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Teacher's Name

7th Grade Language Arts

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How to Write Research Paper Using the MLA Style

Each student will write a research paper, with a works cited page and parenthetical citations, similar to those that students write in high school and college. Topics can range from specific disasters in history to cutting edge scientific discoveries. This paper may provide several grades. For example, sometimes each student receives more than one major grade: one for the research process itself and one for the results—the finished paper. Teachers often assign quiz and daily grades associated with this project as well, so each student should always do his or her best (Tate 22).

Students may choose from a list of general topics, but each student will need to narrow that topic to help focus the research, which will make the student's job easier. For example, if a student is interested in automobiles or cars, that topic could be narrowed to include the history of a specific luxury car, or the history of a specific muscle car, or a biography of an influential person in NASCAR or in the manufacture of a specific make or model of car, like Henry Ford or John DeLorean. Anything that can be addressed broadly can be narrowed to a manageable, enjoyable working topic. And for every topic, the paper should start broadly, then narrow to a specific thesis statement (Jackson 19).

Notice that everything in this paper, including the heading and the Works Cited page, is double spaced. Formal papers should always be written in the third person,

which means that the writer should never use the words “I”, “you” or “we”. Common third person pronouns include “he”, “she”, “it”, “one”, and “they”. Other indefinite pronouns might be “others”, “some”, “anyone”, and “anybody”. Third person is a voice. News stories are almost always written in third person, as are encyclopedia and magazine articles. A research paper requires reporting, using solid, factual research. Each student is informing the reader of something the reader probably did not know before, and is identifying the source of that information (Adams 27).

Although it should go without saying, everything should be properly spelled, properly punctuated, and properly capitalized for full credit. Each paper will have a heading, following the example on the first page of this paper. Here is how to create the proper pagination, so that the last name and page number appear at the top right hand corner of the page:

- go to “view” in the Microsoft Word toolbar
- click on “header and footer”
- then “header”
- then “right justified”
- type the last name
- click on “insert page number”
- click on “close.”

After that, each page will have the proper pagination, much like this page (Walker et al. 22). To create the citations in the Works Cited page, please see the handout entitled, “Building a Works Cited Page, MLA Style”.

Each student's paper will have an introductory paragraph and a conclusion paragraph. Between the two, papers should have at least three major points, and each point could have any number of paragraphs, depending on how the research unfolds. The last page of the paper will be the Works Cited page, with all the citations in alphabetical order.

Remember: the mark of true intelligence is not in knowing or in remembering everything, but in having the ability to find out what one does not know, to the ability understand new material, and to present findings in a way others can understand. (Ash 59).

Works Cited

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- Walker, Leslie and Michele Mize. *Language Arts for Fun and Profit*. Southlake: Library Press, 2009. Print.