

# How to Create (Parenthetical Citations)

## 1. My assignment asks for *parenthetical citations* in my paper. What does that mean?

You already know you need a list at the end of your paper of all the research sources you used (a Works Cited page). The second part of “citing your sources” is identifying which facts/ideas/quotations you got from each source.

Parenthetical citations, or in-text citations, are how you name the source in the body of your paper every time you use something from that source. They are called *parenthetical* because they go in parentheses at the end of the sentence containing a fact/idea/quotation from the source: ( ).

## 2. When do I put a parenthetical citation in my paper?

**A. Every time you use someone’s words directly, you should put “quotation marks” around their words and put a parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence. The citation should include author’s name and page number:**

Some experts believe that hunting is only harmful when done excessively and that “regulated sport hunting has never driven any wild species into extinction” (Turback 74).

**B. Every time you used their idea but you put it entirely in your own words (paraphrasing), you put the citation at the end of the sentence where you talk about that idea, with no quotation marks:**

Though the number of attacks by mountain lions on humans is low, the rate of increase of attacks since the 1960s is cause for serious concern (Rychnovsky 43).

**C. You can also name the author in a “signal phrase.” That means you introduce them in the sentence before the quotation or fact, so you don’t have to put their name in the parentheses:**

Turback claims that “regulated sport hunting has never driven any wild species into extinction” (74).

~~~Examples from: Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999. Print.~~~

## 3. What goes in the parentheses?

Parenthetical citations should always match the first thing in the Works Cited entry for that source. Then you add the page number where you got the fact/idea/quotation.

**A. So ideally, that would be the author’s name, and the page number: (Orwell 14)**

**If the quotation goes onto the next page, use a dash: (Orwell 14-15)**

**If citing a page range (like above), multi-digit numbers will look like this: (174-6)** \*\*Here we are citing info that starts on page 174 and ends on page 176. Notice that we don’t repeat the “17” in the page number 176.

\*\*Also notice how you DON’T put p., pg. or a comma or anything in between the author and the page number.\*\*

**B. If there is no known author, use the next thing from the Works Cited entry, usually the article title or page title:**

(“Water Pollution in the Bay Area” 4)

\*\*Notice how the article title is in “quotation marks,” just like on your Works Cited page\*\*

C. For sources like websites with no page number, you just put the author (if available) or the article/page title if no author given:

(Wilson) or (“Water Pollution in the Bay Area”)

**D. If there is no known author AND no article title, use the next best thing which is the website domain name. (NOTE: THIS IS NOT THE ENTIRE URL!) Ex. (CNN.com) (Forbes.com)**

E. For essays that are only referring to *one* source, like an English essay about a novel, you don’t need to name the author every time. After you name the author in the introduction paragraph, you can just put the page number after all the quotations in your paper: “like this” (56).

#### 4. Where does the period go?

Take out the normal period at the end of the sentence and move it outside the parenthetical citation. This shows that the parenthetical is part of that sentence:

According to the EPA, “Polluted runoff is caused by rainfall and snowmelt moving over and through the ground that picks up and carries with it natural and human-made pollutants” (“Wetlands”).

→Notice how the period after “pollutants” moved outside the parentheses.

**\*\*Exception: If the quotation has a ? or !, leave it in the sentence, then add the period later “is recycling effective?” (Smith).**

#### 5. What if I have more than one source by the same author, or with the same title? Won’t their parentheticals look the same?

Yes. You need to give more information to show which source you mean. For 2 sources with the same **author**, include the next piece of information, the title, with a comma in-between and the page number after. Let’s say I’m citing *Animal Farm* and *1984*, two books by George Orwell:

In many of his works, Orwell criticized those who take advantage of their power to lie to others. He showed powerful groups telling obvious lies, and powerless characters believing those lies, “All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others” (Orwell, *Animal Farm* 45), and “the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it” (Orwell, *1984* 32).

**Here’s two sources with no author that have the same page or article title:**

(“China,” *The World Factbook*) and (“China,” *Country Studies*)

#### 6. What about an interview that I did with an expert?


These are easy: just the person’s last name: (Fuentes). Many teachers will also ask for the date, see below.

If you did two interviews on two different dates, you must use the date to distinguish the two.

(Fuentes 2012) and (Fuentes 2013) Or (Fuentes Nov. 2012) and (Fuentes Dec. 2012)

#### **7. For web pages/articles with no author and a REALLY LONG TITLE, do I have to put the whole thing in the parentheses? It makes my paragraph look weird.**

You are allowed to shorten long titles, but remember the first rule of parentheticals: **it has to match the first thing in the Works Cited entry.** So if I start with this long title:



(“Effects of Nonpoint Source Pollution on San Francisco Bay Marine Life”)

It’s okay to do this: (“Effects”) or (“Effects of Nonpoint Source Pollution”)

But not okay to do this: (“Nonpoint Source Pollution”) or (“San Francisco Bay Marine Life”)

### **8. What if my source has many authors, and that makes the parenthetical too long?**

For sources with fewer than 4 authors, list all of them in the parentheses, with commas between authors and the word “and” before the last person:

(Benton, Shelton, and Zuckerman 149).

When you have 4 or more authors, you can use the first author plus the abbreviation “et al.” which means “and everybody else.” So if your book or article is written by people with the last names Benton, Shelton, Zuckerman, Sanders and Fisher, your parenthetical can look like this: (Benton et al. 149).

### **9. It seems like I’ll have parentheticals at the end of every sentence in my paper!** ☹️

Don’t worry, you won’t. Remember from English class that you have to *introduce* and *explain* every quotation in your own words. Tell us how the fact or quotation proves your thesis (how it supports your argument). That means you’ll always have several of your own sentences around each piece of evidence from a source. Also, you’ll need a topic sentence and conclusion sentence in each paragraph. None of those sentences will need parenthetical citations.

**10. Don’t forget: Every source listed on your Works Cited page should have a parenthetical citation somewhere in your paper. Every parenthetical should have a matching entry on your Works Cited page. Otherwise it’s plagiarism!**