MLA Style Guide

I. First Page

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American Literature

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The River as a Symbol for Good and Evil

The Mississippi River has long been recognized as a major theme in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Most scholars view the river as a symbol of freedom. After all, the river did become a refuge for Jim and Huck, and it was a place where the two outcasts could drift peacefully away from their real and imagined shackles. But the river was not all goodness in Mark Twain's beloved tale. To the contrary, it symbolized much more than freedom. The river took on many of the traits that we see in ordinary humans, and in this book it served as a symbol for both the good and the evil in humanity.
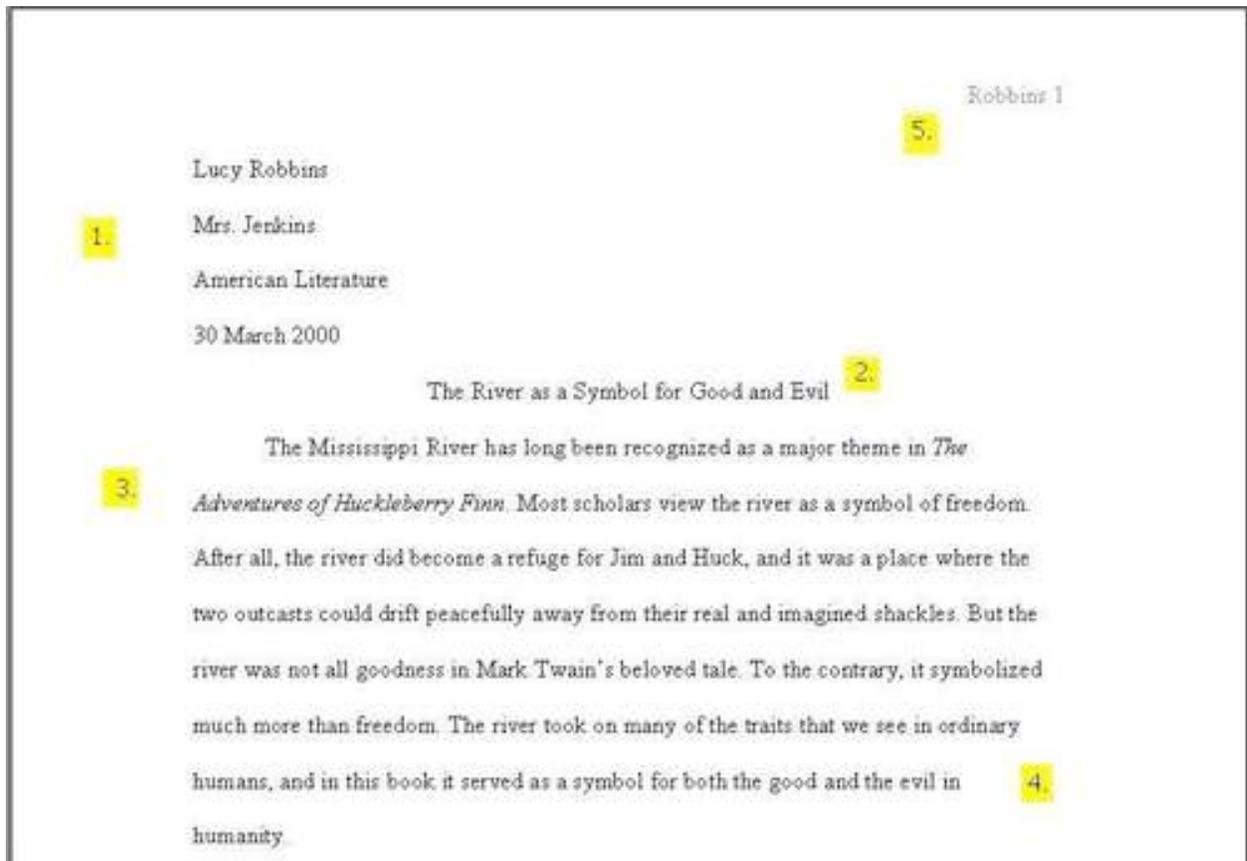
1. Begin typing on the top left of your paper. Use 12-point Times New Roman font. Set line spacing at "double". Place your name, your teacher's name, your class, and the date.

2. Hit return, and type your title. Center the title.

3. Hit return after your title and begin typing your report. Indent with a tab. *Note: Don't forget to italicize the title of the literary work you are writing about!*

4. Make sure to include your thesis statement in the introductory paragraph.

5. Your last name and page number will go in a header at the top right corner of the page. You can insert this information after you type your paper. To do so in Microsoft Word, go to **view** and select **header** from the list. Type your information in the header box, highlight it, and hit the right justify selection.

II. References within the Text

- "There are two basic types of sociodramatic play training: outside intervention and inside intervention" (Christie 29).

By putting the author's last name, Christie, and the page number, 29, in parentheses after your quotation about play training, you are telling the reader where you found this information.

- Christie states that "there are two basic types of sociodramatic play training: outside intervention and inside intervention" (29).

Because you have mentioned the author's name in your sentence, you do not have to repeat it in the parentheses.

- Margaret Sanger was thought to be primarily responsible for the introduction of birth control in this country (Kennedy 251).

- David Kennedy says that Margaret Sanger was primarily responsible for the introduction of birth control in this country (251).
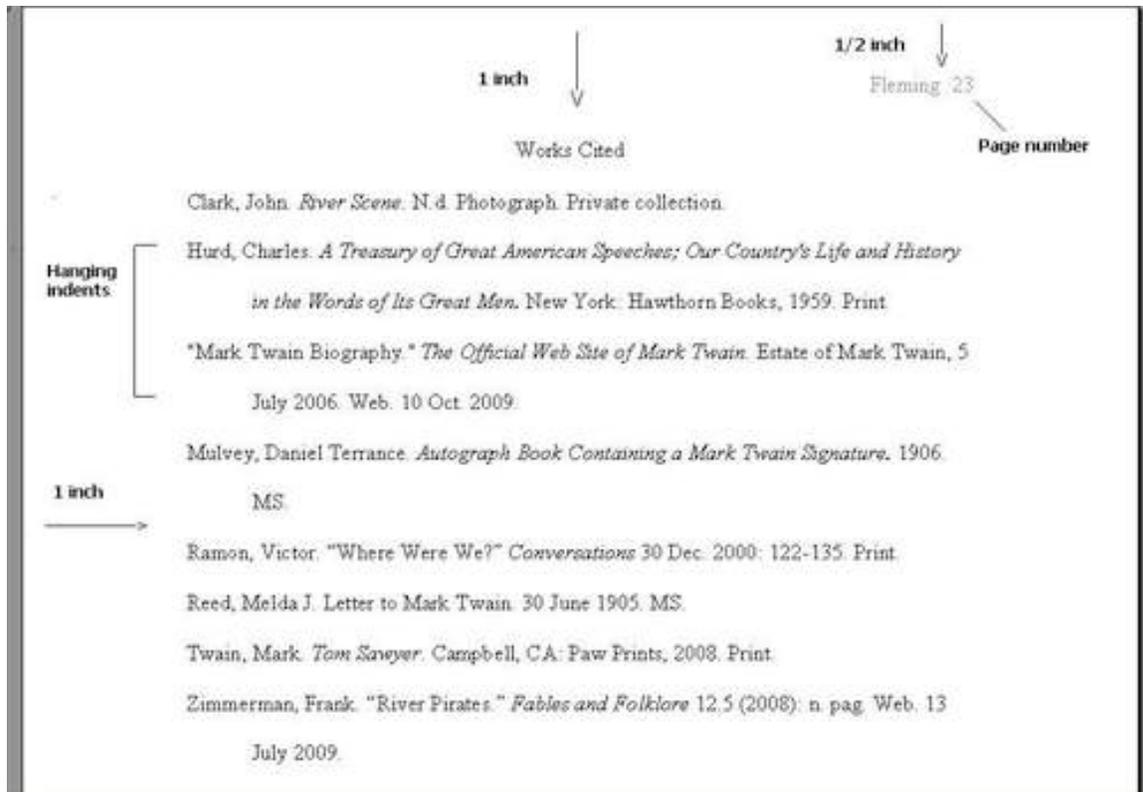
Sentences in your own words about the idea(s) of an author are treated in much the same way as an exact quotation. Here there are no quotation marks because you are describing an author's idea, rather than quoting word-for-word. This is called "paraphrasing." Because you are conveying the author's idea rather than your own, it is important to cite paraphrased sentences just as you would cite a direct quote.

Long quotes: For quotations that extend to more than four lines of verse or prose: place quotations in a block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented **one inch** from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by a half-inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come **after** the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. Here is an example of a long quote:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

> They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

III. Works Cited Page

1. Type "Works Cited" one inch from the top of your page. This measurement is pretty standard for a word processor, so you shouldn't have to make any page set-up adjustments--just start typing.

2. Type in the information for each source, double-spacing the entire page. Alphabetize the works by author. If there is no author or editor mentioned, use the title.

3. Once you have a complete list, you will format so that you have hanging indents. To do this: highlight the entries; then go to FORMAT and PARAGRAPH. Somewhere in the menu (normally under SPECIAL), find the term HANGING and select it.

4. To insert page numbers, place your cursor on the first page of your text, or the page where you want your page numbers to begin. Go to View and select Header and Footer. A box will appear at the top and the bottom of your page. Type your last name in the top header box before the page numbers and right justify.