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For the Classroom
College and Career Readiness
Research Strategies: MLA Citations

Discussion Questions

- What are the steps you take when researching a topic?
- How do you choose what information to use while researching a topic?
- How do you record this information?
- Why is it important to cite websites you use?
- Do you know what MLA stands for?

Activity: MLA Citation Specifics

Students will be able to cite websites they use for research in MLA form.

MATERIALS
- Computer(s)

PROCEDURE
1. Explain to students that MLA stands for the Modern Language Association. It provides universal documentation instructions, commonly known as MLA style, which has been widely adopted by high schools and colleges, especially for use humanities coursework and writing on language and literature. MLA style provides a certain structure for citing resources, and allows for consistency among all students. The MLA Style Handbook is now in its seventh edition.
2. Have students take out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Have them write the following example down on their paper as a reference.

Structure for Citing Resources:
Last name, First name. "Article Title." *Website Title.* Publisher of Website, Day Month Year article was published. Web. Day Month Year article was accessed. <URL>.

Example:

Doe, John. "The Greatest Impact." *Hot Topics Today* N.p., 5 November 2014. Web. 06 Jan. 2015.

Structure for Citing a Tweet:
Begin the entry in the works-cited list with the author's real name and, in parentheses, user name, if both are known and they differ. If only the user name is known, give it alone. Next provide the entire text of the tweet in quotation marks, without changing the capitalization. Conclude the entry with the date and time of the message and the medium of publication (*Tweet*). For example:

Athar, Sohaib (ReallyVirtual). "Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1AM (is a rare event)." 1 May 2011, 3:58 p.m. Tweet.

The date and time of a message on *Twitter* reflect the reader's time zone. Readers in different time zones see different times and, possibly, dates on the same tweet. The date and time that were in effect for the writer of the tweet when it was transmitted are normally not known. Thus, the date and time displayed on *Twitter* are only approximate guides to the timing of a tweet. However, they allow a researcher to precisely compare the timing of tweets as long as the tweets are all read in a single time zone.

In the main text of the paper, a tweet is cited in its entirety (6.4.1):

Sohaib Athar noted that the presence of a helicopter at that hour was "a rare event."

or

The presence of a helicopter at that hour was "a rare event" (Athar).

3. Next, review these additional commonly asked MLA questions:

How do I create the indention that the MLA shows for a works-cited list?
MLA recommends the use of *hanging indention* for the entries in the works-cited list: the first line of each entry is flush left, and subsequent lines in the entry are indented. Hanging indention makes alphabetical lists easier to use. In a word processor, the best way to create this indention is to highlight the paragraphs that are (or will be) entries and then choose hanging indention in the options for formatting paragraphs.

Should I use underlining or italics in my research paper?
Writers commonly use italics for text that would be italicized in a publication. The examples in the *MLA Handbook* follow this practice. Most word-processing programs and computer printers permit the reproduction of italic type. Choose a type font in which the italic style contrasts clearly with the regular style.

4. Dismiss students to computers. Have students find a resource to site on a topic related to a current class, and then practice citing properly using MLA format.
5. When time is up, bring students together to share their findings.

Source: http://www.mla.org/