MLA In-text Citations Cheat Sheet

Whenever you use information or words from a source, you have to cite that source. Failure to do so is plagiarism – you are stealing somebody else’s ideas or words if you do not give them proper credit. This cheat sheet reviews information from the MLA sections of the Aaron book. There are two ways to cite a source. I’ve provided two examples of each – one with quoted information and one with paraphrased information:

1) You can name the source in your sentence, using some variant of “He or she says”

As Williams writes, “The economy will recover when investors start taking risks again” (33).

Williams argues that economic recovery will occur when investors decide that it is safe enough to risk money in the market (33).

2) You can name the author in the citation after the cited material.

One noted economist claims that “The economy will recover when investors start taking risks again” (Williams 33).

Economic recovery will occur when investors decide that it is safe enough to risk money in the market (Williams 33).

As you can see from these examples, the basic information you need for an MLA in-text citation is the author’s last name and the page number where the information was found. If you don’t have a page number (web sources, for example, usually don’t have page numbers), just use the author’s last name. If the source is written by multiple authors, then you must cite all authors (Williams, Jones, and Smith 83). If there are more than three authors, then you could use the first author’s name followed by et al. (“and others”).

If you don’t know who the individual author of your source is, you can use the name of the organization that sponsored the source:

Criminal activity is on the rise – crime statistics show a sharp jump in 2008 (Federal Bureau of Investigation 21).

If you don’t know the individual author and you also don’t have a sponsoring organization, you can use a title keyword in your citation. Here’s an example from a newspaper article titled “Lower Crime Rates Seen in City”:

The city’s new gun control ordinance has resulted in lower crime rates (“Lower Crime” 2).

One word of warning – only cite by keyword when you do not have an individual or organizational author. Many students get confused and switch between citing by author and citing by title. Do not do this – once you cite an article by a particular set of information, you cite it that way through the rest of the essay.
MLA Works Cited Entry Cheat Sheet

These are sample works cited entry formats – this sheet is NOT a sample works cited page itself. This cheat sheet is from the 7th edition of MLA, adopted as the standard in ENG 111 and ENG 112.

Book

Book with two or more authors


Chapter or Essay from an Edited Collection/Anthology

Journal Article from Journal Paginated by Issue

Magazine Article

Magazine Article with No Author Listed

Newspaper Article

Newspaper Article Found through a Database Service

Journal Article Found through an Online Database Service

Web Document