APA In-Text Citations

In-text citations are an important part of academic writing, because they signal careful and honest scholarship. In-text citations are needed **every time** you reference information, arguments, or other material that comes from a source outside of your own brain. Both direct quotations and paraphrases require in-text citation.

As a general rule, an in-text citation should appear in or after each sentence in which an outside source is referenced, quoted, or used. If a citation is not present, academic readers will assume that all the words and ideas contained in the sentence are your own. Should they discover otherwise, your reputation and trustworthiness as a scholar could be irreparably harmed.

WHAT DO I NEED IN MY IN-TEXT CITATIONS?

APA in-text citations need to contain three pieces of information.

1. **AUTHOR NAME:** The author's name is the most important part of your in-text citation. It both gives proper credit for the ideas or information in the citation and points the reader to the full bibliographic entry for that source on your References page. **All in-text citations must correspond with an entry on your References list.**

    You will refer to most sources in your paper by the author's last name (*see examples 1 and 5 on the back of this sheet*). This allows your reader to easily locate that source on your (alphabetical) References page.

    If a source does not have an author, the title replaces the author's last name in the in-text citation (*see examples 2 and 4*). Note that in this case, the title will be the first part of the entry for that source on your References page. If the title is too long or unwieldly, you may use a shortened version, provided that the reader can still easily locate the corresponding bibliographic entry. When referring to titles in-text or in parenthetical citations, put double quotation marks around articles, chapters, or web pages, and use italics for books, periodicals, brochures or reports.

    If a source has multiple authors APA has special guidelines for in-text citations. If a source has two authors, cite them both each time the source is mentioned (*see example 6*). If a source has 3-5 authors, cite all of them the first time a source is mentioned; in subsequent citations, cite only the first name followed by "et al." (*see examples 3 and 7*). If a source has six or more authors, cite only the first of them, followed by "et al."

    If your references page contains two authors with the same last name, then your in-text citations should include initials to indicate which of the two the citation refers to.

2. **DATE:** Because APA Style was developed for the social sciences, the dates of research are an important part of in-text citations. **All in-text citations should include the the year in which the source was published** (or, if the source is a website, when it was last updated).

    In some cases, no date of publication is available. If the work is very old (for example: an ancient Greek or Roman text), you may cite the translation date. If the work is a website or another contemporary source that lacks a publication date, use the abbreviation "n.d." (no date) (*see example 4*).

3. **PAGE OR PARAGRAPH NUMBER:** In APA Style, direct quotations should always include a page or paragraph number. This helps readers easily locate the context of the quotation in the original source. Page numbers should be preceded by the abbreviation "p." (for one page) or "pp." (for multiple pages).

If a source does not have pages (for example: a website), paragraph numbers should be substituted. Again, remember that allowing your reader to easily locate the context of the quote is your goal here. Use paragraph numbers if they are easily visible in the original source. If paragraph numbers are not readily available, use the subheading under which the quote is located, followed by number of the paragraph following that subheading (*see examples 2 and 4*).

If a paraphrase refers to a particular part of a source, follow the same process as citing a direct quote. However, if a paraphrase refers to the whole of a book, article, or other source, no page or paragraph number is needed (*see example 8*).

FORMATTING IN-TEXT CITATIONS

There are two basic ways to format in-text citations in APA Style. They can be used interchangeably for both quotes and paraphrases.

Parenthetical citations are the simplest way to cite information. Parenthetical citations come at the end of the sentence that contains the source material. The follow this format: (author, date, page #).

Example 1: *Identity contingencies* are defined as: "contingencies that are special to you because you have a given social identity" (Steele, 2010, p. 68).

Example 2: "Offering hiding spaces, either under furniture or in cardboard boxes, will help your kitten feel safe, and a cozy, warm bed will help her sleep soundly" ("Bringing home a new kitten," 2012, "Providing a safe space," para. 2).

Example 3: "The lack of copyright notice does not mean that the work is not protected, nor does it mean that a work is in the public domain or that the author of the work has waived his or her rights" (Buehler, Courtney & Slater, 2006, p. 79).

Example 4: "The idea of replacing Columbus Day with a day celebrating the indigenous people of North America first arose in 1977 from the International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas" ("Indigenous Peoples' Day," n.d., "History" para. 1).

Narrative citations are common when the author or originator of the information is important. These types of citations include the author's name within the sentence itself. The year of publication should then follow the author's name in parentheses. This information is then not needed in the parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence.

Example 5: Steele (2010) defines *identity contingencies* as "contingencies that are special to you because you have a given social identity" (p. 68).

Example 6: Penrose and Katz (2010) claim that "we need to carefully consider not only *what* we say, but *how* we say it, for style has an ethical dimension as well" (p. 80).

Example 7: Bueher et al (2006) further state that "the individuals appearing in photographs are not the copyright owners. The photographer, or employer if the photo is made-for-hire, is the copyright owner" (pp. 81-82).

Example 8: Lang (2016) explains his theories on teaching through a series of baseball metaphors.