

Quoting and Punctuating

in MLA Format

The Little, Brown Essential Handbook

- Foster Hirsch, a professor of film at Brooklyn College, writes, "A genre, after all, is determined by conventions of narrative structure" (72).
 - Note signal phrase precedes the quote.
 - Note the quotation marks.
 - Note that the author is named and identified
 - Note the parenthetical citation and the punctuation.

Prose

- Foster Hirsch, a professor of film at Brooklyn College, asserts that unlike the straightforward gangster film, “film noir introduces a narrative method that, by contrast, is sinuous, oblique, often deliberately confusing” (72).
 - Signal phrase introduces quote
 - Present context
 - Parenthetical citation

42 Prose (continued)

- If a quotation extends to more than 4 lines when run into the text, set the quotation off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks.

42c Prose (continued)

At the conclusion of *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other boys began to shake and sob too. (186)

Example: Long Quotation



MLA In-Text Citations

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- The first time you use a source in your essay or paper, **ALWAYS** introduce the author by his or her full name and the complete title of the work being cited.
- Introduce the title of the work once.
- After the initial introduction of the author and the source in your essay, you will then refer to the author by his or her last name.
- **NEVER** refer to any author by his or her first name.

42a Introducing the source

Deane Mansfield-Kelley and Lois A. Marchino in *The Longman Anthology of Detective Fiction* explain that “the amateur detective story is the oldest form of the genre” (25).

- Authors’ names are used in the signal phrase
- Parenthetical citation contains the page number only.

Author named in signal phrase

Our authors further explain the structure of the amateur detective story: “The emphasis is on elaborate and challenging plots filled with false clues, a number of likely suspects, and a murderer who fools everyone but the talented amateur sleuth (Mansfield-Kelley and Marchino 27).

- Note the parenthetical citation
- Note the punctuation

Author NOT named in signal phrase



Using Ellipsis

29c The Little, Brown Essential Handbook

- When you omit a word, phrase, sentence, or more from a quoted passage, you must be fair to the author being quoted and to the grammar of the sentence.
- Never present a quote in a way that alters the author's meaning or intention.
- Use ellipsis points to indicate the omission of language from the original text.
- An ellipsis is three periods with a space before each and a space after the last.

29c Ellipsis

- When the ellipsis ends your sentence followed by the parenthetical citation, use three periods with a space before each, and place the sentence period after the final parenthesis.
 - Hirsch contends that “noir offered many opportunities for the character actor . . . ” (157).

29c Ellipsis

- Original:
- According to Foster Hirsch, a professor of film at Brooklyn College, “The elusiveness and ambiguity that mark noir characterization, the cunning masquerades, the skillful performances that often frustrate the unwary anti-heroes, are all underlined by the genre's use of plots of labyrinthine complexity” (72).
- With ellipsis points:
- According to Foster Hirsch, a professor of film at Brooklyn College, “The elusiveness and ambiguity that mark noir characterization . . . are all underlined by the genre's use of plots of labyrinthine complexity” (72).

3.7.5 Ellipsis--Example



Citing Indirect Sources

MLA 42a.12

- When possible use material from the original source.
- However, when an indirect source is all that's available, use the abbreviation *qtd. in.*
 - According to philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, "the vanity of existence is revealed in the whole form of existence . . ." (qtd. in Sanders 94).

6.4.7 Citing Indirect Sources



Citing Nonprint Sources

MLA 42a.8

- Always use the PDF version of an electronic database source if it is available.
 - PDF has the page numbers for citing.
- If a PDF is not available, then you will need to cite the source as follows:
 - According to critic Michael Pettengell, "Hammett and other hard-boilers were interested in social matters" (Pettengell).
- Whether you use the author's name in the signal phrase or not,
- **PUT THE AUTHOR'S NAME IN THE PARENTHETICAL CITATION.**

Use the PDF Version

