

## **MLA in-text citation (parenthetical)**

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(For single-text critical essays about literature)

### **I. Quotations must be incorporated into a sentence**

How?

## **a. Use a comma or a colon**

Ex: The narrator describes the coast of the land as follows: "...the white sand bays with the waves breaking unseen by anyone, rose to heaven in a kind of ecstasy" (56).

Or

Ex: Jacob thinks of Clara in relation to the grape leaves, as the narrator describes, "She [was] up there among the vine leaves and yellow and purple branches" (56).

## **b. Incorporate a "snippet" into the sentence:**

Ex: Exclaiming that they "know nothing about politics," the guests at this dinner party reveal their need to escape the real world (94).

## II. Punctuate quotations and page #'s correctly

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How?

### a. Citing quotation at the end of a sentence:

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Ex:

Jacob thinks of Clara in relation to the grape leaves, as the narrator describes, “She [was] up there among the vine leaves and yellow and purple branches” (56).

→ Periods, semi-colons, and commas from the quotation can be replaced by a period outside the parentheses.

## **a. Citing end of the sentence quotations (cont'd)**

- What about other punctuation marks within quotations?

Ex: The narrator invites us to explore Jacob's room with her by asking a series of questions: "Was it an argument? A bet on the boat races? Was it nothing of the sort?" (46).

→ Include question marks or exclamation points, within the quotation marks, but end the sentence with a period anyway.

## **b. Citing a "snippet" correctly**

Ex: Exclaiming that they "know nothing about politics," the guests at this dinner party reveal their need to escape the real world (94).

→ Place page # at the end of the sentence unless...

## **b. Citing “snippet” correctly (cont’d)**

...your snippets originate from 2 different pages. Then:

“Listless is the air in an empty room” (39), the narrator describes, personifying a room the same way she does when she comments that “the sitting room neither knew nor cared” (101).

→ Include the page number immediately following the snippet. Note punctuation still follows the parentheses.

## **III. Altering quotations**

a. If you change something, use brackets:

The narrator describes the coast of the land as follows: “...the white sand bays with the waves breaking unseen by anyone, [rise] to heaven in a kind of ecstasy” (56).

(rose changed to rise)

b. If you omit something, use an ellipsis

The narrator describes the coast of the land as follows: “...the white sand bays ... rose to heaven in a kind of ecstasy” (56).

(middle prepositional phrase omitted)

## IV. Quoting longer passages:

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- If the passage is longer than 4 lines in your paper...

→ Use block quotation

## Block Quotation

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- Preface the quotation with a fairly simple introductory sentence that sets the quotation up with a colon
- Single-space
- Drop quotation marks
- Indent one inch (aligned left, as usual)
- Page # appears at the end of the passage outside punctuation
- Do not indent the text that follows because it is not a new paragraph.

## Block Quotation example:

- Stephen remains uncomfortable with himself, as shown on his visit to the anatomy theatre:

They passed into the anatomy theatre where Mr. Dedalus, the porter aiding him, searched the desks for his initials. Stephen remained in the background, depressed more than ever by the darkness and silence of the theatre.(89)

In the presence of his father, Stephen shrinks into the background and focuses on the negative aspects...

## Recommendations

- For precision and clarity, quote only what you need.
- Unless you are using a snippet, think situation, quotation, explication
- Vary your quotation methods
- Find creative ways to explain your quotations. Avoid (this shows...). Try "This image suggests.." or "The word 'silence' implies..." etc..
- PS: It's a quotation, not a quote!