

## Sample MLA Research Paper

The research paper on the following pages is an example of how a paper is put together following MLA guidelines. **The title page and outline are not required for MLA papers**, but if your instructor asks for one or both, use the models and guidelines that follow.

### Sample Title Page

Center the title one-third down the page.

UN Sanctions and the  
Suffering of Iraq's People

Center identifying information—student, instructor, course, date—two-thirds of the way down.

Troy Holland  
Professor Rylaarsdam  
English 101H  
17 April 2002

## An MLA Research-Paper Model

Troy Holland wrote the following research paper for his freshman composition class. As you review his paper, read the side notes and examine the following:

- The different types of sources used in the paper
- The techniques used to state the thesis and organize the argument
- The methods used to integrate information into the writer's own thinking, including how he cited his sources

The heading (not needed if a title page is used) supplies identifying details.

The title indicates the topic and theme. The opening introduces the subject and provides background information.

Common knowledge is not documented.

The writer states his thesis.

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### UN Sanctions and the Suffering of Iraq's People

In 1991, the Middle East nation of Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, attacked its neighbor Kuwait. To protect Kuwait, the United Nations intervened against Iraq, a step that eventually led to the Persian Gulf War. With the military help of the United States, Great Britain, France, and other nations, the UN forced Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait in operation Desert Storm. The United Nations Security Council also placed sanctions on Iraq to enforce Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions and to prevent Hussein from repeating his aggression.

More than ten years have passed since the UN implemented these sanctions, the United States is engaged in a war on terrorism, and Saddam Hussein still refuses to cooperate with the United Nations. As a result, the UN, spurred on by the United States, continues to enforce the sanctions. The problem is that these economic sanctions have caused tremendous suffering for average Iraqi people. Many of our elected leaders have argued that because Saddam Hussein seriously threatens world peace, this suffering cannot be avoided. But the decision that such suffering is acceptable should not be made by politicians alone. In a democracy, all citizens share responsibility for the policies that their elected leaders make. In fact, a strong argument can be made that the suffering of Iraqi men, women, and children is not a justifiable side effect of the sanctions against Iraq.

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A strong transition leads the reader into the body of the paper.

To understand the issue, we first need to consider what the UN wanted the sanctions to accomplish in Iraq. Following the Gulf War, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 687 on April 3, 1991. This resolution called on Iraq to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction and pay its war debts. The resolution also implemented economic sanctions against Iraq until it complied with the UN's expectations. These sanctions restricted the sale to Iraq of everything from health care supplies to building materials to food. In addition, the sanctions blocked Iraq from exporting all goods except for a limited amount of oil. The money made from the sale of this oil would be used to pay war debts and buy food and medicine. Resolution 687 also set up an organization to monitor the payment of the war debts and make sure that Iraq destroyed all its weapons of mass destruction ("United Nations").

The writer uses a source from the Iraq Action Coalition Web site.

On the one hand, sanctions seem partly to have worked. Some experts argue that sanctions have contained Saddam Hussein's aggression. Hussein does not control all of his own country, he cannot use money from oil sales for weapons, his efforts to secretly build weapons of mass destruction are being thwarted, and he is less of a threat to neighboring countries, such as Kuwait (Yaphe 127). Also, supporters say that food and medicine are allowed into Iraq. For these reasons, many people continue to support sanctions as a way to prevent Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction, especially in light of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon.

Both sides of the debate are presented.

On the other hand, sanctions have not been completely successful. Saddam Hussein has been uncooperative from the start, especially about UN inspections of Iraq's weapon sites. He continues to find ways to raise money, and he is still able to acquire weapons by smuggling them (Cortright and Lopez 744). In fact, Hussein also has succeeded at manipulating UN sanctions so that they hurt his own people and raise international opposition. As David Cortright and George Lopez, international peace negotiators at the University of Notre Dame, put it, "[a] policy designed to exert pressure on an aggressor regime has been perverted by that regime into a virtual attack on innocents" (745). While

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Hussein continues to follow his own agenda and protect his own power, the most vulnerable Iraqis suffer.

The writer indicates a source's credibility before quoting him.

Instead of forcing Hussein to comply with the disarmament, the economic sanctions have caused living conditions within Iraq to deteriorate sharply. Because of Gulf War damages, a lack of funds, a shortage of building materials, and Hussein's own agenda, Iraq cannot rebuild; in fact, basic infrastructures have broken down. George Capaccio, an editor at Houghton Mifflin and a member of relief organizations such as Conscience International and the Middle East Council of Churches, traveled to Iraq in March 1997 to witness the conditions firsthand. He describes these problems:

A quotation longer than four lines is introduced with a complete sentence and a colon, and indented ten spaces.

In rural areas only about 50 percent of the water is drinkable. This is due in large part to the fact that raw sewage continues to flow into the major rivers; chlorine for water purification is often in short supply; and the network of underground pipes has numerous breakages so that waste from sewage lines frequently flows into water lines. These conditions can be directly traced to the UN sanctions which make spare parts for water and sewage treatment plants hard to come by. (E-mail)

The parenthetical citation is placed two spaces after the period at the end of set-off quotations.

Capaccio adds that problems within the health care system, agricultural sector, and electrical grid have also harmed living conditions for Iraqis. In other words, because the economic sanctions have restricted imports, the Iraqi people have not been able to rebuild after the war. And the inability to rebuild has caused basic services to break down.

One of the most basic needs is food, and the economic sanctions have cut back Iraq's access to food. Before the sanctions, Iraq imported up to 66 percent of its food; until 1990, Iraq spent an average of \$2.5 billion on food imports each year ("United Nations"). But after the economic sanctions were put into place, Iraq could no longer import as much food as it needed. Instead, it has been forced to rely heavily on its own food production, which is limited because of the desert climate. As a result, Iraqis have lived with constant food shortages.

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A quotation by an authoritative source (mentioned in the text) is integrated.

Who has suffered most from these food shortages and the breakdown in basic services? The children. The economic sanctions have affected children more severely than other Iraqis because their young bodies break down more easily under the added strains. These strains lead to both serious sickness and death. Denis Halliday, the former UN Humanitarian Coordinator to Iraq, argues that "sanctions are both directly and indirectly killing approximately six or seven thousand Iraqi children per month" (77), whereas Iraq suffered 40,000 casualties during the war. Some studies claim that 237,000 Iraqi children, ages five and younger, have died as a result of economic sanctions (Gordon 388). At the lowest estimate, the economic sanctions have caused almost six times more Iraqi deaths than the Gulf War. This statistic is strong evidence that the sanctions need to be rethought. Instead of encouraging Saddam Hussein to comply with UN resolutions, the economic sanctions have caused what Halliday has called "genocide" (qtd. in Wood).

The citation indicates that the source was quoted in another source.

Iraqi children have been suffering and dying for two main reasons: malnutrition and poor health care. Hussein's policies have made it hard for parents to provide for their children, but sanctions make the job even tougher by restricting imports. The United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, whose purpose is to protect children's rights, found that in 1997 up to 32 percent of the children, ages five and under, were malnourished. This number had increased 75 percent from 1991 ("Nearly One Million Children"). So not only have deaths among children risen sharply since 1991, but the percentage of malnourished children has risen sharply as well.

The citation lists the title because no author is given.

In addition, most Iraqis have little or no access to health care. Hospitals have had to deal with shortages of water and power, and often what water they do have is unclean. In his visit to Iraq, Capaccio witnessed these shortages, and he remarks that the hospitals in Iraq are in deplorable shape. Many heating and cooling systems do not work, and flies travel freely through the hospitals, spreading more disease. Medical equipment is scarce, including ambulances and diagnostic equipment, and much of what doctors do have is obsolete. Medicines for diseases such as leukemia, typhoid, and cholera are not available unless they are bought on

The writer summarizes a source accurately and fairly.

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the black market (E-mail). These conditions are a sharp turnaround from the health care system before the sanctions. The United Nations reports that before 1991, Iraq had a health care system that covered 97 percent of the urban population and 78 percent of the rural population. Iraq also had a welfare system that supported orphans, disabled children, and poor families ("United Nations"). The Iraqi people no longer receive quality health care because of the UN economic sanctions and Saddam Hussein's refusal to comply with UN resolutions.

Iraq's people are not responsible for Saddam Hussein's aggression, but they have been forced to suffer under the economic sanctions. In fact, many people believe that the suffering of innocent civilians makes economic sanctions illegal under the just-war doctrine. David Cortright, a researcher for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, explains that according to the just-war doctrine, warring countries cannot target vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, women, and children. Cortright goes on to argue that "[i]f decision makers in war are bound by the moral criteria of the just-war doctrine, those imposing economic sanctions must be similarly bound by such constraints. The principle of civilian immunity applies no less in the imposition of economic sanctions than in the conduct of war" (Cortright and Lopez 740). In the same way, others argue that economic sanctions place Iraq under a siege that harms civilians much more than it harms the military (Gordon 391). The economic sanctions cripple the most vulnerable people in Iraq while doing little to force Saddam Hussein to follow the United Nations' resolutions. The sanctions must be changed both to relieve people's suffering and to keep Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction.

Because of pressure from humanitarian groups, the United Nations has been searching for many years for a solution to the suffering. In 1995, the UN convinced Hussein to accept a temporary solution called the "food for oil program" ("Iraqi Oil Exports"). Under this program, Iraq was allowed to sell a certain amount of oil, and the money from these sales went into an account controlled by the United Nations. The UN then used that money to pay war debts and to allow Iraq to buy food and medicine

A quotation is used because of its power and authority.

A change from uppercase in the original to lowercase is shown with brackets.

The writer summarizes the central argument he has been making.

Attempts to solve the problem are explored.

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for its people ("Iraqi Oil Exports"). However, these payments were not enough to meet people's needs. Capaccio puts the problem this way:

The total value of humanitarian supplies that have actually arrived in Iraq is estimated to be 10 billion dollars. Annualized more than four years and divided by a population of 23 million people, this comes to about three dollars per person per month—hardly enough to begin the job of reconstructing an entire society. (E-mail)

The writer shows how he has integrated information by commenting on quoted material.

Three dollars a month is very little money to support someone who needs food and medicine.

Strong transitions help readers follow the issues involved.

In the past few years, the amount of oil that Iraq can sell has been raised so that there is now no specific limit, and the Iraqi government can use the funds for more than food and medical supplies (Cortright, "Hard Look" 2). However, Hussein continues to find ways to abuse the program and the funds so that innocent Iraqis suffer. Although the oil-for-food program is an excellent idea, it is not enough to stop the malnutrition and poverty. Stronger steps need to be taken to reduce the suffering.

The writer builds on others' ideas and qualifies statements to enhance credibility.

One step would be to gradually remove the trade restrictions on Iraq. The United Nations could lift sanctions as Saddam Hussein complies with weapons inspections. Until now, the UN's policy has been to keep all sanctions in place until Iraq meets all of the conditions. However, many people believe that Hussein will react better to policies that have a clear end and attached incentives. Russia, France, and China all believe that the economic sanctions must have these qualities to be successful (Yaphe 129-130). As Hussein proves that he is complying with the agreement, the United Nations could gradually increase the imports allowed into Iraq. The priority would be food, health care supplies, and building materials. This change may help Hussein realize the benefits of complying with the United Nations' military requirements.

For the past year, politicians and experts have been debating "targeted" or "smart" sanctions. On the one hand, these sanctions would apply very tight restrictions to military goods so that Iraq cannot develop its military might. On the other hand, restrictions on peaceful forms of

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trade and development would be lifted so that average Iraqis can get on with their lives (Cortright, "Hard Look" 3). In 2001, this idea was defeated in the UN Security Council, but debate continues on its merits. One problem, for example, has been the fuzzy line between military and peaceful goods. If "smart" sanctions passed, the Security Council would have to implement them carefully. While striving to reduce the suffering, Council members must remain firm about blocking Iraq's ability to produce weapons of mass destruction so that the Middle East does not become more unstable than it already is.

The citation includes both the author and a shortened title because two sources have the same author.

Another step that might be very helpful would be to increase the number of relief organizations and relief workers that the United States allows to enter Iraq. Right now, the United States does not allow any American citizens to enter Iraq without official permission (Capaccio, "Suffer"). More relief workers could do a lot to spread aid to more people. This increase in workers would also help to ensure that aid actually reaches the people who need it.

The concluding paragraph summarizes the issue and argument, revisiting ideas in the introduction.

As U.S. citizens, we share responsibility for the policies set by our elected leaders. Madeline Albright, the Secretary of State under former President Clinton, was asked a number of years ago whether the economic sanctions were worth enforcing at such high cost. Her response about the economics being a hard choice but worth the price may have reflected the public opinion at that time. Many people now disagree. They would argue that the present sanctions continue to hurt Iraq's most vulnerable citizens without achieving the political goals. President Bush, the Congress, and the UN must develop a fairer, more effective policy toward Iraq. As citizens concerned about innocent people both at home and abroad, we must take a stand against the suffering of innocent Iraqis. We must press our leaders to rethink the sanctions. If we pledge "liberty and justice for all" in our own land, how can we practice injustice in our foreign policies?

The essay ends with a thought-provoking question.



The list of works cited begins on a separate page and includes the title, header, and page number.

Sources are listed in alphabetical order by author (or by title if no author is given).

Items are double-spaced throughout. Second and subsequent lines are indented.

Periods separate most items in individual entries but are never underlined.

Internet addresses are indicated between angle brackets.

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MLA update: DO NOT include internet address!