MLA Style In-Text Citations

In an MLA-style paper, a citation is needed when using a direct quote, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas. When citing a source in an MLA paper, the citation needs the author's last name and page number. The author’s name can go in parentheses with the page number, or be incorporated into the sentence. In the parentheses, only the name and page number are included (no commas, “p.”, or anything else).

Anderson remembers President John F. Kennedy saying we must ask ourselves “not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” (7).

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There are a lot of different kinds of authors. This chart should help you to understand how to cite each kind of author.

Quick ‘n’ Easy Author Guide

| One author: use the last name and page number. | (Adams 34) |
| Two or three authors: use the last names and page number. | (Adams and Jefferson 70)  
(Lincoln, Polk, and Garfield 45) |
| Four or more authors: list all the last names OR give the first one, followed by “et al.”, and the page number. | (Bush, Clinton, Carter, Nixon 55)  
(Bush et al. 55) |
| Unknown author: use the work’s title or a shortened version of it and the page number. | (“Excellent Jokes in Print” 18) |
| Organization: use the organization’s name or its abbreviation. | (United States Postal Service 10)  
(USPS 10) |

This guide should help you with most basic citation questions. If you have more questions, look at the Little Seagull Handbook or at a trustworthy online source, like Purdue OWL.