

KYLE BISHOP
MLA-STYLE CITATIONS

Signal Phrases: Using a clear introductory phrase before all quotations; introduce the author thoroughly (use full name and establish credentials) the first time the source is used

- When introducing a quotation with an independent clause, use a colon.

Example:

Ryan Barthe, professor of sociology at NYU, claims weak gun laws will lead to greater lawlessness: “An increase in handguns will results in more senseless deaths.”

- When introducing a quotation with an introductory phrase or a verb, use a comma.

Example:

In his seminal work on Second Amendment rights, Harvard scholar Herbert Miles claims, “America is founded on the idea of personal defense” (549).

- When introducing a quotation with the word *that* (or in other cases where the quote doesn’t interrupt the flow of the sentence), use no punctuation (and no capital letter).

Example:

Walter Carter and Mark Smith, staff reporters for *The Economist*, argue that “defense of the home begins in the home” (34).

Quotations: Using the exact words from a text

- Quotations of four or fewer lines of typed text are presented inside quotation marks and incorporated into the rest of the text

Example:

Gary Miles indicates that “public schools represent a key blind-spot for law enforcement because of the relative helplessness of the students” (1448).

- Quotations of four or more lines of typed text are block indented 1 full inch from the left margin, double spaced, and *not* enclosed in quotation marks; when quoting more than one paragraph, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional ¼ inch.

Example:

A recent study by civil rights attorney Jonathan W. Grimes shows the problems with such a limited perspective:

Yes, children can be taught to respect (and even to avoid) guns, but not all parents are equally responsible in teaching such respect.

The problem lies with liability: if *my* child is visiting *your* house, *you* are legally responsible for his safety, and it's not *my* job to teach him to respect the firearms stored in *your* closet. ("Gun Safety")

- If a portion of the text has been removed, ellipsis marks (. . . if the omission is within a sentence; if the omission crosses over sentences) are used to indicate the omission.

Example:

Controversial director Michael Moore insists, "The NRA needs to be held responsible . . . for the deaths of these children. . . . They supported the legislation, after all."

- If the original source contains a grammatical error, follow the error with [sic].

Example:

Margaret Taylor claims, "These permits are a rite [sic], not a privilege."

- If a word or phrase in the original quote needs to be emphasized, it may be italicized and followed by [emphasis added].

Example:

The OED defines *arm* as "*any* [emphasis added] weapon" ("Arm," def. 5b).

- If words or phrases have been inserted, they must be enclosed within square brackets [].

Example:

Barthe sees it otherwise: "Each person [at the crime scene] was found to possess a gun permit, so no crime could have taken place."

Parenthetical References: Showing the source of a paraphrase or quotation by directing the reader to the appropriate work on the works cited page and the precise page (chapter, paragraph, or line) number where the borrowed material is located

- Parenthetical references appear at the end of a sentence or clause, and they should be as close to the borrowed material as possible.
- The period ending the sentence (or the comma ending the clause) goes *after* the parenthetical reference for a short quote and *before* the reference for a long quote.
- If the source is sufficiently clear (i.e., the author's name appears in the signal phrase or the source is the same as the previous one), cite just a location number (if available; otherwise, no citation beyond the author or title is necessary).

Example:

Carter and Smith make their position clear: “No crime is a good crime” (36).

- If the author is not mentioned in the signal phrase by name, or is otherwise unclear, list the last name before the page number (with no punctuation in between).

Example:

The will of the masses often outweighs the needs of the elite minority (H. Miles 554).

- If a source provides numbered paragraphs, but not numbered pages (such as some Web sources), use the abbreviation “par.” (after a comma) to indicate a paragraph reference.

Example:

According to the Guns for Life Web site, gun control is more about political “power” than political “rights” (“Fight for Power,” par. 16).

- With single-author sources, use the author's last name only

Example:

However, few have ever been convicted of concealed weapon violations (Taylor).

- If the source has two or three authors, list all author's last names; if the source has more than three authors, list the first author only, followed by et al.

Example:

Seven out of ten gun-related deaths occur in the home (Anderson et al. 234).

- If more than one work by the author is listed on the works cited page, use a key word (punctuated as the complete title) to narrow down the reference.

Examples:

Grimes insists trigger locks are a poor substitute for a gun safe (“Ten Ways” 2).

However, trigger locks are a poor substitute for a gun safe (Grimes, “Ten Ways” 2).

- If two sources are by authors with the same last name, use a first-name initial to differentiate the source; if anonymous sources share the same title, include additional publication information (after a comma).

Example:

School shootings could be mitigated if those on campus, including faculty and “senior staff members,” carried concealed handguns (G. Miles 1456).

- If the source has a corporate author, list the full name or title first; a clear truncation or abbreviation may be used thereafter.

Example:

According to the National Rifle Association (NRA), handguns are “protected by the Constitution of the United States” (par. 4).

- If the source has no listed author, cite by title, truncating the reference to the first few key words only (if possible, and only if it will not cause confusion)

Example:

The problem with concealed weapons permits, says *City Weekly Magazine*, is that they can arguably “legalize” criminal activity (“Gun License” 13).

- If the quotation is quoted from another source (indirect reference), refer to the original author in the signal phrase and the actual source in the parenthetical citations (along with the abbreviation “qtd. in”).

Example:

Yet according to Jefferson Smith, a pawn shop owner in Queens, “The current wait period [for a handgun] is unrealistically long and very inconvenient” (qtd. in Moore).