In order to avoid plagiarism and direct the reader to sources of information used in research, citation is a necessary part of the process of academic writing. In-text citations are one means that can be used to provide required information about sources.

What are in-text citations?
In-text citations are references within the body of writing itself (rather than in footnotes or endnotes) which refer to a works cited page at the end of the paper. Even if you have a solid bibliography or works cited page, in-text or other citations are required to indicate not only what sources you used in your writing, but also what you took away from each source. They take the form of brief parenthetical references and should be included whenever you incorporate the ideas or words of another author through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrasing.

Usually, the last name of the author and the page number from which the information came is sufficient for an in-text citation.

Examples of in-text citation:
Tannen has argued this point (178-85).

Others hold the opposite point of view (e.g., Jakobson and Waugh 210-215).

It may be true, as Robertson maintains, that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance…” (136).

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Some advice:
• Do not use commas to separate the author’s last name and page number in a parenthetical reference.
• Do not use a p. to indicate page number in a parenthetical.
• Keep parenthetical references as brief as possible.

Sometimes in-text citations get trickier when a text provides neither author nor page number to be used in a parenthetical reference. When a text provides neither author nor page number to be used in a parenthetical reference, provide enough information for your reader to be able to find the work on your works cited page or bibliography and to be able to find the specific place in the work from which the information was drawn. The first information provided in a bibliographic entry is the best information to provide in a parenthetical reference.

The basic rule of thumb is to provide enough information for your reader to be able to find the work on your works cited page or bibliography and to be able to find the specific place in the work from which the information was drawn.