# In Text Citation

In any research paper, you will have used information from other sources, and it is essential to use in text citations to accredit other researchers.

Most of your introduction, and much of your discussion, involve building upon the research of others, placing your research project in the context of previous findings in the field.

It is perfectly acceptable to quote the work of others and, in fact, it is essential that you do so.

Occasionally, you will use direct quotes from another source, but most of the time you will be paraphrasing the work. You will need to create a bibliography or reference list of all of the sources that you use, but you will also need to indicate within the text where your information came from.

Referencing is an essential part of writing any research paper, so err on the side of caution.

Common knowledge does not need to be referenced, and you can assume that any reader is fairly knowledgeable about the field.

For example, a psychologist will be aware of pavlovian conditioning, so you do not need to reference that if it from your own head. A biochemist will be aware of how ethanol is made.



## How to Format an in Text Citation

There are a number of ways in which you can reference the source, but most are based upon variations of MLA [1] and APA [2] style.

Check with your supervisor which exact technique you should be using, and be consistent.

If you use one style all of the way through, there should be no problem, but mixing the styles makes things unclear to the reader and may well be punished by your supervisor.

# Apa Style in Text Citations

The American Psychological Association standard (APA-standard [3]) is used in most social and psychological papers, and variations of the author/date style are used by many scientific disciplines.

For this style, after every paraphrase, you include the surname of the author and the date of writing. For example,

(Sargeant, 2007) at the end of the sentence

or

………Sargeant (2007), found that the fatty acid composition……

This will allow any readers to find your work in the reference list and check the original source for themselves. There are a few variations, especially with electronic information, but they all follow the same basic structure.

If the author has written more than one paper in the same year, then you can use an alphabetical appendix:

(Sargeant, 2008a)

Some departments prefer it if you also use page numbers, if possible. For example,

(Sargeant 2008, 17)

The other difficulty is when there is no author mentioned, and the source was written by an organization. In this case, you use the name of the organization or a recognized abbreviation. For example, NHS, for the National Health Service, or WHO, for the World Health Organization.

The exact abbreviation does not matter too much, as long as it is clear in the bibliography [4]. The same is true of many electronic sources, although be careful that any non-attributed source is reliable.

# Mla Style in Text Citations

The MLA [5] style in text citation has two variations, the author/page number, although the modern trend is for author/year/page number, such as

(Sargeant 2008, 17)

If there are more than two authors listed, then the usual standard is to mention both (Sargeant & McEvoy, 2008). For multiple authors, it is usual to mention them all the first time, but to use 'et al.' afterwards. For example

(Sargeant et al.)

If there are six or more authors, you can use the abbreviation straightaway.

Occasionally, you may have to use a source that has been referenced in another source. If you can, try to find the original source and use that. If you cannot obtain this source, then you need to use a two-stage referencing system. For example,

(Sorgheloos, 1967, as cited in Sargeant, 2008)

This makes it clear that you could not access the original work, and that you correctly attribute the original findings to the researcher who actually performed the initial research.

# Footnote Style in Text Citations

A few standards, such as Chicago style and the Council of Biology Editors (BCE) use a footnote [6] numbering system, where a number is used and cross-referenced with the endnote section and bibliography:

Sargeant[1]

or

Sargeant [1]

Although most word processors provide an automatic system of doing this, the added complexity, and the way that it makes the paper unwieldy for the reader, means that it is falling out of fashion.

# When to Use an in Text Citation

It is always best to over cite, and avoid accusations of plagiarism [7], but there are a few times that citation is not necessary.

General knowledge, such as 'Crick and Watson discovered the structure of DNA,' will not need referencing.

Common knowledge in the field is generally fine, too, although you should err on the side of caution.

If you use class notes, some lecturers are not too worried about citations, although it is usually good practice to find a source saying the same information, from a textbook or journal [8].

**Links**

[1] https://explorable.com/mla-citations
[2] https://explorable.com/apa-citations
[3] https://explorable.com/apa-writing-format
[4] https://explorable.com/writing-a-bibliography
[5] https://explorable.com/mla-writing-format
[6] https://explorable.com/how-to-write-footnotes
[7] https://explorable.com/academic-plagiarism
[8] https://explorable.com/academic-journals