MLA Format Basics

Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will understand what MLA format is and how to create and set up a works cited page in MLA format.

Go to http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations and read the tutorial entitled “Citing Information.” This tutorial will help you answer the questions below. Begin your reading with the section entitled “Introduction” and read that plus the sections entitled “Why We Cite” and “MLA.”

1. What does MLA stand for? ____________________________________________________________

2. In what subjects will you use MLA format? _________________________________________________

3. Name two reasons sources should be cited:
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Name three types of works you need to cite or document:
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Name two types of works you do not need to cite:
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6. When you are in doubt about whether you should cite something, what should you do?
   ____________________________________________________________

7. What is a parenthetical citation?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

8. You must cite when you __________________
   a. Quote
   b. Paraphrase
   c. Summarize
   d. All of the above

9. In a parenthetical citation, which format is correct? ___________________________
   a. (Jones, 37).
   b. (Jones p. 37).
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c. (Jones 37).
d. (Jones, p. 37).

10. If a source does not have an author listed, what do you put in the parenthetical citation? ________________________________________________________________

11. What is a works cited page? ________________________________________________________________

12. Why do papers need both parenthetical citations and a works cited page? ________________________________________________________________

13. How are items on the works cited page arranged? ________________________________________________________________

14. Describe line spacing on a works cited page: ________________________________________________________________

15. How would today’s date be written if you were writing it on a works cited page? ________________________________________________________________

Next, pick up an MLA style guide, located in the Writing and Reading Center at the reception desk or along the back counter. Review the works cited page for spacing, noting in particular the hanging indent. To read more about the hanging indent, visit the following Web site:

http://myweb.wssu.edu/wallr/hanging_indent.htm

And visit http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc for all the 2009 MLA format updates.

Finally, it is time to create your own works cited page. To do so, you will need to use a word processing program such as Microsoft Word. If you are working in the WRC, you can open Word from the desktop using the icon. If you need help opening Word or starting a new document, please ask a lab aide for assistance. You will need to do the following before you can begin:

1. Ensure margins are set to one inch
2. Create a title (works cited) and center it on the page
3. Set the spacing to double
4. Set the indent to hanging
If you need assistance, please ask a lab aide. Once you have set your page up, you may begin. Note that you will need to print your completed works cited page when done, so please be sure you have the money to print today.

Assume you are writing a research paper on the topic of censorship. You are incorporating information from a book, an article, an anthology, and a Web site into your paper. Using the note cards below, create a works cited page.

“Censorship Can Be Beneficial” by Thomas Storck
*Opposing Viewpoints: Censorship* edited by Byron L. Stay
San Diego, Greenhaven Press, 1997
Pages 21-30

Anatomy of Censorship: Why the Censors Have it Wrong by Harry White
Pasadena, University Press of America, 1997
p. 50, 117-119

“A Battle Reconsidered” by Suzanne M. Kauer
*English Journal*
January 2008, vol. 97, issue 3
Pages 56-60

“A Pig-Headed Reading of the Law”
http://ncac.org/censorship_news/20080623.cfm
from the National Coalition Against Censorship Web site

Attach a confirmation sheet or get a signature below:

Instructor Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________________

Return this completed, signed sheet to your instructor.