

## MLA Documentation Exercises

**Background Info:** The word "bibliography" springs from two Greek terms: *biblia* and *graphos*. The first term is plural for "book" or "papyrus" and refers to the Phoenician city of Byblos, which was a leading center for the manufacture and export of papyrus. The second term originally meant "to write books," but, over time, it came to mean "writing about books." At about the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the composite word began to be used to describe the referencing of books, authors, publication data, and so on. A Spanish scholar by the name of Nicolàs Antonio (1617-1684), who put together the first annotated reference list of Spanish authors, is recognized as the inventor of the modern bibliography, although it was not known by that name during Antonio's time.

**Exercise A:** According to MLA style, which of the following statements should be documented and which need not be documented? (Circle the sentence numbers of the statements that need documentation.)

1. The Declaration of Independence was issued in 1776.
2. The sediments on the ocean floor are the accumulation of silt carried by rivers to the sea, volcanic dust, coastal sands, and discarded shells of living creatures.
3. Levi Strauss, the inventor of blue jeans, came to the United States from Germany in 1848.
4. Coca-Cola is a popular soft drink all around the world.
5. According to Germaine Greer, the reason few women have achieved greatness is that they have historically internalized their oppression, thereby draining the energy required for creative work.
6. The United States is a substantially less secure society today than it was forty years ago.
7. The Olympic Games are held every four years.
8. The initials GNP stand for the term *gross national product*.
9. As a society, we should read poetry because it makes us live more fully and deeply.
10. Henry David Thoreau lived at Walden Pond for two years.

**Exercise B:** Read the following excerpt, taken from "Helping Computer Chips to Keep Their Cool" by Sana Siwolop in *Business Week*, January 25, 1988. Then evaluate the succeeding passages that exhibit unacceptable use of quotations. Point out problems and write a revision of each. End your quotations with this MLA parenthetical reference: (Siwolop 111).

Engineers could improve the efficiency of engines, chemical reactors, furnaces, and other equipment if only they could supply them with electronic sensors. But computer chips can't take the heat. Most microchips develop amnesia long before the temperature climbs to the boiling point of water. But that may change. Researchers at North Carolina State University in Raleigh have successfully made microelectronic transistors that operate at temperatures of up to 1,200 F. The key: using silicon carbide, a material familiar to most people as the grit on sandpaper, instead of the crystalline silicon usually used for computer chips.

*Unacceptable Uses of Quotations:*

- A. Many problems are caused when sensitive equipment overheats. "Most microchips develop amnesia long before the temperature climbs to the boiling point of water" (Siwolop 111).

*Revision:*

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- B. Many researchers believe that they would be able to "improve the efficiency of engines and other equipment if only they could supply them with electronic sensors" (Siwolop 111).

*Revision:*

- C. Several new developments have taken place at North Carolina State University in Raleigh "have successfully made microelectronic transistors that operate at temperatures of up to 1,200 F" (Siwolop 111).

*Revision:*

- D. In the past, there have been serious problems with sensors designed to detect heat. Until recently, "computer chips can't take the heat" (Siwolop 111), but now that problem may be solved.

*Revision:*

- E. One of the problems in designing a heat sensor is that many "microchips develop amnesia before the temperature climbs up to the boiling point of water" (Siwolop 111).

*Revision:*

**Exercise C:** Read a passage from one of your textbooks. Then write three or four sentences about the passage. Using MLA style, include both paraphrasing and quoting within the sentences. Conclude the exercise by putting together a MLA Work Cited entry for the text.

*Sentences:*

*Work Cited entry:*