MLA Parenthetical Reference and Endnotes/Footnotes

A. Parenthetical Reference
A parenthetical reference (sometimes called "in-text" citation) is a reference to one of your sources in your bibliography. It's called parenthetical reference because it's in parentheses, right in the body of your paper. Using parenthetical references is important, because it lets your reader know what you took from another source and where they can find that source. You need to use parenthetical references whenever you quote, paraphrase, or summarize from someone else's work.

Usually, a parenthetical reference includes the author's last name, or the title of the article if there is no author, and the page number. This changes depending on how you use the author's text, and the information available to you about the source.

Placement
Parenthetical references should go at the end of the sentence. This is less distracting to the reader. The parentheses go between the last word and the period. If your parenthetical reference is following a quote, it should <u>follow</u> the quotation marks.

> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" (Jones 23).

Sentence vs. parentheses
Only information that is not in the sentence goes in the parenthetical reference. If you've mentioned the author's name in your sentence, you do not need to repeat it.

> Jones firmly believes pies, while delicious, are not nearly as good as chocolate (4).

When author's names are similar or the same
The information in the parenthetical reference should help the reader distinguish between sources. If you have authors with the same last name, distinguish them by using their first name or first initial. If these are the same as well, use the article or book title.

> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" (L. Jones 23).
> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" (Louise Jones 23).
> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" (Jones, *Chocolate* 23).

When there is no author
If there is no author, use the title of the article. The title can be shortened to just the first word (not including "the" or "a"). If the title is underlined or quoted in your bibliography, it should be the same in your parenthetical reference.

> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" (*Chocolate* 23).
> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" ("Chocolate for All" 23).

When there are two entries with the same authors (or no author) and title
If you have two resources that have the same author (or no author) and title, extra information must be added to distinguish it. For a non-periodical print source use the date. For a periodical source, use the title of the periodical. For an online source, use the title of the database or web site.

> It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is (Jones, 2008).
> It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is (*Chocolate,* General OneFile).

Pages numbers and other numbering systems
Some sources might use section numbers, and web sites might use paragraphs rather than page numbers. If an alternate number system in given, use that in your parenthetical reference. Note that there is a comma between last name and number in this case.

> It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is (Jones, pars 2-3).
> It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is (Jones, sect 4-5).

When to cite volume number
Only cite the volume number if you've used more than one volume from the same multi-volume set. The example shows that the information is from the fifth volume on page 17.

> It is firmly believed that pies, while delicious, are not nearly as good as chocolate ("Chocolate for All" 5:17).

Quoting or paraphrasing a quotation
If you want to quote or paraphrase a quote from another article, add "qtd. in" in front of your citation.

> "It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is" (qtd. in Jones 12).

B. Endnotes and Footnotes
Rather than having citation information right in the body of your paper (which can be considered distracting) endnotes or footnotes can be used. **This is a style choice. If you are unsure if you're supposed to be using parenthetical reference or endnotes/footnotes, ask your teacher!** Both endnotes and footnotes are arranged numerically, using Arabic numerals that correspond to the numbers in the text. Each time you quote, paraphrase, or summarize, instead of putting your citation information right there in the paper, you add a superscript number that connects with a citation at the bottom of the page (footnote) or at the end of your paper (endnote). Instead of arranging citations alphabetically, they will be in the order they appear in your paper.

If you are using endnotes, your teacher might not have you do a bibliography, since they will be very similar. **Make sure you check first!** When using footnotes, you should still have a bibliography of the sources used at the end of your paper.

Microsoft Word will format your endnotes or footnotes for you. In case you're using other software, footnotes are notes placed four lines below the text of the page to which they refer. Endnotes are double-spaced, both within and between the notes. Footnotes should be single-spaced, with two spaces between notes. If a footnote continues onto the next page, you should insert a solid line across the page two lines below the text and then place the continued note two lines below this solid line (Gibaldi 269). As you can tell, endnotes are much easier to set up (and modify, as your paper changes) than footnotes, so if a teacher requires notes, ask if you can use endnotes.

Both footnotes and endnotes are identified in the paper with consecutive superscript numbers, which are placed after punctuation marks (except dashes):

> It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is.[2]
> It is common knowledge that chocolate is the best dessert there is[3]—if only because of its health benefits.

The first endnote and footnote for each source includes basically the same information that is in a bibliographic citation for that type of work, but the format is different and you should indent only the *first* line of notes.

Subsequent notes for each source usually need only include the names of authors and page #s:

> [1] Jones 333-4.

If, however, you used two books by the same author, you should also include a shortened version of the titles:

> [2] Jones, *Chocolate* 62.

Works Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph, ed. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: MLA,

    2009. Print.

"MLA Parenthetical Reference." *NoodleTools*. NoodleTools, Inc., 2009. Web. 10 Aug. 2009.

    <http://www.noodletools.com/noodlebib>.

"MLA 2009 Footnotes and Endnotes." *The OWL at Purdue*. Purdue U, 2009. Web. 10 Aug.

    2009. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/04/>.

"Parenthetical Documentation and Endnotes/Footnotes." *Helen Temple Cook Library*. Dana Hall

    School, 2002. Web. 10 Aug. 2009. <http://mydana.danahall.org/depts/library/citing.htm>.

"Using Notes with Parenthetical Documentation." *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research*

    Papers. 7th ed. 1977. New York: MLA, 2009. 230-232. Print.