

Your full name

David Glen Smith, Instructor

English III: American Literature

Date

Assignment Number: Title of Work

All work must follow the standard MLA standards outlined in this document. Even if using another program other than Microsoft Word 2007, Google Documents, or MS Word 2003, all students must use the same page layout restrictions.

Be sure an extra space does not appear between paragraphs. The reading format should appear as a standard book publication. The assignments are *not* using a block paragraph format used by a majority of internet sites. Likewise, **the font selection should be set in Times or Times New Roman, 12 pt. size.** The page margins should be 1” on all four sides.

A page header has been established for this example document. The page header must appear in the right-hand corner of the page, with a ½ inch margin from the top. Even though the papers will be submitted digitally, the page header preserves your identity and your work as a unit. Whatever program you use, the end result must be the same for all projects.

Another important aspect of your research paper— correctly crediting sources used for background material. There are three different methods for using references: paraphrasing, short quotations, and long quotations. All three methods defend your topic sentences and give proper credit to the original author. *Any material not of your own creation needs to be credited.*

The first method, paraphrasing, requires you to express an author’s work in your own words. Often students confuse information termed “common knowledge” with information which is in fact actually considered a paraphrase. *The MLA Handbook* affirms students should

feel free to use outside materials in their own work, but they do need to be cautious when borrowing another author's concepts (69). To ensure your work is not unintentionally considered plagiarism, cite your reference within signal phrase, then provide a page number in parentheses at the close of the sentence.

Short quotations are used when you need to show the exact wording of a source, in order to make an effective point in your paper. These situations particularly need to be given proper credit. *The MLA Handbook* also mentions that most circumstances of plagiarism are unintentional, "as when an elementary school pupil, assigned to do a report on a certain topic, goes home and copies down, word for word, everything on the subject in an encyclopedia" (70). In these cases, author and source should be identified in the sentence with the page number appearing in parentheses. Notice the final period appears *outside* the parentheses.

Finally, there are situations which will require long quotations. **If quoting material longer than four lines of text, the material needs to appear set off from the text.** As an example:

When you believe that some... passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to your paper, transcribe the material exactly as it appears, word for word, comma for comma. Whenever you quote verbatim from a work, be sure to use quotation marks scrupulously in your notes to distinguish the quotation from summary and paraphrase (46).

Notice in these cases the quoted passage is still double spaced, the page number still appears in parentheses, but quotation marks are not needed.

In the near future we will discuss other MLA standards and variations on these regulations. Likewise, we will cover citing evidence and ways to avoid plagiarism.