In-Text Citations: MLA

In MLA, every time you use the work or thoughts of another, you need to cite the original author. Use of others’ work or thoughts include: summary, paraphrase, and direct quotations. In addition to giving the author credit at the end of your paper, you need to cite them when you use their ideas. This is done with in-text citations.

All paraphrases, summaries, and direct quotes are cited directly after their use and before your own thoughts. In MLA, the end citation consists of the author’s last name and the page number. For example, this quote from Jim Dougan is found on page one of his article:

“After the release of their first album in 1987, The Cows were roundly derided as a talentless, tasteless joke (a charge that would be leveled a few years later against Babes in Toyland)” (Dougan 1).

If you introduce the author before quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing, then only the page number is included in the in-text citation:

According to music critic Mark Prindle, Minneapolis rock combo The Cows are an acquired taste (1).

- If Prindle’s article had no page numbers, there is no need for an in-text citation. Note that Prindle was still given credit for his work, so this would be the ONLY situation where an in-text citation is to be omitted.

Block Quotes are quotes longer than four typed lines. The parenthetical or in-text citation goes after the period. Block Quotes are almost always introduced with a colon and are indented ten spaces, as in the example below:

...Fitzgerald movingly describes how Gatsby contains these same personality traits:

Only in Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction – Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. (Fitzgerald 6)

If your source doesn’t have an author, list the title and page number instead:

The price of rice in China does have an effect on the global economy (“Rice Prices” 1).