

How to Cite In-text References from Electronic Sources (e.g. Kindle e-readers, etc.)

Many electronic book readers do not use standard page numbers. Instead, in order for those applications to be able to track a bookmarked location across different kinds of devices, they commonly use “location numbers” which do not correspond uniformly to page numbers in print versions of the same text.

This is why MLA guidelines *do not* recommend using e-reader location numbers in in-text parenthetical citations of those kinds of sources. Instead, the recommendation is to **use chapter and section numbers** referencing where the material is found in the source text.

This is what the current edition of the *MLA Handbook, 8e* (Kindle edition) says about how to cite electronic sources with location numbers instead of page numbers:

An e-book (a work formatted for reading on an electronic device) may include a numbering system that tells users their location in the work. Because such numbering may vary from one device to another, do not cite it unless you know that it appears consistently to other users. If the work is divided into stable numbered sections like chapters, the numbers of those sections may be cited, with a label identifying the type of part that is numbered. (sec. 3.3.3)

The MLA handbook offers the following example of a paraphrased reference to a Kindle edition of a book that uses page locations instead of page numbers. Rather than including the location number from the Kindle, they use the relevant chapter number of the book (just as I did above by citing the chapter and section “3.3.3”):

According to Hazel Rowley, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt began their honeymoon with a week’s stay at Hyde Park (ch. 2).