

In MLA Format, How Should The Following Parenthetical Citation For A Book Written By A Single Author

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Understanding how to properly cite sources is fundamental to academic writing, ensuring that authors receive appropriate credit for their work and that readers can locate original materials effortlessly. Among various citation styles, Modern Language Association (MLA) format is widely used in humanities disciplines, particularly in literature, arts, and cultural studies. One common challenge students and researchers face is correctly formatting parenthetical citations for books authored by a single individual. This article provides a comprehensive guide to mastering MLA in-text citations for such sources, emphasizing best practices, rules, and examples to enhance the clarity and credibility of your writing.

What Is an MLA Parenthetical Citation?

In MLA style, an in-text or parenthetical citation is a brief reference within the main text of your paper that directs readers to the corresponding detailed entry in your Works Cited list. These citations typically include the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the information or quote is drawn. The primary purpose is to attribute ideas correctly, prevent plagiarism, and enable readers to locate the original source efficiently.

Basic Principles for Citing a Book by a Single Author in MLA Format

When citing a book written by a single author in MLA style, the general rule is straightforward:

- The in-text citation should include only the author's last name and the page number(s).
- The full bibliographic details are included in the Works Cited list.

This simplicity stems from the assumption that the reader can locate the full source details in the Works Cited, so the parenthetical citation aims to guide them to the specific part of the source you referenced.

Fundamental Format

The basic format for a parenthetical citation for a single-author book is:

```
``plaintext
(Author's Last Name Page Number)
'''
```

For example:

```
``plaintext
(Smith 45)
'''
```

If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, only the page number is required in parentheses:

> According to Smith, the theory was revolutionary (45).

Rules and Guidelines for Parenthetical Citations in MLA for Single-Author Books

To ensure accuracy and adherence to MLA standards, consider the following rules when creating parenthetical citations for single-author books:

1. Include the Author's Last Name

- Always use the author's last name, not the first name or initials.
- If the author's name is already mentioned in the sentence, omit it from the parentheses.

2. Include the Page Number(s)

- Page numbers are essential when quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to specific parts of the source.
- Use the exact page number where the information appears.
- For multiple pages, use a hyphen: (Smith 45-47).

3. No Comma Between Name and Number

- Do not insert a comma between the author's last name and the page number.
- Correct: (Smith 45)
- Incorrect: (Smith, 45)

4. Citing Multiple Pages

- When citing more than one page, use a hyphen: (Smith 45-50).
- For non-consecutive pages, separate with commas: (Smith 45, 50, 55).

5. Multiple Works by the Same Author

- If citing different works by the same author, include a shortened version of the title to distinguish between sources.
- Example: (Smith, *History of Art* 23).

6. No Need to Include the Author's Name in Parentheses if Mentioned in the Sentence

- If the author's name is part of the sentence, only include the page number.

Example:

> Jane Smith argues that the concept is flawed (45).

Special Cases and Considerations

While the standard format covers most situations, some specific cases require additional attention.

1. No Page Number Available

- If the source does not have page numbers (e.g., some e-books), MLA recommends using paragraph

numbers, section headings, or omit the parenthetical if the context makes the source clear.

- Example: (Smith, par. 4) or omit entirely if the source is clear.

2. Quoting or Paraphrasing Multiple Parts of the Same Book

- Use different page numbers for each citation.

- Example: (Smith 45) and (Smith 78).

3. Citing in a Work with Multiple Authors

- This guide focuses on single-author books, but note that for multiple authors, MLA requires listing all or using "et al." after the first author, depending on the number of authors.

Examples of Correct Parenthetical Citations for Single-Author Books in MLA Format

Here are several illustrative examples to clarify proper application:

- Quoting directly from a book: "The revolution was swift and decisive" (Johnson 102).
- Paraphrasing a concept: Johnson argues that change can be rapid (102).
- Referring to multiple pages: Recent studies highlight the trend (Johnson 102-105).
- Author mentioned in the sentence: According to Johnson, the revolution was swift (102).

Creating a Corresponding Works Cited Entry

Remember, the parenthetical citation is only part of the overall citation process. The full bibliographic details should be included in your Works Cited list, formatted as follows:

- Basic Format for a Book by a Single Author:

```plaintext

Author's Last Name, First Name. Title of the Book. Publisher, Year of Publication.

```

Example:

```plaintext

Johnson, Mark. The History of Revolutions. Oxford University Press, 2015.

```

Conclusion: Mastering MLA Parenthetical Citations for Single-Author Books

Properly citing a book written by a single author in MLA format is essential for maintaining academic integrity and clarity in your writing. By following the straightforward rules—using the author's last name and the specific page number(s)—you ensure your citations are accurate and compliant with MLA standards. Remember to adapt your citations when mentioning the author in your text, citing multiple pages, or dealing with special cases such as electronic sources without page numbers.

Consistent application of these guidelines not only enhances the credibility of your work but also enables your readers to trace your sources efficiently. As you become more familiar with MLA in-text citation rules, incorporating parenthetical citations into your writing will become a seamless part of your scholarly practice.

Key Takeaways:

- Use the author's last name and page number in parentheses.
- Omit the author's name if already mentioned in the sentence.
- Use hyphens for page ranges and commas for non-consecutive pages.
- Adjust citations for sources without page numbers appropriately.
- Always include full source details in your Works Cited list.

By mastering these principles, you ensure your academic writing adheres to MLA standards and upholds the integrity and clarity of your scholarly communication.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the correct MLA in-text parenthetical citation for a book written by a single author?

The correct MLA in-text citation includes the author's last name and the page number, for example: (Smith 45).

How do I cite a book with a single author in MLA format if I mention the author's name in the sentence?

If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, only include the page number in parentheses, e.g., Smith argues that... (45).

Can I omit the page number in the parenthetical citation when citing a single-author book in MLA?

Generally, MLA recommends including the page number, but it can be omitted if you are referring to the entire work or the author's overall ideas.

How should I cite a single-author book with multiple editions in MLA format?

The parenthetical citation remains the same; include the author's last name and page number. If necessary, specify the edition in the Works Cited entry to clarify which version you're referencing.

What if the book has no page numbers? How do I cite it parenthetically in MLA?

If there are no page numbers, you can omit the page number and just include the author's last name, e.g., (Smith).

Is it necessary to include the author's full name in the parenthetical citation in MLA?

No, only the author's last name is used in parenthetical citations in MLA format.

How do I handle parenthetical citations for a single-author book when quoting directly?

Include the author's last name and the specific page number where the quote appears, e.g., (Smith 78).

Can I include multiple sources in a single parenthetical citation for a single-author book?

Yes, separate multiple sources with semicolons, e.g., (Smith 45; Johnson 102).

Are there any special rules for citing a book written by a single author in MLA if I use multiple chapters or sections?

You should cite the specific page number or range that contains the information; the citation format remains the same, e.g., (Smith 45–47).

Additional Resources

Parenthetical Citation: Navigating MLA Format for a Single-Author Book

Understanding Parenthetical Citations in MLA Format

In academic writing, particularly within the humanities, the Modern Language Association (MLA) style is a preferred method for citing sources. Among its various components, parenthetical citations serve as a crucial element, allowing writers to acknowledge sources within the text without disrupting the flow of their narrative. When citing a book written by a single author, mastering the correct parenthetical citation format is essential not only for academic integrity but also for clarity and professionalism. This article offers an in-depth exploration of how to craft these citations effectively, providing insights from style guides, expert recommendations, and practical examples.

What Is a Parenthetical Citation?

A parenthetical citation, also known as an in-text citation, is a brief reference embedded within the body of your writing that points the reader to more detailed information in your Works Cited list. In MLA style, these citations typically include the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the information was sourced.

Key functions of parenthetical citations include:

- Attribution: Giving proper credit to original authors for their ideas or research.
- Verification: Allowing readers to locate the source material if they wish to explore further.
- Avoiding Plagiarism: Demonstrating academic honesty by acknowledging borrowed content.

Core Principles for Citing a Single-Author Book

When citing a book authored by a single individual, the MLA guidelines specify a straightforward approach. However, several nuanced considerations can influence how you format your citations, especially concerning the inclusion of page numbers, multiple authors, or specific editions.

Fundamental principles include:

- Author's Last Name and Page Number: Always include the author's last name and the specific page number if referencing a particular part of the book.
- No Punctuation Between Name and Page: Unlike some styles, MLA style does not require a comma between the author's name and the page number.
- Page Range: When citing multiple pages, use a hyphen to indicate the range (e.g., 45-47).
- Multiple Citations: For multiple sources, separate citations with a semicolon within the parentheses.
- Omission of the Page Number: When paraphrasing or referring to the entire work, the page number is optional but recommended for clarity.

Detailed Breakdown: How to Format Parenthetical Citations for a Single-Author Book

1. Basic Format

The most fundamental form of a parenthetical citation for a single-author book is:

> (Author's Last Name Page Number)

Examples:

- Direct quote:

"The mind is everything," (Smith 45).

- Paraphrased idea:

According to Smith, the mind plays a central role in perception (45).

Best practices:

- Use the last name only; avoid first names or initials unless necessary for clarity.
- Include the page number where the specific information appears.
- Omit the page number if referencing the whole work or general ideas.

2. Citing Multiple Pages

When quoting or paraphrasing across multiple pages, use a hyphen:

> (Smith 45-47)

Example:

The development of cognition is complex and multifaceted (Smith 45-47).

This indicates that the referenced information spans pages 45 through 47.

3. Incorporating the Citation into the Sentence

MLA allows for integration of the author's name into the sentence, with the page number in parentheses:

> According to Smith, cognition develops through various stages (45).

Alternatively:

> Smith states that cognition develops through various stages (45).

Note: If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, only the page number in parentheses is necessary.

4. No Page Number Situations

When citing a summary or general idea from the entire book, you may omit the page number:

> (Smith)

However, be cautious—it's often better to include page numbers when referencing specific data or quotes for precise attribution.

5. Multiple Works by the Same Author

If you are citing more than one book by the same author, include a shortened title to distinguish between them:

> (Smith, *Understanding Psychology* 112)

Example:

The research indicates significant behavioral changes (Smith, *Understanding Psychology* 112).

Special Cases and Common Pitfalls

While the basic format is straightforward, certain situations require additional attention to detail.

1. No Known Author

If a book lacks an author, use a shortened version of the title:

> (Title 45)

Example:

The theory has been debated extensively (*Cognitive Development* 67).

2. Quoting Material from Different Pages

When citing multiple, unrelated ideas from different pages within the same sentence:

> (Smith 45, 78)

Note: Separate page numbers with a comma.

3. Long Quotations

For quotations longer than four lines, MLA recommends block formatting, which lessens the necessity of parenthetical citations within the block, but a citation is still required.

Expert Recommendations and Best Practices

To ensure your parenthetical citations are impeccable, consider the following expert-endorsed practices:

- Consistency Is Key: Use the same format throughout your document.
- Be Specific: When citing paraphrased information, include page numbers if the material is specific.
- Cross-Check With the Works Cited: Confirm that the author’s name and page numbers match your citation.
- Use Citation Generators as a Double-Check: While tools can assist, always verify manually to prevent errors.
- Avoid Over-Citation: Only include page numbers when necessary to pinpoint specific content.

Sample Parenthetical Citations in Context

Scenario	Example	Explanation
	----- ----- -----	

Quoting a specific page	(Johnson 89)	Direct quote from page 89
Paraphrasing entire work	(Johnson)	General idea from the entire book
Multiple pages	(Johnson 89-92)	Information spans pages 89 to 92
Author's name in sentence, page in parentheses	Johnson argues that... (89)	Author mentioned in sentence, page cited at end
Citing a work with no author	(The Art of Writing 45)	Shortened title used in citation

Conclusion: Mastering the Art of Parenthetical Citations for Single-Author Books

Adhering to MLA format for parenthetical citations when referencing a single-author book is a fundamental skill that enhances the clarity, credibility, and professionalism of your academic writing. By understanding the core principles—such as including the author's last name, page number(s), and proper integration into your sentences—you can confidently navigate this aspect of MLA style. Remember, precision and consistency are your allies, ensuring that your citations serve their purpose effectively: giving credit where it's due, guiding your readers seamlessly to your sources, and upholding the integrity of your work. Whether quoting directly, paraphrasing, or referencing entire works, mastering these guidelines will elevate your scholarly writing to a polished and credible standard.

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