MLA DOCUMENTATION STYLE: IN-TEXT CITATIONS
Each academic discipline has its own expectations for style and documentation. Often, these disciplines rely on a broad system of guidelines that are determined by professional organizations in the field. In literature and composition fields, the standard style is MLA (Modern Language Association).

MLA DOCUMENTATION RELIES ON A COMBINATION OF IN-TEXT CITATIONS (AUTHOR AND PAGE NUMBER) AND A WORKS CITED PAGE (FULL BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION). MLA does not typically use endnotes or footnotes; however, some scholars make use of the Chicago Manual guidelines in order to include these items. (For more information, consult the Center for Writing’s quicktip on Chicago Documentation Style.) For an example of a works cited page, please see the quicktip by that title.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS APPEAR AFTER QUOTED OR PARAPHRASED INFORMATION. The two key features of an MLA-style in-text citation are the following:

1. The in-text citation generally requires the author’s last name and the page number from which the cited information comes (unless the author’s name is clear, in which case a page number is all that is required).
2. No comma is placed between the author name and page number, and the period appears after the citation (except for long quotes, which are indented—see below for further information).

Beyond these guidelines, adjustments need to be made for internet material (generally doesn’t use page numbers; use a title if there is no author), two books by the same author (use the titles), or two authors with the same last name (use a first initial in addition to the last name).

Standard entry (author’s last name + page number):
“A fully dressed woman walked out of the water” (Morrison 50).

With author’s name in signal phrase (page number alone):
Morrison’s narrator tells us that “[a] fully dressed woman walked out of the water” (50).

Internet source, no author (title alone):
“The Writing Center, a support program that facilitates writing projects, provides free tutorials to all students at UMC from all disciplines” (The Writing Center).

Two books by same author (title of work plus page number):
“The things they carried were largely determined by necessity” (The Things They Carried 2).

Two authors with same last name (Author’s first initial and last name + page number):
“The greatest challenge was getting the right sample materials” (R. Jones 17).

QUOTATIONS OR IDEAS THAT NAME THE AUTHOR IN A SIGNAL PHRASE REQUIRE ONLY THE PAGE NUMBER IN PARENTHESES.

Standard entry: “A fully dressed woman walked out of the water” (Morrison 50).

With name in signal phrase: Morrison’s narrator tells us that “[a] fully dressed woman walked out of the water” (50).

COMMON STRUCTURES FOR SIGNAL PHRASES
Writers can use signal phrases in several ways when they introduce quoted or cited material into their texts. Below are some of the most common:

According to Morrison, “…”
Morrison suggests that “…”
As Hacker points out in her introduction, “…”
After observing that “…”, Vandenberg goes on to hypothesize that “…”
Editor David Nadelberg offers a tongue-in-cheek explanation of the teen diary phenomenon: “…"

LONG QUOTES, OR BLOCK QUOTATIONS
Block quotations, or quotations that take up more than four lines of your text, are set off beginning on a new line and indented five spaces. Block quotations differ from brief in-text quotations in two ways:

1. Block quotations do not require quotation marks. The visual setting-off of the passage, along with the parenthetical citation at the end, signal to readers of MLA-style papers that they are reading a quotation, not your own words.

2. The parenthetical citation at the end of a block quotation comes after the period, not before it.

Adapted from quicktips by Center for Writing, UM-TC