



# WRITER'S STUDIO RESOURCES: CITATIONS



## What is a citation?

A citation helps readers know when you use outside information in your essay. Citations appear in the form of parentheticals within the body of your essay and in longer form at the end of your essay in the works cited or references page.

## Why do I need citations?

Citations have two main purposes: give credit to your sources and provide ethos by establishing your reliability as a researcher. They are required in all academic writing. Not citing sources is considered plagiarism.

## Citation Basics

*Citations have different styles. The most commonly used in academic courses are MLA, APA, and Chicago. Which style you use is determined by your professor, but typically, English courses use MLA, Psychology and Sociology courses use APA, and History courses use Chicago.*

There are two types of citations you will use when writing an academic essay:

1. **Full-length citations** appear at the end of your essay in the Works Cited (MLA), References (APA), or Bibliography (Chicago) page.
  - MLA – Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1851.
  - APA – Melville, H. (1851) *Moby Dick*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
  - Chicago – 1. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851), 1.
2. **Parenthetical citations** appear within the text of your essay. These are shorter and include only the essential information to direct readers to the corresponding full-length citation.
  - MLA – “Call me Ishmael” (Melville 1).
  - APA – “Call me Ishmael” (Melville, 1851, p. 1).
  - Chicago – “Call me Ishmael.”<sup>1</sup>

*\*Chicago Style uses endnotes instead of parenthetical citations. See our Chicago Style Guide for more info!*

## When and Where to Cite

- Cite any ideas or information that is not your own (except common knowledge).
- Place parenthetical citations directly after the information appears.
- You must cite after a summary or paraphrase, not just after quotations. Putting someone else’s idea into your own words doesn’t make it your idea; you still need to give credit to the source!
- **Remember!** You shouldn’t have a parenthetical citation without a corresponding full-length citation.



# Citation Formatting

Citations follow a strict format that varies depending on style. While citations may seem difficult at first, they all boil down to plugging the right information into the right “formula.”

## Full Length Citations

All citations require the same basic pieces of information: Author, Title, Publisher, Date of Publication, and Page Numbers. For web resources, you may also need the website URL and the date you accessed the source. Take note of this information when gathering resources so you have it handy when it’s time to write up your citations page. Here are the general formats for journal article citations for each of the three main citation styles:

MLA	• Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." <i>Title of Journal</i> , Volume, Issue, Year, pages, www.url.com. Accessed Day Month, Year.
APA	• Last Name, First Initial. (Year). Title of Article. <i>Title of Journal</i> , volume number(issue number), pages. Retrieved from www.url.com
Chicago	• Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." <i>Title of Journal</i> , Volume, Issue, Year: pages. Accessed Month Day, Year, www.url.com.

Don’t worry, no one expects you to memorize citation formatting. That’s where reference guides and websites like EasyBib and Citation Machine come in: these are tools to help you get the right information in the right order for your citations. Just remember when using a citation website to always double check the formatting before submitting your essay.

*\*Check out our Style Guide pamphlets for more in-depth details and citation formats for all kinds of resources!*

## Parenthetical Citations

Parenthetical citations also vary depending on style, but they are simpler than the full citations.

MLA	• (Last Name page number)
APA	• (Last Name, Year, pp. #)

*\*Chicago style uses endnotes instead of parenthetical citations. See our Chicago Style Guide for more about endnotes and citing in Chicago style!*

Here are some options for how to write your parenthetical citations in MLA style:

- If you include information such as the author’s name in the sentence where the source appears, you don’t need to repeat it in the citation. This is called an *in-text citation*: as a rule, when you put the information in the text of your essay, you can omit it from the citation.
  - Melville opens his novel with the line, “Call me Ishmael” (1).
- If you are missing information, such as the author’s name, substitute information you do have, such as the article title.
  - One article claims that “ice cream is good for you” (*Why Ice Cream is Awesome* 23), but the source does not appear credible.
- Websites have no page numbers, so the parenthetical citation (MLA) will only include the author’s last name.
  - New studies have found that cats “likely rode on Viking ships” (Brulliard).