Parenthetical Notes (MLA Style): Quick Reference Guide

**PURPOSE**
Use a note to identify the specific source location for a specific idea, piece of information, or quotation in your paper.

**FORMAT**
Give the specific page reference, preceded by the *least* amount of information needed to identify the source in your list of works cited.

**PLACEMENT**
Place the note following the passage.

**MODEL ENTRIES**

*Standard Reference*
Give the author and page(s):

A fear of thunder is common among dogs (Digby 237).

*Author Identified in the Passage*
Omit the author’s name in the note:

Digby noted that dogs are often terrified of thunder (237).

*An Anonymous Work (Unidentified Author)*
Use the first word or two from the title:

(“An Infant’s” 22)

*A Work with Two Authors*

(Reid and Cook 48–49)

*A Work with Three or More Authors*

(Courtois et al. 112)

*Two or More Works by the Same Author*
Add the first word(s) from the title:

(Asimov, Adding 240–43)
(Asimov, “Happy” 68)
Two Authors with the Same Last Name
Include the authors’ first names:
(George Eliot 459)
(T.S. Eliot 44)

A Multivolume Work
The volume number precedes the page number(s):
(Agus 2: 59)
Exception: Omit the volume number if only one volume is identified in your list of works cited:
(Agus 59)

A Reference to a Work as a Whole
No pages are listed:
(Richardson)

A Reference to More Than One Work
(Matsumoto 33; Vanderhooten 7; Crambury 450-53)

A Reference to Discontinuous Pages
(Witanowski 47, 103)

An Interview or Other Source without Pages
(Mitchell)

One Source Quoted in Another
(qtd. in Kelly 44)

An Electronic Source
(Darwin)

A Source Reproduced by a Microfilm Reproduction Service or Database
(Kafka and London)

PUNCTUATION
Treat the note as part of the preceding sentence.

Sentence Ending in a Period
Move the period to follow the note:
Van Druzel believes the universe to be 15 billion years old (302).
Whisney said, “I cannot remember” (qtd. in Dinks 237).

Sentence Ending in a Question Mark or an Exclamation Point
Add a period following the note:
Calhoun asked, “Am I forgiven?” (qtd. in North 7).
They died shouting, “Liberty forever!” (Torkelson 111).
indent Quotation
The note follows the final period; a period does not follow the note:

Mark Twain wrote:
When I was a boy on the Mississippi River there was a proposition in a
township to discontinue public schools because they were too expensive. An
old farmer spoke up and said if they stopped the schools they would not
save anything, because every time a school was closed a jail had to be
built. (84)

*Borrowed from Research: The Student’s Guide to Writing Research Papers by
Richard Veit