

## MLA Tutorial Questions

### Lesson 1: Introduction

1. What do the letters MLA stand for?

- Modern Language Association

2. By formatting your papers in MLA, what are you signaling to your teachers?

- That you are a serious student who knows how to format your papers the “proper” way.

### Lesson 2: Importance of a Thesis

1. The adversarial method is a way of discovering what?

- It’s a method for discovering the truth.

2. The adversarial method is based on the belief that the best way to discover the truth is to do what?

- Listen to an argument between two people who have opposing views. Then you can decide the truth for yourself.

3. The purpose of a thesis is to let the reader know what?

- To let the reader know which side of the debate you are on.

### Lesson 3: Presenting Evidence

1. Why is it important to document your sources?

- So your reader can look at your evidence first-hand (if he or she chooses to do so).

#### **Lesson 4: Chicago Style vs. MLA Style**

1. What is a Works Cited page?
  - It's the page at the back of your paper that lists all your sources.
2. What is the biggest difference between Chicago Style and MLA?
  - Chicago Style uses footnotes.
  - MLA Style uses parenthetical notes.
3. Which style will you be using to document your sources in this class?
  - MLA

#### **Lesson 5: The 7-Step Formula**

1. List the 7 pieces of information you need for each of your sources. List them in the proper order.
  1. Author's Name
  2. "Title of Article."
  3. Name of Website
  4. Date of Article
  5. The word "Web"
  6. Date You Accessed the Article
  7. URL

#### **Lesson 6: Devil in the Details**

1. Write today's date in the proper format. Remember, months with more than four letters get abbreviated after the first three letters.
  - 3 Oct. 2016
2. Go to **this article** on the web. Cite it properly, as you would on your Works Cited page. Follow the example above and pay close attention to the details!

## Lesson 7: In-Text Citations

1. What goes inside the parentheses of a parenthetical citation?
  - The last name of the author you are citing.
2. If you do not know the author of the article you are citing, what do you put in the parenthetical citation?
  - The title of the article you are citing. (You can shorten the title to one or two words, as long as the reader can still identify that specific article on the Works Cited Page).
3. What do you do if you have several titles, all with unknown authors, and all of them start with the same word?
  - You need to include more words of the title, because otherwise the reader wouldn't know which of those titles you are citing.
4. Do the names of articles get put in quotation marks? Or do they get italicized?
  - Titles get put in quotation marks.
5. What is the error this student has made?
  - In the parenthetical citation, the student put the title of the article ("Soviet Dictators"). However, on the Works Cited page, the student listed this source (correctly) by starting with the author's name. Well, if the student *knew* the author's name, then he or she student should have put the author's name in the parenthetical citation.

The important thing to remember is this: The thing that goes in the parenthetical citation must *always* match the *first* word of the corresponding entry on the Works Cited page. Otherwise, the reader would have to read the entire Works Cited Page in order to find that source, instead of just looking it up alphabetically.

## Lesson 8: Citing Statistics

1. What is a statistic?
  - A statistic is a "number" that contains information about your topic.

2. Whenever you cite a statistic, what must you do right away (at the end of the sentence that contains the statistic)?

- You must cite your source for that statistic.

### **Lesson 9: Using Signal Phrases**

1. What is a signal phrase?

- A signal phrase is a phrase that alerts your reader that you are about to present evidence.

2. A signal phrase often consists of three parts. What are those parts?

1. The full name of the your source
2. An appositive which identifies the occupation of your source
3. Some version of the word "says" (e.g., claims that, points out that, writes, according to, etc.)

3. When introducing a witness with a signal phrase, what purpose does the appositive serve?

- To identify the occupation (or relevance) of your witness/source.

## Lesson 10: How to Write Appositives

1. Should the appositive come before or after the name?
  - An appositive can come either before or after the name.
2. How is the punctuation different, depending on whether the appositive comes before or after the name?
  - If the appositive comes **after** the name, place it between parenthetical commas.
  - If the appositive comes **before** the name, do **not place** a comma between the appositive and the name.
3. Write an example of a signal phrase in which the appositive comes **after** the name.
  - Barack Obama, the President of the United States, claims that . . . .
4. Write an example of a signal phrase in which the appositive comes **before** the name.
  - President Barack Obama claims that . . . .

## Lesson 11: Can I Ever Leave Out an Appositive?

1. What is the rule regarding the use of names in your paper?
  - The first time you introduce a source, use both the first and last name of the “witness,” followed (or preceded) by an appositive. Thereafter, use only the last name
2. Demonstrate your understanding of the “Appositive Rule” by writing several sentences. In the first sentence, introduce your witness by using her first and last name as well as an appositive. In all subsequent sentences, use only the last name.
  - James Farnsworth, a professor at Harvard University, found that violent crimes in New York City decreased dramatically between the years 2000 and 2010 (Farnsworth). Farnsworth believes that the drop in crime is due to better policing (Farnsworth).

### Lesson 12: The Big Four Signal Phrases

1. What are the big four signal phrases?

1.	According to
2.	In fact,
3.	In the words of
4.	For example

### Lesson 13: Quoting a Full Sentence

1. What are two things that you must do whenever you quote a full sentence? (Hint: What comes before the quote, and what comes after it?)

- **Before the sentence**, write a signal phrase that alert the reader that you are about to quote a source.
- **After the sentence**, write a parenthetical citation so that the reader can—if he or she wishes—look up your source on your Works Cited page.

### Lesson 14: Quoting a Phrase

1. Why might you choose to quote just a phrase, instead of quoting a full sentence?

- Sometimes the phrase is the only thing worth quoting.

### Lesson 15: Quoting More Than One Sentence

1. Why is it risky to quote more than one sentence from your source?

- Your teacher may accuse you of being a lazy writer. (Your readers want to hear **your analysis**, not the analysis of some other writer).

2. Under what circumstances would you want to quote more than one sentence from your source?

- When you are quoting a first-hand witness or an expert with great credibility.

3. What does the abbreviation “qtd. in” stand for?

- quoted in

4. When should you use the abbreviation “qtd. in”?

- If the words you are quoting already had quotation marks around them when you found them, then you must use “quoted in”.

5. Imagine that you have found a book written by former president Franklin Roosevelt. You want to quote a line from the book in your paper. What should you put in the parenthetical citation?

- (Roosevelt)

6. Imagine that you have found a book written by former president Harry Truman (who once served as Roosevelt’s vice president). In Truman’s book, he recounts many conversations he had with Roosevelt, sometimes quoting Roosevelt word for word. You want to use one of these quotes (the words of Roosevelt) in your paper. What should you put in the parenthetical citation?

- (qtd. in Truman)

### Lesson 16: Block Quotes

1. What is a block quote?

- A block quote is a quote that appears in a “block” all by itself, in its own paragraph. Block quotes are easy to recognize because they are formatted differently than the rest of the paper.

2. What is the rule for block quotes? (When should they be used?)

- If the words you are quoting are **more than four lines long**, you must format them as a block quote.

3. Should block quotes be centered?

- No. Block quotes get indented 1 inch from the left margin, but the right margin should be the same as the rest of the page.

4. Should the block quote have an even left margin, or should the first line be indented .5 inch?

- Block quotes should have an even left margin (and a ragged right margin).

5. Do block quotes get put in quotation marks?

- No.
6. In block quotes, does the parenthetical citation come before the final punctuation, or after it?
    - After. In other words, end the block quote with a final period, like this. (And then cite your source in parentheses, like this)
  7. Why do some teachers frown on the use of block quotes?
    - Because lazy students tend to overuse them.
  8. What are Mr. Hall's rules regarding the use of block quotes?
    - No more than 2 block quotes from the same source.
    - No block quote is allowed to be longer than 10 lines of text.

### **Lesson 17: Dropped Quotes (And Why You Should Avoid Them)**

1. What is a "dropped quote"?
  - A dropped quote is when you "drop" someone else's words into your own writing, without introducing these words with a signal phrase.
2. Are dropped quotes good or bad? Is a dropped quote ever acceptable?
  - Dropping a phrase into the middle of your own sentence is acceptable, as long as it sounds natural (is grammatically correct), and you have placed the phrase in quotation marks, and you have cited the source of those words at the end of your sentence with a parenthetical citation.
  - Dropping an entire sentence (or more) into your own writing is considered bad writing, ***even if the words are placed in quotation marks and you have cited the source at the end.***

### **Lesson 18: Citing the Source for an Entire Paragraph**

1. What does it mean when a writer cites a source at the end of the paragraph?
  - It means that all the information in that paragraph comes from the same source (the source cited at the end of the paragraph). It also implies that everything in the paragraph has been

put in the author's own words. (Otherwise, he or she would have used signal phrases and quotation marks).

2. True **or False**: You can use someone else's exact words, as long as you cite the source at the end of the paragraph.

- False! Citing the source is **only one of the things** that you need to do whenever you incorporate somebody else's words into your own writing. You must **also**:
  - Introduce those words with a signal phrase.
  - Put quotation marks around those words (or set them apart with block formatting).

### **Lesson 19: Two Unforgivable Mistakes**

1. What two mistakes are considered "cheating" when writing an academic paper?

- Plagiarism
- Academic dishonesty

### **Lesson 20: What is Plagiarism?**

1. What is plagiarism?

- Plagiarism is the crime of stealing someone else's words. In other words, it's when you incorporate someone else's words into your own paper without attributing those words to the original source.

2. When incorporating the words of someone else into your own paper, what are the two ways—the only two ways—that you can avoid plagiarism?

- 1) Put those words within quotation marks, **or** 2) format those words as a block quote.
- Of course, a good writer would also introduce those words with a signal phrase, put a parenthetical citation at the end of the quote, and include a Works Cited page.

3. Is changing a few words enough to avoid a charge of plagiarism?

- No!

### **Lesson 21: Academic Dishonesty**

1. What is academic dishonesty?

- It's the crime of misrepresenting your evidence. In other words, if you claim that your source says something, but in reality it says something else, then you have committed the crime of academic dishonesty.
2. How is academic dishonesty sometimes the result of laziness? How can you avoid this mistake?
    - Students sometimes forget which source a particular quote comes from, so they guess. Students can avoid this mistake by **not** guessing. If you're not sure where you found a quote—investigate it! Figure it out (or don't use the quote).
  3. If a police officer or a prosecutor gets caught lying about evidence, he or she will certainly get fired. What do you think happens to a university professor who is found guilty of academic dishonesty?
    - He or she may lose her job. Either way, his or her reputation as a reliable and trustworthy scholar and researcher will be ruined.

### **Lesson 22: It's Your Responsibility**

1. If you still don't understand what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, whose fault is it?
  - Your own. Claiming that you "didn't understand" will not be accepted as an excuse.
2. If you're not sure whether something you've written constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, what should you do?
  - Check with the teacher.

### **Lesson 23: Saving with Different File Names**

1. Why is it important to save your file under a different name, each time you save your work?
  - If the draft you are currently working on crashes, at least you can go back to your last draft.
  - Saving early drafts of your paper could serve as proof that your paper really is your own work.

**Lesson 24: Plagiarism Pledge**

1. Read the pledge and sign on the line below:

I understand the meanings of “plagiarism” and “academic dishonesty.” I understand that these mistakes are considered very serious breaches of integrity (honesty) in the academic world. I understand how to avoid these “unforgivable” mistakes in my work. And even if I don’t—well, that’s on me—because I understand that ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty will not be accepted as excuses for having these mistakes in my work. Furthermore, I understand that any instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty found in my work may result in an "F" for my paper, and that the teacher may or may not allow me to rewrite and resubmit my work, at his sole discretion.

In addition, I understand that it is my responsibility to keep all my preliminary drafts, by saving them under different file names, and I understand that the teacher may ask to see any (or all) of these drafts, so he can see the exact process by which I came up with my work.

Student Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_