

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:

What, wondered Schlotsky, causes sunspots? (65-66).

Calhoun asked, "Am I forgiven?" (qtd. in North 7).

They died shouting, "Liberty forever!" (Torkeelson 111).

Indented 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