



MLA Citation 8th Edition

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MLA requires that writers cite sources within the text of the paper or presentation. Within-text citations are also known as parenthetical references—a name derived from the fact that they are shown inside parentheses. These citations signal to readers that the information they have just read contained ideas, concepts, images, or exact words that originated from an external source. These references show that you did your research and that you can support your ideas with the verifiable data or ideas, adding credibility to your work without plagiarizing. *A Works Cited page alone is not enough.*

What types of information within my paper do I need to cite?

- Always cite **direct quotes** and **ideas or information you have summarized or paraphrased**. Additionally, cite borrowed statistics, data, charts, diagrams, graphs, illustrations/graphics, photographs, and art.
- Do not cite common knowledge—information that most people know (even if they would have to look up the specifics) such as the fact that Barack Obama is the president of the U.S., or that the speed limit in a school zone in CA is 25 mph.

How do I cite in text?

Always use some form of introductory (signal) phrase or sentence before your summary, paraphrase, or quote. If you use a borrowed chart, graph, table, schematic or other image, use a label and a caption for the item.

Introductory phrase contains...	Parenthetical citation should show	Example
no mention of the author's name	Author's last name and the page number	The research confirmed that radiation increased cancer risks (Jones 114).
Author	Page number	Jones' research confirmed that radiation increased cancer risks (114)
An indirect source, i.e. the author/speaker has been cited from within a different source	The abbreviation —qtd. in plus the last name of source, and page #	Jones' said of her work, —risks of cancer certain (qtd. in Smith 45).
Source has no author. Title is not in signal phrase.	Title and page number	Research has linked radiation to cancer ("History of Cancer" 114).
Source has no author and no page number. (often the case with websites)	Title alone. If original document shows designated paragraph numbers or line numbers, also use paragraph #	Research has linked radiation to cancer ("History of Cancer"). Research has linked radiation to cancer ("History of Cancer" n. page).

Introductory phrase contains...	Parenthetical citation should show	Example
Source with 3 or more authors and names are not in signal phrase	Last name of the first author plus abbreviation —et al. , and page numbers	Research has linked radiation to cancer (Jones et al. 114).
Two or more separate sources contributing to a summary or paraphrase	At the end of summary/paraphrase, parenthetical citation of all sources	Research has linked radiation to cancer (Jones 23; Smith 112).

Note that punctuation **follows the parenthesis** if the use is **within your paragraph**. If using an indented (blocked) quote, the punctuation follows the quote and you do not use quotation marks.

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

The following incorrect and then **correct** versions of quotes, paraphrases, and summaries derive from a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. in his —Letter from Birmingham Jail :

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. (King 85 - 86)

MLA Works Cited Citation:

King, Martin Luther Jr. *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*. Ed. James M. Washington. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992. Print.

Don't do this: "Dropped" quotation. *It doesn't introduce or acknowledge source.*

People must feel a responsibility toward fellow human beings. —We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny (King 85).

Do This: Quotation with a signal phrase.

An example of social responsibility may be taken from the words of Martin Luther King when he wrote, —We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny (85).

Don't do this: Inappropriate paraphrase. *It copies the exact structure, switching out words for synonyms, and borrowing words (also, the citation should have his name because it is not in the sentence where the citation appears)*

King wrote that he was aware of the tight connection of all societies and regions. He could not sit back in Atlanta, Georgia without worrying about what happened in Birmingham, Alabama. Denial of justice in one place threatens justice in all places. All of us are trapped as if in a networking group linked to the same future. The things that affect one member affect all members (85).

Do This: Acceptable paraphrase. *It shows the main idea and the key points.*

In his —Letter from Birmingham Jail , Martin Luther King Jr. points out the interrelatedness (85) of U.S. citizens, regardless of where they might live, and then he shares his own sense of personal responsibility. He connects back to the public obligation toward human rights, and the shared consequences of both action and inaction (85 - 86).

Don't do: Inappropriate summary. *It borrows words and it doesn't add a within text citation.*

Communities are interrelated. Not even Martin Luther King could sit back without feeling concern for Birmingham's people because injustice anywhere affects all people.

Do This: Acceptable summary. *It shows the main idea.*

Version #1 includes quoted material.

Martin Luther King uses his 1963 —Letter from Birmingham Jail to bring attention to humanity's

interrelatedness (85) and to the social obligation of securing justice (86) for all people. Additionally, King defends his participation in acts of civil disobedience in Birmingham (85 – 86).

Version #2 without quoted material and summarizing the whole article.

The "Letter from Birmingham Jail", not only defends Martin Luther King's participation in acts of civil disobedience in Birmingham, but also brings awareness to the responsibility individuals have for securing the rights of all humanity (King 83 – 90).

HOW DO I CITE SOURCES IN THE NEW 8TH EDITION MLA FORMAT?

As you gather information about your sources, MLA recommends asking the following questions:

Who is the author of the source?

What is the title of the source?

How was the source published?

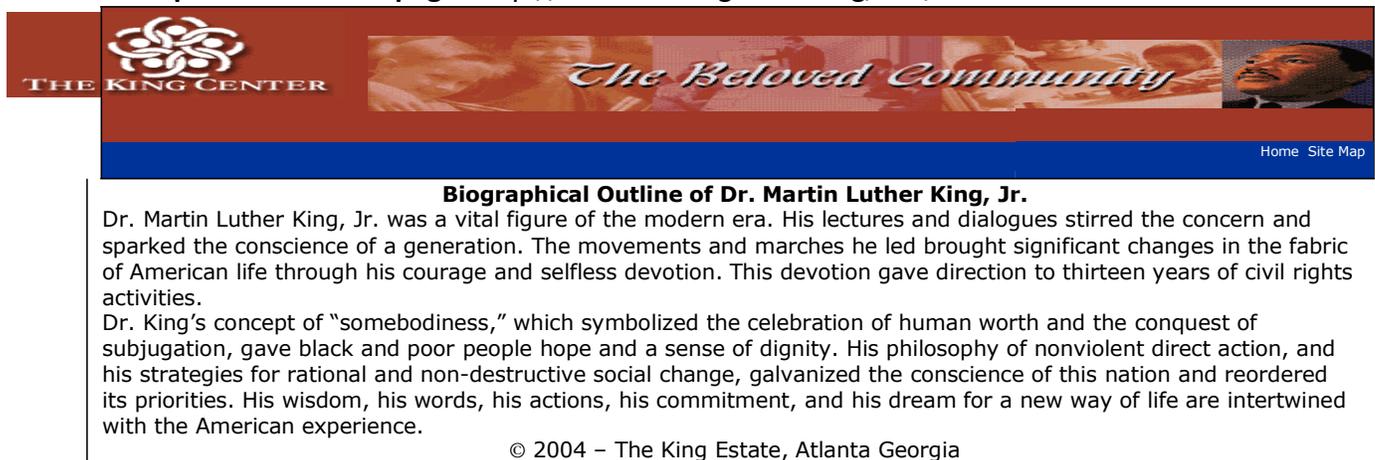
Where did you find the source?

When was the source published?

Use this template to help you organize your publication information. These are the core elements of any entry in a works cited list. →

- 1 Author.
- 2 Title of source.
- 3 Title of container,
- 4 Other contributors,
- 5 Version,
- 6 Number,
- 7 Publisher,
- 8 Publication date,
- 9 Location.

Example is at this webpage: <http://www.thekingcenter.org/mlk/bio.html>



The screenshot shows the header of the King Center website with the logo and the title "The Beloved Community". Below the header is a blue navigation bar with "Home" and "Site Map" links. The main content area features a biographical outline of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., including a paragraph about his impact and a copyright notice for 2004.

Biographical Outline of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a vital figure of the modern era. His lectures and dialogues stirred the concern and sparked the conscience of a generation. The movements and marches he led brought significant changes in the fabric of American life through his courage and selfless devotion. This devotion gave direction to thirteen years of civil rights activities.
Dr. King's concept of "somebodiness," which symbolized the celebration of human worth and the conquest of subjugation, gave black and poor people hope and a sense of dignity. His philosophy of nonviolent direct action, and his strategies for rational and non-destructive social change, galvanized the conscience of this nation and reordered its priorities. His wisdom, his words, his actions, his commitment, and his dream for a new way of life are intertwined with the American experience.
© 2004 – The King Estate, Atlanta Georgia

To cite in text: First time you cite it ("Biographical Outline of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.")

Subsequent times ("Biographical Outline")

Citation for the Works Cited Page:

"Biographical Outline of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." *King Center*. The King Estate, 2004,

<http://www.thekingcenter.org>.

MLA Format In Text: Example of How to Incorporate Citations

Adams 2

Martin Luther King Jr., as a leader of the Civil Rights movement, existed not as an anomaly of leadership, but rather as a person whose actions evolved from a history of Civil Rights leadership throughout the world. In his biography of King, historian Stephen Oates suggests that King's actions in the Civil Rights movement were influenced by his early study of Mahatma Gandhi (132-134). Oates' biography explains, "While earning his doctorate in theology, King had studied Gandhi's efforts" (132). In particular, King was impressed by Gandhi's understanding of purposeful suffering, and King took strength in Gandhi's words, "Through our pain we will make them see their injustice" (qtd. in "Martin Luther King"). This influence was confirmed by Coretta Scott King when she reflected back on her husband's life (*Legacy of a Dream*). Martin Luther King Jr. also studied the actions of early leaders such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois (Oates 150). The voices of those leaders resonate in King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail":

I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. (King 85 – 86)

King's words in that section reach back to a demand for an inherent right to justice, and a plea for shared accountability that evolved from justice movements of the early 1900s in the U.S. and later in India (Dubois 95; Gandhi 133; Washington 20). Nonetheless, King's own voice in phrases such as "tied in a single garment of destiny" (86) shows the unique and theological tone that would become the hallmark of his public persona.

Works Cited

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*Depending on the discussion of the film in the paper, use the most relevant contributor as the first entry of the Works Cited citation.

Article,
with
volume
accessed
through
library
database.

Website

Essay
within a
Literary
Anthology

Essay in
collection
by same
author

Documentary
Video*

Website

Book by
one author

TV News
Segment
viewed online

Newspaper article
accessed through
library database.

Kindle book or
digital reader.
Also shows a
reprinted edition of
a classic work.

Two Interviews
conducted by
author.