

WRITING GUIDE | MLA Citation: Authors' names in text

How many authors?

In MLA documentation, in-text citations are formatted based on **how many authors** there are.

When you use a signal phrase (attribution), it also depends on whether it is the **first time the source has been used** in the paper or a **subsequent use** (all uses after the first).

Note: et al. = abbreviation of the Latin “et alia,” which means “and others”

When using a signal phrase (attribution): *(indication of source is optional)*

1 author	First use: full name & page #	Subsequent use: last name only
	Darwin Chen, in “Rogerian Reconsidered,” concludes ... (206)	Chen concludes ... (206)
	Darwin Chen concludes ... (206)	
2 authors	First use: full names & page #	Subsequent uses
	Ruben Garcia and Taylor Martin, in their evaluation, find ... (1145)	Garcia and Martin find ... (1145)
	Ruben Garcia and Taylor Martin find ... (1145)	
3+ authors	First use: full name of first author & page #	Subsequent uses
	Marcia Stanislau et al., in “Gazing Male in <i>Birdcage</i> ,” argue ... (72)	Stanislau et al. argue ... (72)
	Marcia Stanislau et al. argue ... (72)	

With no signal phrase:

One author	Two authors	Three or more authors
(Chen 17)	(Garcia and Martin 17)	(Stanislau et al. 17)