In-Text Citations (parenthetical citation) as recommended by MLA Style

Note:
The following handout has been retrieved from the Writing Lab & OWL Web site at Purdue University (USA).
It has been slightly adapted to meet the needs of the lecture.
For more information: http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/   or Gibaldi, Joseph. <u>MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</u>. The Modern Language Association of America.

Basic In-Text Citation Rules

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what's known as *parenthetical citation* or *in-text citation*.

What does this consist of? Directly after a quotation from a source or a paraphrase/summary of a material, the student/researcher places the **author's last name**, a space, and the **page number(s)** from which the material has been borrowed**.** Here is an example:

`Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).`

When the author of a source is **unknown**, a **shortened version of the title of the work** replaces the last name (see section D).

If the source is a **short work**, the title should be placed within quotation marks.

If it is a **long work**, the title should be *italicized* or <u>underlined</u>.

The in-text citation corresponds to an entry in the **Works Cited** page(s) in which the complete bibliographical information should be given. Here is an example of an entry in a **Works Cited** page:

`Burke, Kenneth. `<u>`Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method`</u>`. Berkeley: U of California P, 1966.`

Parenthetical citations and **Works Cited pages** enable readers to know which sources the researcher consulted and relied on while he was writing his research paper. Hence, they can either check his interpretation of the sources or use them in their own academic writing.

Here are the most common in-text citation cases:

A. <u>Citing one work by one author</u>

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on the Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of the sentence. For example:

`Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).`

`Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).`

`Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).`

The citation, both (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tells readers that the information in the sentence is located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. If readers want more information about the source, they can go to the Works Cited page (end of the paper), where, under the name of Wordsworth, they can find the rest of the bibliographical information:

```
Wordsworth, William. Lyrical Ballads. London: Oxford U.P., 1967.
```

B. Multiple Citations

To cite multiple sources in the same parenthetical reference, the citations should be separated by a semi-colon:

```
...as has been discussed elsewhere (Burke 3; Dewey 21).
```

C. Author-Page Citation for Classic and Literary Works with Multiple Editions

Page numbers are always required, but additional citation information can help literary scholars, who may have a different edition of a classic work (like, for example, Marx and Engels's The Communist Manifesto). In such cases, give the page number, a semicolon, and then the appropriate abbreviations for volume (vol.), book (bk.), part (pt.), chapter (ch.), section (sec.), paragraph (par.). For example:

```
Marx and Engels described human history as marked by class struggles
(79; ch.1).
```

D. Anonymous Work/Author Unknown

If the work has no author, an abbreviated version of the work's title should be used.

```
An anonymous Wordsworth critic once argued that his poems were too
emotional ("Wordsworth Is a Loser" 100).
```

E. Citing Authors with Same Last Names

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a material is borrowed. For example, if the researcher uses different material from different sources having different authors but these authors have the same last name, both authors' first name initials should be given (or even the authors' full name if different authors share the same initials) in the in-text citation. For example:

```
Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to
designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for
medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).
```

F. Citing Multiple Works by the Same Author

If one uses and cites more than one work (two works or three, etc) by the same author, a shortened title for the particular work should be included. This is to distinguish it from the other works.

```
Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small
children ("Too Soon" 38), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that
early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor
skill development in a child's second and third year ("Hand-Eye
Development" 17).
```

Moreover, if the author's name is not mentioned in the plain text, the researcher has to include the author's name followed by a comma, followed by a shortened title of the work, followed by page number(s):

```
Visual studies, because it is such a new discipline, may be "too
easy" (Elkins, "Visual Studies" 63).
```

G. Citing Indirect Sources

Sometimes a researcher may have to use an indirect source. An indirect source is a source cited in another source. For such indirect quotations, the abbreviation "**qtd. in**" should be used to indicate the source actually consulted. For example:

```
Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social
service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd. in Weisman 259).
```

Note here that, in most cases, a responsible researcher will attempt to find the original source, rather than citing an indirect source.