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ENG4U

5 December 2020

Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know:

General Zaroff’s insanity in “The Most Dangerous Game.”

It is important that your essay follow the appropriate format. A formal essay that follows the Modern Languages Association’s style guide (MLA) should look like what you are now reading. In this brief template you will learn about format, quotations, and references.

First, notice the first page–it is plain, simple and straight forward. It contains the author’s name, the instructor’s name, the course code, and the date. The title includes the name of the story that the author is examining, in this case “The Most Dangerous Game.” Remember that short works: short stories, short poems, songs, newspaper articles, and abstracts are placed in “quotations.” Also remember that longer works: novels, long or epic poems, movies and newspapers are *italicized.* For instance, the song “Girlfriend in a Coma,” by The Smiths, is in quotation marks, while the book *Girlfriend in a Coma,* by Douglas Coupland is italicized.

On a more creative note, the title of the essay says something about the essay itself. Before reading the introduction, the reader is already aware of the author’s stance. Clearly Murphy believes Zaroff is insane. A creative title is a vastly superior approach than simply using a generic title like: “Essay #1" or “The Most Dangerous Game Essay”. One suggestion might be to look for famous quotes about your topic and incorporate them in your title. If for instance you were writing a paper on Hitler, you may want to find a quote about evil from a famous source. For instance: for the quotation “Evil counsel travels fast” by the Greek philosopher Sophocles could become: Evil counsel travels fast: The Russo-German Non- Aggression Pact.

The first paragraph is indented as is each subsequent paragraph. Also notice the font. Most teachers prefer times new roman, but other acceptable fonts include courier, arial, and verdana. Never use wacky fonts. Another note on the format is that every paper must be double spaced. This makes it easier for the instructor to read and to write comments on your paper. Remember double spacing and page numbering should always be handled by your word processor– in other words do not try to use the enter key for your double spacing. Similarly, let the word processor handle the page numbering–in this case Murphy has done a great job in including her last name in the numbering.

With regard to the writing of an English Essay, it is very important that you follow several important rules. First, use an impersonal formal academic tone. This means you should not use “I,” “One” , or refer to your opinion. An essay is an argument using facts in the form of quotations to make a point. You would never hear a lawyer saying: “I think, and in my opinion, the defendant is guilty.” A good lawyer would simply present her case using the facts “The defendant’s blood was on the victim; therefore, he is guilty.”

The second issue is the use of contractions. Simply put, do not use them. This means it is always “do not” never “don’t.” It is always “it is” and never “it’s” The reason you do not use contractions in formal writing is because it is formal. Formal writing is like you are writing to someone interested in hiring you. When writing an email to a potential employer one would not use LOL, instead it would be wise to keep the tone serious. Similarly, you should never use abbreviations like etc. or o.k. or and so on. Using abbreviated phrases in an essay is like wearing your gym clothes to the prom.

Quotations are a tricky part of any paper in English. According to the latest MLA handbook quotations under three lines should be included in the body of the text. For instance, if you were writing a paper on *Jurassic Park* regarding the evils of scientism you might have an imbedded quote like this. Ian Malcolm insists, “Life finds a way” (Crichton 158). This is an assertion of Malcolm’s belief that genetics are dangerous. For quotations longer than three lines of text set the selection into its own block. Malcolm sees the narrow focus of modern science as a negative force:

They’re both technicians. They don’t have intelligence. They have what I call ‘thintelligence.’ They see the immediate situation. They think narrowly and call it ‘being focused.’ They don’t see the surround. They don’t see the consequences. That’s how you get an island like this. From thintelligent thinking. (284)[[1]](#footnote-1)

Malcolm holds the science based on achieving profits in contempt and sees the goal oriented narrow focus as a very negative phenomena among scientific thinkers. Another useful tool is the ellipsis (...) The ellipsis indicates that you have taken some text out of your quotation–that some superfluous text has been removed.

Scientists have an elaborate line of bullshit about how they are seeking to know the truth about nature…Scientists are actually preoccupied with accomplishment. So they are focused on whether they can do something. They never stop to ask if they *should* do something. (284)

It is my hope that this template will be a help to you. I hope that through practice your academic writing will improve. Just like any other difficult skill it takes practice to get better at writing. Remember that your teacher is not simply your judge he or she is also your coach. Expect this task to be difficult because it is! All writers have struggles and a novice, like yourself, can expect to struggle. Finally, remember that through all of this, essay writing can be fun. A term paper is your opportunity to make your unique point. Within the restrictions of academic writing you really can say anything you want.

Works Cited[[2]](#footnote-2)

Author’s name. Title of Book. Publication information (City: Publisher, Date.)

Crichton, Michael. Jurassic Park. New York: Ballantine, 1990.

Works Consulted[[3]](#footnote-3)

Gibaldi, Joseph MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1995.

Works Cited

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Parenthetical Reference

(Martel, #)

1. Note that the second parenthetical reference does not contain the author’s name this is because it is the same author and book from the previous quote. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A “Works Cited” list is used for all books or other works you have quoted in the text of your essay [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A “Works Consulted” is used for all books that went into the process of writing the paper but is not confined to those quoted in your paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)