

Title: Using Citations in a Research Paper

Grade Ranges:

___ K-4
x 5-8
___ 9-12

Subject Tag:

Writing Guides: Research Papers

Synopsis:

An essential skill for every student is the ability to complete a research paper in the correct format. Two formats used in research writing are the “Modern Language Association” (MLA) and “American Psychological Association” (APA). Students should be familiar with both styles. In this lesson plan, students will not write a research paper but learn different ways to use citations in research. They will create and use flashcards for different activities. This lesson plan works as a prequel to any research assignment.

Keywords:

research writing, citations, references, works cited, Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), bibliography, references,

Body:

1. What is a research paper? Clarify how research papers differ from other types of writing. Specifically, research papers rely on another person’s prior findings to answer a particular question and are scientific documents that must follow a certain format.
2. Here are some distinctions between the two research paper formats:
 - a. Modern Language Association (MLA):
This is the most common editorial style used in academic research writing. The main feature of MLA is the use of in-text citations made with parenthetical references. MLA style research papers must include a “Works Cited” page, listing all references the author consulted in writing the paper.
 - b. American Psychological Association (APA):
This is the style most used in the social sciences. APA requires the author’s last name and date of publication in all in-text summaries. For direct quotations, however, the page number must also be included. APA also includes a list of “References” in alphabetical order at the end of the research paper.
3. Using these two formats, outline how to list references:
 - a. MLA: The “Works Cited” page lists all sources used in the research paper. Examples for books and periodicals are as follows:
 - i. For books include the author, title, city of publication, publisher, and year. Example:
Smith, John. *Trains and Economics in the U.S.* New York:

ABC Press, 1999.

- ii. To cite periodicals include the author, title of the article, title of the periodical, date published, and page numbers. Example:
Smith, John. "A History of Trains." *Transportation Magazine*
Month 1994: 10-15.

- b. APA: The bibliographic list is titled "References." Examples for books and periodicals are as follows:

- i. The entry should begin with the author's name. Date of publication follows, in parentheses. Italicize the title, but only capitalize the first word. Place of publication comes next, then the publisher and place of publication.

Example:

Smith, J. (1999). *Trains and economics in the U.S.* New York: ABC Press.

- ii. To cite periodicals include the author, date, title of article, title of magazine and volume if necessary, and page numbers.

Example:

Smith, J. (1994, August). A history of trains. *Transportation Magazine*, 10-15.

4. Individually, in pairs, or in small groups students should use books and magazines that you supply to practice the correct usage of both MLA and APA editorial styles. Have students write each citation on a separate index card. (This practice session can vary in its amount of time and in its degree of difficulty. For example, a greater variety of sources to cite will increase the difficulty of completing this step.)
5. Collect the index cards, now flash cards.
6. These flash cards can be used as flash cards in many ways. Here are some suggestions — each of which can be structured in a competitive format among teams of students:
 - Shuffle the cards, redistribute them to students who must locate the source that a card cites.
 - Have students identify whether a card is MLA or APA format.
 - Cover a section on each card with a piece of tape and have students figure out what information is hidden — author's name, article's title, date of publication, etc.
 - Have students identify what type of source a citation is for, particularly if they have made flash cards for sources beyond books and magazines.

Related Links:

1. A Guide for Writing Research Papers based on Modern Language Association (MLA) Documentation
<http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>

This site, prepared by the humanities department and the Arthur C. Banks, Jr., Library at Capital Community College in Hartford, Connecticut, provides an excellent overview of MLA format, along with specific examples.

Features:

- ___ Contains special education tips
- ___ Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- ___ Requires Internet access for students to complete

Objectives:

The student will be able to complete a research project using the correct editing style chosen.

Standards:

NY: 3 - Students will read, write, listen and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

NYC: E1c - The student demonstrates familiarity with a variety of functional documents and produce written or oral work.

CT: 3 - Students will apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

NJ: 3.3 - All students will write in clear, concise organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes. **Cross-content workplace readiness standards: 2** - All students will use information, technology, and other tools.

Prerequisite Skills:

NA

Time Required:

two – three hours

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. a wide variety of sample reference materials
2. school library (will give you a wide variety of sources to cite)
3. 3x5 cards
4. details of MLA & APA styles, available online or in the official books:
 - a. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers: 5th edition.* By Joseph Gibaldi
 - b. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association : Fifth Edition*

Assessment Criteria:

1. Students correctly create examples for review.
2. Students correctly identify the flash cards in the way(s) that you designate.

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

Review Comments: