

Bryn Mawr College
Emily Balch Seminar
Poverty, Affluence, and American Culture

In-text Citation: The Basics

1. MLA (Modern Language Association) Style:

- Simplest, easiest, and most widely used.
- Main idea: Provide the least amount of information necessary, to enable your reader to look up the quotation or idea in the original source.
- You are free to use a different style if you want (Chicago, APA, whatever).

2. Basic Format – parenthetical citation:

- Example: Riis says the tenements “touch the family life with deadly moral contagion” (23).
- Page number goes in parentheses. No “page” or “p.” – just the number.
- You don’t need the author’s name as long as it is clear from your sentence who the author is. If it is not clear, then include the author’s name. Example: As Eugenists, Grant and Galton both argue that the “free propagation of the stock of the unfit” (Galton 2) should be prevented.
- Parenthetical citation goes *after* the quotation mark but *before* the period.
- If your source has no page numbers, then you don’t need a parenthetical citation at all (because there’s nothing to cite in that case).
- You need to cite a page number if you are using a *specific* idea from a source, even if you are not quoting. Example: Carnegie argues against government charity, on the grounds that the poor people who receive the charity will waste it (3).
- You do *not* need to cite a page number if you are using a general idea from a source, or an idea that appears in several places in the text. Example: Addams takes a humanistic approach, emphasizing the lives of the poor people she encounters, and the importance of the rich and the poor interacting.

3. Resources for More Information:

- **Tri-Co Library Web Site, section on Citation Guides:**
<https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/friendly.php?s=citation>
- **Purdue University OWL (Online Writing Lab), MLA Style Guide:**
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> (is linked from the Tri-Co Library citation page too; and also includes links to other style guides)