

Essay Scrub: Detailing the MLA Details

For this scrub, focus on the details of MLA citations and capitalization. Read each sentence of the essay aloud and look for each of the following items:

Capitalization:

- Every sentence begins with a capital letter.
- Every title of a magazine, book, article, and author are properly capitalized.
Capitalization Rule for titles: Capitalize the first word, the last word and any important words in any title. Do not capitalize a, an, the, and, but, or, nor or prepositions of four or less letters unless located as the first or last word of a title. Reminder: prepositions are words that show where and when things occur like: in, out, under, on, of, to, over, etc...
- Every sentence ends with a period. Formal essays should not include questions (question mark) or exclamatory statements (exclamation mark).
- Each paragraph is indented (one tab). Only one return key at the end of a paragraph. Delete the extra space between paragraphs.
- Remove all contractions from formal essays. If you wrote can't, change it to cannot. If you wrote isn't, change it to is not. If you wrote let's, change it to let us (Remember "us" is first person plural and formal essays stay in third person).

Check MLA citations to be sure that you have all of the necessary information. If you are including a fact or statistic that came from what you read, you must cite it.

- Your citation should start out as a lead in:
 - According to the *SCOPE Magazine* article "Should Everyone Get a Trophy?" by Lauren Tarshis,
 - Note that *SCOPE Magazine* is in italics (when typing) or underlined (when handwritten). Longer written works like magazines or books are underlined or in italics. Shorter works like magazine articles, short stories or poems are put in "Should Everyone Get a Trophy" or "The Circuit." The capitalization of the title follows the rule above.
- At the end of the citation, include the author's last name and page number in parenthesis:
 - "Today, rules in many leagues require equal playing time for all team members" (Tarshis 26).
 - Notice that the period is not within the quotation. The period falls after the author's name, page number and closed parenthesis (**Tarshis 26**).
- If quoting the article and within that quotation there is another quotation, you need to indicate that there is a quotation inside the quotation, as follows:
 - "'The focus isn't on winning,' says Coffin. 'It's about building skills'" (Tarshis 26).
 - To indicate that the author is being quoted, use " double quotation. When the author quotes someone, use ' single quotation to show that there is a quotation inside the quotation. When the quotation inside the quotation is finished, use another single quotation to close it, and a double quotation to show that the quotation of the author has ended. It looks strange, but you often end up with "" as above.