

Student's Name

Instructor's Name

Geography Class

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### Using Modern Language Association Format

Over the next several years, high school and college instructors will assign many types of writing assignments. When writing book reports, research reports, or any other types of reports that require you to provide information that is not of your own personal knowledge or experience, it will be necessary for you to follow a specific report format. The Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) formats are the most widely accepted report formats. Usually, your school or department will have a policy of using one format for all classes.

For our Geography class, we will use the MLA format exclusively. It was developed by teacher and scholars in the late 1900's and has been a popular way of writing reports ever since. According to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, "The MLA now has over 30,000 members and supports a variety of publications and activities designed to strengthen teaching and scholarship in languages and literature" (Gibaldi xiv). You will probably use the MLA format again in the future, so it is important to practice it until it becomes second nature.

The MLA Handbook details every conceivable nuance of report writing. It gives the writer direction on citing sources, abbreviations, spelling, punctuation, and contains a special section on avoiding plagiarism. According to Gibaldi, "A writer who fails to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating another's wording or particular apt term, paraphrasing another's argument, or presenting another's line of thinking is guilty of plagiarism" (26).

We use report formats like the MLA format so that every student's or researcher's papers are standardized. This way, it is easy to find the exact information we need. The writer's name is always on each page, work is cited correctly to avoid embarrassing mistakes, and papers look neat and professional. According to the Harbrace College Handbook, "To write well from sources is a complex process that requires writers to perform a number of diverse tasks" (Horner, Webb, and Miller 485). Mastering the MLA format for reports and research papers is an important step in learning how to effectively use your computer for schoolwork.

Works Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1998.

Horner, Winifred B., Suzanne S. Webb, and Robert K. Miller. Harbrace College Handbook. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1998.