

## Paranthenetical Citations – A Tutorial

### What is a paranthenetical citation?

A paranthenetical citation (a.k.a. paranthenetical reference) is the Modern Language Association’s prescribed method of giving credit to a source you quote, paraphrase, or summarize within your essay. The paranthenetical citation (PCIT) places essential source information (such as the author’s name or title of the piece, page or paragraph numbers, etc.) directly after the source material you use. The PCIT is a marker that says to your reader, “This is where I found this information.” It is also a pointer to detailed bibliographic information you have listed on your Works Cited page.

There are many variations of the paranthenetical citation, so consulting a current handbook like *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook* to find the right models for your specific sources is essential. You might also refer to a trusted online source such as the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#). In this tutorial I will cover what I consider to be the most frequent variations.

### **Prose Sources with Set Pagination**

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Are you using a source found in a physical book you hold in your hand? If so, you will be able to refer to its set pagination in your citations. Examples of prose sources are

- an essay or short story in an anthology
- a textbook
- a novel
- a play written in prose rather than meter
- a newspaper or magazine article.

If you are accessing a source digitally, is the file an exact reproduction of an original print source? (For instance, a print magazine has made the pdf version of an edition available online for download.) If so, you should be able to see original page numbers within the copy.

#### **The Basic PCIT for a Prose Source with Set Pagination**

Let’s create a sample quote and basic paranthenetical citation now. Say that in our essay we intend to integrate the following quote from Abby Hazelton’s essay “The Passage of Time in ‘The Solitary Reaper’” found in our literary anthology:

The shift to past tense in the last stanza of Wordsworth’s poem “indicates that time goes on despite the speaker’s wishes.”

Here is the quote with PCIT included:

The shift to past tense in the last stanza of Wordsworth’s poem “indicates that time goes on despite the speaker’s wishes” (Hazelton 59).

- Notice that the end punctuation is moved rather than repeated.
- Notice the spacing between the quotation mark, parentheses, name, and page number.
- Notice that there are no punctuation marks within this basic PCIT.

There are two frequent variations to this set-up of the basic PCIT:

#### **First Variation of the Basic PCIT – Source Already Contextualized**

This first variation occurs when you have already clarified for your readers the name of the source. If you have already clarified the source in the context of your paragraph, and if your reader will have no doubt of the source you are quoting, then you can simply list the page number in your PCIT and leave out the name of the author. For instance,

In her critical essay on “The Solitary Reaper,” Abby Hazelton argues that the shift to past tense in the last stanza of Wordsworth’s poem “indicates that time goes on despite the speaker’s wishes” (59).

- Here you have mentioned the author’s name in your introduction to the quote, so including her name again in the PCIT is not necessary.

#### **The Second Variation of the Basic PCIT – An Anonymous Source**

What if your source lists no author? For instance, sometimes newspaper columns have no by-line. In this instance, list a shortened version of the title of the piece, appropriately marked with quotation marks or italics, depending on the kind of source.

For instance, if “The Passage of Time in ‘The Solitary Reaper’” were anonymous, you would construct your quote and citation like this:

The shift to past tense in the last stanza of Wordsworth’s poem “indicates that time goes on despite the speaker’s wishes” (“Passage of Time” 59).

- Notice in this shortened version of the title I have deleted the first article *The* since beginning articles aren’t counted on Works Cited pages.
- I have also left off the last prepositional phrase. Despite the shortening, the reader should have no problem finding the equivalent citation on the Works Cited page. If you shorten a title, find the clearest and most elegant way to do so.
- Notice also that the title is appropriately marked with quotation marks since it is considered a short work. If it were a long work such as a newspaper, magazine, or book, the title would be *italicized* rather than quoted.

Now that we have covered the basic PCIT models for sources with set pagination, let’s move on to sources without set pagination.

## Digital Sources without Set Pagination

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In your academic writing may frequently reference digital sources such as articles found in online databases, government or corporate websites, online magazines, and eBooks. Most of these types of sources have *no set pagination*. When you print out a web resource, the number of pages will most likely vary, depending on such things as the type size selected or the settings of your printer.

Of course, there are exceptions. For instance, some publications offer pdf copies of their print publication. A direct pdf copy of an original will feature the same set pagination is the original, so pages should be referenced for this kind of digital source .

You will have to rely on common sense to decide whether or not a particular source you are using contains set pagination.

Let’s run through a few examples of PCITS for digital sources now.

### **A Digital Source – Author Not Contextualized**

When you do not mention the name of the source in your own set-up of a quote, you must include the name in the PCIT; for instance, consider the following passage, with a quote from an online database version of Sharon Begley’s essay “Both Religion and Science Can Reveal Life’s Meaning”;

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, “science was perceived not as antithetical to faith but rather as an avenue to deeper faith and to greater appreciation for the works of the Creator. In nature, scientists believed, could be discerned the handiwork of God” (Begley).

- The last name of the author is included in the PCIT, but no page number is listed since the database version of the essay does not contain set pagination.

But what if you *do* clarify the source’s name in your set-up of the quote?

### **A Digital Source – Author Contextualized**

If you clarify the name of a source without set pagination, you can forgo a PCIT altogether, placing end punctuation back into its standard position.

In “Both Religion and Science Can Reveal Life’s Meaning,” Sharon Begley notes that before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, “science was perceived not as antithetical to faith but rather as an avenue to deeper faith and to greater appreciation for the works of the Creator. In nature, scientists believed, could be discerned the handiwork of God.”

- Notice that there is no need for a PCIT here.
- Notice the end-punctuation tucked neatly into its original position within the quotation mark.

Let’s look at another variation.

### **A Digital Source with Numbered Paragraphs**

If your digital source contains numbered paragraphs, you should refer to the paragraph number of any quote. For instance, if the digital copy of Begley’s essay offered paragraph numbers in the margins, we could create a citation in this way:

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, “science was perceived not as antithetical to faith but rather as an avenue to deeper faith and to greater appreciation for the works of the Creator. In nature, scientists believed, could be discerned the handiwork of God” (Begley, par. 2).

- Notice the comma after the author’s name and before the paragraph mention.
- Notice the lower-case abbreviation with period—“par.”

If you clarify the author’s name in your intro to the quotation, your PCIT will look like this:

In “Both Religion and Science Can Reveal Life’s Meaning,” Sharon Begley notes that before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, “science was perceived not as antithetical to faith but rather as an avenue to deeper faith and to greater appreciation for the works of the Creator. In nature, scientists believed, could be discerned the handiwork of God” (par. 2).

- Only the abbreviation “par.” and the actual paragraph number are needed in this instance.

There is one final concept I would like to address before closing.

### **Matching PCIT’s to Works Cited Entries**

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Whenever you integrate source material, you must provide the PCIT if required. Additionally, you must also provide detailed bibliographic information of the source on a Works Cited page.

Whatever appears in the body of your essay (either in the PCIT or mentioned in your introduction to the quote) *must* correspond with the name or title under which a source is listed on the Works Cited page.

For instance, if you quote Sharon Begley,

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, “science was perceived not as antithetical to faith but rather as an avenue to deeper faith and to greater appreciation for the works of the Creator. In nature, scientists believed, could be discerned the handiwork of God” (Begley.)

your reader should be able to find a bibliographic entry under Begley, Sharon on the Works Cited page.

Begley, Sharon. "Both Religion and Science Can Reveal Life's Meaning." *Opposing Viewpoints: Constructing a Life Philosophy*. Ed. Mary E. Williams. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2005. *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center*. Gale. Web. 30 Sep. 2009.

If you quote Benjamin Franklin, there must be a corresponding entry under Franklin, Benjamin. If you quote an anonymous essay and your PCIT includes the title, like this: (“Passage of Time” 59), then your reader should be able to find “The Passage of Time in ‘The Solitary Reaper’” listed under P on the Works Cited page.

As you revise your research paper, be sure to check that the source name mentioned in the PCIT or lead-up to the quote is clearly connected to the first listed name or word of a source on your Works Cited page.

If you would like to learn more about creating a Works Cited page, I encourage you to take a look at my Works Cited tutorial where I lead you, step by step, through the process of setting up a Works Cited page.

## Conclusion

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We have reached the end of this presentation. I have shared with you only a few of the most common variations of parenthetical citations, but there are many more, depending on the kind and medium of the source. For instance, a poem, a play written in verse, or a sacred text like *The Bible* or *The Bhagavad Gita*—each must be cited according to its kind.

Here are a few key items to remember as you begin integrating PCIT’s:

- Remember to move the end punctuation of a quote to the end of the PCIT rather than doubling it.
- Remember to punctuate, capitalize, space, and abbreviate correctly within the PCIT according to the model you are using.
- Remember to use a current handbook containing lots of PCIT models, such as *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*. If you don’t have a handbook, use a trusted online MLA source such as the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>).
- Remember to create a clear connection between the name or title within the PCIT you’re your introduction to the quote) and the first name or word of the corresponding Works Cited entry.

I hope you have found this information on parenthetical citations useful. Thank you for following along. Enjoy your researching and writing!

For other printed or video tutorials on topics such as MLA formatting and Works Cited, visit

<http://home.cerrocoso.edu/enns/tutorials.htm>