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Professor Stevens

English 1302

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Title: Centered But Not in Bold or Underlined

This sample paper gives general guidelines for a research paper in MLA format. The latest edition of the MLA handbook, published in 2016, changed many elements of the citations. One-inch margins are used on all sides, which is the default setting on Microsoft Word. While the title is centered, the body of the essay is left aligned (not justified), known as ragged right. The paper should be double-spaced throughout, with no extra space between sections or paragraphs. Microsoft Word usually has a default setting that puts in a small amount of extra vertical space any time the Enter key is pressed. To remove this setting, go to Line and Paragraph Spacing, choose Line Spacing Options and under Spacing change the After entry to zero. This paper uses Times New Roman font in 12 point size, a font and size recommended for college essays. One space between sentences is now standard; double-spacing between sentences is still acceptable.

Set a header at the top right of the page that will repeat on successive pages; it will include last name and page number. To do so, right click near the top of the page so the header box appears. Choose edit, and then click on Page Number near the top left of the toolbox. Choose Top of Page and then Plain Number 3. When the number appears, type the last name and a space next to the number. The header text should be the same font and size as the rest of the paper. The title block begins in the regular text area at the upper left corner of the first page.

It begins with your full name, followed by the professor's name, the course name and the date, which is formatted without any punctuation. No extra spaces appear above or below the title.

The MLA format allows students to acknowledge sources by giving brief citations in the text which correspond to an alphabetical list of works that appears at the end of the paper (*MLA Handbook* 19). The preceding in-text citation refers to the source from which the information was taken, which usually requires putting the author's last name and page number in parentheses. In this case, there was no author, so the title was used. Titles of books and longer works are italicized, as in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Titles of shorter works—such as articles, poems and songs—should be in quotation marks; the song title, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” should appear in quotation marks. No extra punctuation or spaces appear in the citation.

Quoting is one way to use information from an outside source, as illustrated in this statement: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (King 1080). The quotation marks are used to indicate that the words used are exactly as they appeared in the original. If any words are omitted, use an ellipsis where they were removed, as in this sentence which left out a list of names: “Some. . . have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms” (King 1087). Notice that the quotation marks enclose only King's exact words, while the period goes after the parenthetical citation. As shown in the block quotation on the next page, if the author's last name is included in the sentence that introduces it, it should not be repeated in the parentheses, unless required by the instructor.

If a quotation is longer than four typed lines, it is presented in a block format: indented a full inch from the margin but **not** enclosed in quotation marks. In this case, the period goes before the parenthetical citation. Martin Luther King, Jr. describes just and unjust laws:

A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. . . Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. (1083)

This source, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter From Birmingham Jail," will be listed on the Works Cited page as well, giving complete publication information for the anthology where it was found. Any material from an outside source, even if it is summarized or paraphrased, must be cited in order to give proper credit. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism, which may result in penalties according to college rules even if it happens unintentionally. Reviewing the included material for proper citations is imperative.

The Works Cited page should come at the end of the paper, beginning on a separate page with the same margins and header. All print on this page will be double spaced with no extra spaces between entries. Items in a Works Cited page are alphabetized by the first word of each entry, which may be either a name or a title of a work. Each entry uses a hanging indent, which means the first line of the entry is at the left margin, but all subsequent lines are indented one half inch. To set a hanging indent in Word, under "Paragraph," choose "Indents and Spacing." Under "Indentation Special, choose "Hanging." The entries will then begin at the left margin, but any subsequent lines will be automatically indented one-half inch; when the "Enter" button is pressed at the end of the entry, the cursor will go back to the left margin for the next one. The attached sample Works Cited Page contains the entries for the two citations in this paper, as well as guidelines for commonly used sources. (Note that these entries are not alphabetized in order to give examples under each type described.)

Works Cited

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." *Making Literature Matter*, Edited by John Schilb and John Clifford, 3rd ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009, pp. 1078-1091.

MLA Handbook. 8th ed. Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book*. Publisher, year.

Oates, Stephen B. *Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Harper Perennial, 1994.

Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Article." *Name of the Scholarly Journal*, volume, issue, date, page range. *Name of Database*. Doi or URL.

Warne, Nathaniel. "Exodus and Liberation: Deliverance Politics from John Calvin to Martin Luther King, Jr." *Historian*, vol. 78, no. 2, Spring 2016, pp. 375-377. *Academic Search Complete*, doi 10.1111/hisn.12211.

"Title of webpage or Article (if no author given)." *Title of Website*, sponsor of website, date of posting, URL.

"Martin Luther King, Jr.: Fast Facts." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 11 Jan. 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/17/us/martin-luther-king-jr-fast-facts/index.html>.