10.6: MLA In-Text Citations

"Quotation" (Author's Last Name Page Number).

Include the right information in the in-text citation. Every time you reference material in your paper, you must tell the reader the name of the author whose information you are citing. You must include a page number that tells the reader where, in the source, they can find this information. The most basic structure for an in-text citation looks like this: (Smith 123).

*North and South*: "Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it."[1]

**incorrect** MLA formatting:

"Margaret had never spoken of Helstone  Incorrect because the period falls within the quotation marks
“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it.” (Gaskell 100)

Incorrect because of the comma separating the author’s last name and the page number

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Gaskell, 100).

Incorrect because the author’s full name is used instead of just her last name

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Elizabeth Gaskell 100).

Incorrect because the title of the work appears, rather than the author’s last name; the title should only be used if no author name is provided

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (North and South 100).

Correct MLA formatting:
“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Gaskell 100).

Do you notice the difference between this citation format and the format of the first example? Unlike the first example, this citation does not list the author’s last name inside the parentheses. This is because the last name is included in quotation’s introduction, which makes the identity of the author clear to the reader. Including the author’s last name again inside of the parenthesis would be thus redundant and is not required for MLA citation.

Elizabeth Gaskell’s narrator makes it clear that her protagonist does not speak of her home once she is in Milton (100).
In-text citations are often parenthetical, meaning you add information to the end of a sentence in parentheses. But if you include that necessary information in the language of the sentence itself, you should not include the parenthetical citation. This example shows you proper uses of in-text citations.


CC licensed content, Original

- MLA In-text citations graphic. Authored by: Kim Louie for Lumen Learning. License: CC BY: Attribution

CC licensed content, Shared previously