In today’s modern world, technology has replaced much traditional detective work. With forensics now a factor in many trials, it seems justice is often rightly served. However, before these advancements, guilt or innocence often came down to old-fashioned detective work and eyewitness accounts. As a result, some people were convicted of crimes they did not commit. This occurs with the character of Tom Robinson in Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Tom is found guilty because of the deep racism of the times.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place during the Great Depression in a small Alabama town, described as “a tired old town” (Lee 1). Lee provides detail explaining how “grass grew on the sidewalks, and the courthouse sagged in the square” (1). The town typifies the struggles of the era. However, their struggles are not only economic—the population of Maycomb struggles with social and racial equality too, as did many other small towns of the time. In his essay, titled “Racism in Classic American Novels,” Henry West writes that Maycomb “represents the extreme racism and [other social problems] that gripped the nation . . . at the time” (254). West goes on to stress that the happenings in the small town symbolize the severe and alarming problems of the entire country (255).


In Text Citation Basics

Basic in-text citation rules

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as parenthetical citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase.

General Guidelines

- The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends (1.) upon the source medium (e.g. Print, Web, DVD) and (2.) upon the source’s entry on the Works Cited (bibliography) page.
- Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text, must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.

In-text citations: Author-page style

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence. For example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).
Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Both citations in the examples above, (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tell readers that the information in the sentence can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the Works Cited page, where, under the name of Wordsworth, they would find the following information:


In-text citations for print sources with known author
For Print sources like books, magazines, scholarly journal articles, and newspapers, provide a signal word or phrase (usually the author’s last name) and a page number. If you provide the signal word/phrase in the sentence, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical citation.

Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3).
Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

These examples must correspond to an entry that begins with Burke, which will be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of an entry in the Works Cited:


**Citing a work by multiple authors**

For a source with two authors, list the authors’ last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

Best and Marcus argue that one should read a text for what it says on its surface, rather than looking for some hidden meaning (9).
The authors claim that surface reading looks at what is “evident, perceptible, apprehensible in texts” (Best and Marcus 9).

Corresponding works cited entry:


For a source with three or more authors, list only the first author’s last name, and replace the additional names with et al.

According to Franck et al, “Current agricultural policies in the U.S. are contributing to the poor health of Americans” (327).
The authors claim that one cause of obesity in the United States is government-funded farm subsidies (Franck et al. 327).

Corresponding works cited entry:


**Citing multiple works by the same author**

If you cite more than one work by a particular author, include a shortened title for the particular work from which you are quoting to distinguish it from the others. Put short titles of books in italics and short titles of articles in quotation marks.
Citing two articles by the same author:

Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children ("Too Soon" 38), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child’s second and third year ("Hand-Eye Development" 17).

Citing two books by the same author:

Murray states that writing is "a process" that "varies with our thinking style" (Write to Learn 6). Additionally, Murray argues that the purpose of writing is to "carry ideas and information from the mind of one person into the mind of another" (A Writer Teaches Writing 3).

Additionally, if the author's name is not mentioned in the sentence, you would format your citation with the author's name followed by a comma, followed by a shortened title of the work, followed, when appropriate, by page numbers:

Visual studies, because it is such a new discipline, may be "too easy" (Elkins, "Visual Studies" 63).

Citing non-print or sources from the Internet

With more and more scholarly work being posted on the Internet, you may have to cite research you have completed in virtual environments. While many sources on the Internet should not be used for scholarly work (reference the OWL’s Evaluating Sources of Information resource), some Web sources are perfectly acceptable for research. When creating in-text citations for electronic, film, or Internet sources, remember that your citation must reference the source in your Works Cited.

Sometimes writers are confused with how to craft parenthetical citations for electronic sources because of the absence of page numbers, but often, these sorts of entries do not require any sort of parenthetical citation at all. For electronic and Internet sources, follow the following guidelines:

- Include in the text the first item that appears in the Work Cited entry that corresponds to the citation (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name).
- You do not need to give paragraph numbers or page numbers based on your Web browser’s print preview function.
- Unless you must list the Web site name in the signal phrase in order to get the reader to the appropriate entry, do not include URLs in-text. Only provide partial URLs such as when the name of the site includes, for example, a domain name, like CNN.com or Forbes.com as opposed to writing out http://www.cnn.com or http://www.forbes.com.