**COMMON MLA, CITATION, GRAMMAR, AND PUNCTUATION QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS**

🡪 Alphabetical Order:

Do not use or count very brief and unimportant words (such as the articles “a”, “an”, or “the”) in arranging alphabetical order on your Works Cited page.

🡪 Capitalization Format for Article Titles:

In general, use the same capitalization format for an article title as it appears in publication; either capitalize just the first word of the article title, or capitalize every significant word (omitting prepositions, articles such as “the” or “an”, etc.). But do **\*not\*** put the title in ALL CAPS.

🡪 Common Grammar Errors

*BIAS/BIASED*: The word “bias” is a noun. The word “biased” is an adjective. EXAMPLE: This media source produces biased stories; their bias is obvious in every program they produce.

*JOURNAL/ARTICLE*: An academic journal (or peer-reviewed/scholarly journal) is a publication that contains articles; an academic journal article appears in this kind of publication.

*TERRORIST/TERRORISTS*: The first word here is singular, and the second is plural. The same goes for other such related words. EXAMPLE: Separatists in the Ukraine sent a representative to UN meetings; the separatist leader demanded action on key issues.

🡪 How to Cite AP/Reuters and other Wire Services as They Appear in Print by Subscriber Publications:

If you’re using a wire service article that has been published in a subscriber publication (such as the Chicago Tribune or Chicago Sun-Times), do not put the name of the wire service in your Works Cited page cite. Be sure to cite the article author (or article title, if there is no author) in the text of your essay, and you do not have to mention that the piece is from a specific wire service unless you want to make a point about that wire service.

🡪 How to Cite Multiple Works with the Same Author:

On your Works Cited page, arrange multiple works by the same author in alphabetical order of the first significant word of each work title. List the author’s name for the first entry. For each entry that follows, replace the author’s name with five hyphens. When citing in the text of your essay, you will need to cite both the author’s name and the title of the work.

🡪 How to cite a Source with Multiple Authors:

Your Works Cited page should list all authors for each cite in the same order as they are listed in your source byline. Remember to format the very first author with last-name first and then every other author first-name first, with commas and then “and” before the last author: Smith, Bill, Walter Jones, Steven Williams, and John Mill. When you cite this source in the text of your essay, cite the first author and then use the words “et al” (from Latin, for “and others”).

EXAMPLE: Humans will need five planet Earths to feed the hungry (Smith et al 226).

🡪 How to cite a quote within a quote:

Whenever quoting text from an article that includes a quote, remember that you should use double quotes to indicate you are quoting and then single quotes to show that the material you’re quoting is itself a quote. Also, use parentheses for an in-text cite that indicates “qtd. in” your source.

EXAMPLE: “President Obama said that ‘We will defeat ISIS’” (qtd. in Johnson 12).

🡪 How to Format a Block Quote:

If you quote a section of an article that takes up four lines of typewritten text or longer in your paper, be sure to use a block quote with 5-space-TAB indent format instead of quote marks and parenthetical cites after the ending punctuation.

EXAMPLE:

According to author George Orwell, poverty seems to affect the poor in the same way that wealth affects the rich:

The Paris slums are a gathering-place for eccentric people – people who have fallen into solitary, half-mad grooves of life and given up trying to be normal or decent. Poverty frees them from ordinary standards of behavior, just as money frees people from work. (7)

🡪 How to Format Indentation on Your Works Cited Page:

View the following instructional video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8igidQBZCcc>

🡪 How to punctuate in-text cites:

In most sentences when you quote, always put punctuation inside of the quote marks. (As in, “You’re wrong,” I said. He answered, “OK.”) But when you use an in-text citation, the in-text cite always goes at the end of the sentence, with ending punctuation outside of the parentheses. SEE ALSO *HOW TO FORMAT A BLOCK QUOTE*.

EXAMPLE: “President Obama said that ‘We will defeat ISIS’” (qtd. in Johnson 12).

🡪 How to Quote Text That Contains a Published Error:

When you notice an error (misspelling or typographical mistake) in a text that you would like to quote, insert brackets right after the error with the word “sic” (from Latin, for “thus”) to indicate that this is not your own error: According to the New York Daily News, “President Obamma [sic] has given Russia an ultimatum” (Marks 4A).

🡪 Punctuation in General

*HYPHEN vs. DASH*: They are not the same thing. Use a single hyphen (-) to connect words, as in “computer-assisted drafting” or “Irish-American parade.” Use a dash (—) as you would a colon (:) or when separating off a side thought.

EXAMPLE: “The project was a complete failure — we had to start all over again.”

EXAMPLE: “The U.S. democratic process — developed in America’s revolutionary struggle for independence — fell apart during the Civil War.

🡪 Using Italics/Underlines:

Italics and underlines are equivalent in MLA format, but do **\*not\*** use both of them in your paper randomly. Instead, pick either italics or underlines, and use that one format consistently throughout your whole paper.