

MLA Parenthetical Documentation for Internet Sources

1. What's the difference between citing online and print sources?

- Conceptually, there is little or no difference between an in-text citation from a print resource or an electronic one. The most important point to remember is that your reader must be able to quickly look up your in-text citation on the Works Cited page.

2. How does the parenthetical documentation relate to the Works Cited documentation?

- The information in a parenthetical citation should be the first thing the reader sees in the Works Cited entry. For example, the first element of a single-author book on the Works Cited list will be the author's name, and hence the in-text parenthetical documentation will be the author's name as well. The reasoning is that you want your reader to be able to quickly and easily look up your documented source on the Works Cited page.

2. Hey! There aren't any page numbers in this online source. How do I cite this stuff?

- One difference between citing print sources and online sources is that online sources don't always have fixed page numbers. Instead, you may use a paragraph or section number in your citation in place of the page number. If citing a paragraph isn't appropriate, **then it is usually permissible to omit any type of numbering in your citations.**

The first elements (i.e. what you will put in your parenthetical citation) of some common online sources:

A SCHOLARLY PROJECT: The goal of the Victorian Women Writers Project is to produce highly accurate transcriptions of works by British women writers of the 19th century (*Victorian*).

- *The quotation comes from a website entitled Victorian Women Writers Project. Notice that only the first major word has been used in the citation (so if "The" was the first word of the title, it would be skipped in parenthetical documentation in favor of a more concrete word).*
- *Notice that the parenthetical citation is italicized to show that it is a title.*

A PERSONAL SITE: My name is John Johnson, and this is my homepage (Johnson).

- *A personal site's in-text citation is always the author, rather than the title, of the site.*

AN ARTICLE IN A REFERENCE DATABASE: Fresco painting is ideal for making murals ("Fresco").

- *This article came from the online reference database: The Encyclopedia Britannica. Notice that the title of the article is "Fresco" and that it appears between quotation marks because titles of works appearing in something larger (like a poem in book of poetry, or an article in a magazine, newspaper, or reference database) always appear between quotation marks.*
- *Longer titles are shortened to one or two concrete words from the title.*

AN ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE JOURNAL: Among recent trends in youth music culture, perhaps none has been so widely reviled as the rise of a new generation of manufactured "teenybopper" pop acts (Wald, para. 1).

- *A journal differs from a database in that a journal citation includes the name of the author who wrote the article. Also, notice that after the author's name is para.1, because the quote comes from the first paragraph (para.) of the article, and was numbered as such. When numbering with standard page numbers, no abbreviation is necessary to indicate that the number refers to a page.*

- For further information on in-text citations of Internet Sources please refer to <[www.MLA.org/StylePage/Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.MLA.org/StylePage/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions)> or to the fifth edition of the [*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*](#) (1999) or the second edition of the [*MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*](#) (1998).