



## PARENTHESES

A parenthesis (the singular form of “parentheses”) is a type of bracket. A dash is more commonly used nowadays in formal writing although parentheses and dashes basically have the same function.

### 23a Enclose explanatory, minor, or secondary information

Parentheses are used to add material that might interrupt the flow of the sentence. The added information is considered secondary or minor to the main idea of the sentence.

- ➔ In the Chinese zodiac, a person with the boar (a pig) sign is honest, sociable, and hard-working.

### 23b Enclose in-text citations

Parentheses are also used to enclose in-text citations when you need to document your source(s).

MLA in-text citation ➔ Williams theorizes that the overlap in different systems of astrology is due to “the inherent relationship between travel and storytelling” (234).

APA in-text citation ➔ Although astrology systems around the world may differ, some overlap is possible due to how stories and travel go together (Williams, 234).

### Helpful hint

You can embed parenthetical elements within other elements; however, this is not common in formal writing. Use different types of brackets to set off both elements in this case.

- Astrology (whether it is Indian [from India] or Chinese) usually is based in some way on nature.



## 23c

### Enclose numbers or letters in outlines

Parentheses can be used at different levels of outlines to enclose numbers or letters.

→ I.

A.

B.

1.

a.

b.

(1)

(2)

c.

(1)

(a)

(b)

(2)