?

Parenthetical references are brief references, enclosed by parentheses, within the text of your paper. They refer the reader to your bibliography. Parenthetical references usually include the author's last name and the page number. The reader can then turn to your bibliography or list of works cited for complete publishing information.

### REMEMBER:

- References in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited!
- Identify the location of the borrowed material as specifically as possible!
- Keep parenthetical references as brief and as few as clarity and accuracy permit.
  - o if you include the author's name in your text, you need only put the page number in the reference
  - o if you have two authors with the same last name in your bibliography, include their first names in the parenthetical references
  - o if you have two works by the same author in your bibliography, include the title of the work in your sentence or in the parenthetical reference in abbreviated form
  - o if you are citing an entire work rather than a specific passage or section, omit the parenthetical reference and give the author's name in your sentence.

**EXAMPLES:**

To be used in conjunction with the handout "Preparing a Bibliography"

**Author's name in parenthetical reference**

"The health status of African-Americans is getting worse." (Curry 32)

**Author's name included in text**

Bobby Lake-Thom believes he might "lose the opportunity to connect with, acquire, and apply a new source of knowledge and power" when he can't read nature's signs. (25)

**Two authors**

"Teleconferencing techniques are essential components of several forms of distance education." (Barron and Orwig 228)

**Work listed by title (no author)**

The evening news programs are focusing more and more on serious crime. (Live at 11: Death)

**Multi volume work**

"Foreign plant quarantines control the shipping of plants from other countries". (World Book 15:550)

**Government publication**

The U.S. Department of Labor expects employment in the broadcasting industry to increase by about 15 percent between 1990 and 2005. (90)

**Web site or article from online database**

Web documents and articles from online databases generally do not have fixed page numbers or any kind of section numbering. If your source lacks numbering, you have to omit numbers from your parenthetical references. If your source includes fixed page numbers or section numbering (such as numbering of paragraphs), cite the relevant numbers.

**EXAMPLE:**

"Subject directories and indexes are a good place to start your search." (Kivel)

For additional information on citing sources you may consult the [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) in the Library at REF LB2369. G53 1999 or visit various web sites listed on the DVC Library's web page under Style Guides. Please come to the Reference Desk with additional questions or call us at ext. 2246.

**Remember the Library thrives on questions!**