APA In-Text Citations:

- Are used to formally acknowledge the work of others in the text of your document.
- Must appear in the reference list at the end of the article (with a few exceptions such as personal communications or ancient texts). Note that each entry in the reference list must be cited in the text.
- Are placed in parentheses after a quote or paraphrased passage using an author-date format.
- Should include page numbers in the citation if you are citing a direct quotation or referring to a specific part of a work such as a chapter title. If you are paraphrasing from a work, you are not required to provide a page number, but APA guidelines encourage it.
  - Use "p." and "pp." to indicate page numbers when citing newspaper articles and information from a book, but not when citing journal and magazine articles.

Works by one author (signal phrase)—A signal phrase is a phrase, clause or sentence that leads into a quote or paraphrase. Generally, a signal phrase includes the author’s surname (not in parentheses) and the year of publication (in parentheses). Cite the page number in parentheses at the end of the quote/paraphrase.

Ex. Watson (2001) noted that the molecule called RNA was different than the DNA molecule (p. xi).

Works by one author (no signal phrase)—After a quote or paraphrase, in parentheses, insert the author’s surname, the year of publication, and the page number, separated by commas, into the text at the appropriate point.

Ex. The molecule called RNA is different than the DNA molecule (Watson, 2001, p. xi).

Works by two authors—Cite the surnames of the authors in the order they appear in the article header or title page, followed by the publication year and page number. Cite both names every time the reference occurs in the text. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand (&) in the parentheses.


Ex. Mooney and Kirshenbaum (2009) related that “scientific illiteracy” is a problem (p. 13).

Works by three, four, or five authors—Cite the surnames of all authors, separated by commas, the first time the reference is cited. In subsequent citations, use only the first author’s surname, followed by et al.

Ex. 1st citation: The set of rational numbers is not sufficient to solve some of the problems (Zill, Dewar, & Wright, 1978, p. 1).

Ex. 2nd citation: Zill et al. (1978) explained that the set of rational numbers is not sufficient to solve some of the problems (p. 1).
Works by six or more authors—Cite only the surname of the first author followed by et al.

Ex. Wilde et al. (2015) indicated that many catheter users have spinal cord injury (p. 24).

Works with no identified author or with an anonymous author—Cite the first few words of the reference list entry (usually the title), the year, and page number. Use as many words as necessary to identify the source as it appears in your Reference List. If the author is designated as “Anonymous,” cite the word Anonymous followed by a comma, the date, and page number.

Ex. The protest march still constitutes an important medium to communicate grievances (“Taking Sides,” 2010, p. 49). (Full title of book is Taking sides: Clashing views on social psychology)


Short quotations (fewer than 40 words)—Incorporate the quote into text enclosed in double quotation marks. Cite the author surname, year, and specific page number.

Ex. Churchill said, “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat” (Cannadine, 1989, p. 149).

Block quotations (40 or more words)—Display quote in a freestanding block of text on a new line, indented by two tabs from the rest of the text. Do not use quotation marks. Double space the entire quotation. At the end of the block, cite the author surname, year, and specific page or paragraph number after the final punctuation mark.

Ex. In his study on French archaeology, Debaene (2013) explained why there has been relatively little written about the French tradition.

First four lines…

combines two seemingly antagonistic tendencies. (p. 23)

Online material with no pagination—If the online material does not provide page numbers, use paragraph numbers if they are visible. Or, count paragraphs down from the beginning of the document. Use the abbreviation para.

Ex. Many people still don’t understand panic disorder (Holmes, 2015, para. 3).

If the document includes headings, but not paragraph or page numbers, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph following it to direct the reader to the location of the quoted material. If the heading is too unwieldy to cite in full, use a shortened title enclosed in quotation marks.

Ex. Some psychologists are trained to use hypnosis in treatment (Smith, 2011, “How psychologists use hypnosis,” para. 2). (Full title of heading is How psychologists use hypnosis when treating panic disorder)

Personal communications (letters, interviews, emails, phone conversations)—are not included in the Reference List. Because they don’t provide recoverable data, they should be cited in the text only. Provide the initials and last name of the communicator, type of communication, and exact date of the communication in parentheses.

Ex. J. H. Smith (personal interview, April 6, 2014) acknowledged his role in the company’s loss of revenue.
Ex. John told me to arrive at 3:00 p.m. (A. B. Doe, email conversation, July 22, 2014).

Classical religious works/Ancient texts—are cited in the text only. For very old works when a publication date isn’t applicable, cite the year of the translation you used, preceded by trans.

Ex. In his treatise, Metaphysics (trans. 1952), Aristotle claimed that “all men by nature desire to know.”

Identify the version you used in the first citation. In subsequent citations, there is no need to cite the version. Parts of classical works (books, chapters, lines, etc.) are numbered systematically across all editions, so use those numbers instead of page numbers.

Ex. 1st citation: Psalm 23.1 declares, “The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want” (King James Version).
Ex. 2nd citation: “He restoreth my soul: . . .” (Psalm 23.3).
Ex. In the Iliad, Homer writes, “And now the royal kings fell in with Nestor” (14.31).