Documentation Test Help

Documentation Test: (50 pts)

Your Research Project Assignment Overview tells you that your Documentation Test is simply your Works Cited page(s) for your research project. This Works Cited page must contain at least your required resources for your project. Remember, the required resources are:

- 1 CQ Researcher article (2003 or more recent)
- 2 sources from periodicals, magazines, journals, or newspapers, obtained from print, an on-line version of a source, or through PCC library's electronic databases
- 1 source that originally came from a book—Opposing Viewpoints database is great for these
- 1 relevant web site

Certainly, you are encouraged to include more sources on the Documentation Test than these, but you MUST include the required sources.

Documentation is strange in that it is actually very simple—if you follow the format exactly. But, humans being what we are, we don't usually want to place our minds completely on hold and just follow the format. Additionally, while just following the format sounds easy, there is a seemingly infinite number of picky little details that must be attended to in each citation. We've got to remember to place article titles in quotation marks, book titles in italics, to invert the first author's name but leave the second and third alone. And the list goes on.

So, documentation, while not difficult from a critical thinking standpoint, is difficult when we look at the tedium involved. That, my friends, is why I always have both my on-line and my face to face students prepare your Works Cited pages in advance. It is too tempting to put off the Works Cited page until after you have finished your research project, but once you are done writing, dealing with the tedious task of assembling the Works Cited page is more than most folks can deal with.

We're getting the bulk of this out of the way now, so that you can just focus on finishing building your paper from your outline and notecards and then filling in the weak areas with additional research and not worry about the Works Cited page.

Now, you may very well add or subtract a few sources between now and then when you hand in your project--no problem, simply update your Works Cited page.

Remember, your final project will include a fully updated Works Cited page(s) that corresponds exactly with the sources that you cite in your paper. The Works Cited page(s), like all of your other pages, will be paginated according to MLA guidelines, with your last name and page number in the upper right hand corner.
Preparing Works Cited, or bibliographic, citations is not nearly as difficult as it used to be now that we have so many databases that give us the citation to use. Be sure to use the CQ Researcher Cite Now! button and choose MLA to get your CQ Researcher Citation for free!

And remember the citation generator on the RE:Writing site at www.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting. When you get to the RE:Writing site, go to the center column, "Research Resources and Citing Sources." Then, choose the first selection in that column, "The Bedford Bibliographer." This is the best citation generator that I have worked with.

I must caution you on a couple of points when using a citation generator. Like most machines, a citation generator is only as good as the operator. As the operator, you are responsible for making sure that the input is correct. Remember the old saying, "Garbage in; Garbage out." That applies in this case. You must ensure two things:

1. You must make sure that you choose the correct type of source. If you are using an incorrect format, your citation can't possibly be correct.

2. You must make sure that your typing is precise and that you supply accurate input into each of the fields. Remember, when we are constructing citations, if we don't have access to a piece of information, simply skip that field.

Once you have prepared your citations, of course it is still up to you to copy and paste them into your Works Cited page, remembering to double space each line, just as you have been doing all semester with your essays. Additionally, be sure that you use hanging indents and place your citations in alphabetical order. The Bedford Bibliographer will take care of most of these details for you--I don't think that it double spaces though.

You may choose NOT to use the Bedford Bibliographer. That is fine. Then be sure to take advantage of the documentation resources on the Library web site. Additionally, your Troyka handbook always provides a great deal of logical, accurate information about preparing both individual entries and formatting both your Works Cited page and your paper itself. Be sure to use the handbook regularly.

Remember, this isn't hard because it is intellectually challenging; it is hard because it involves so many details. So:

Take your Time

Don't try to do this in an hour

Be Patient with the Process and with YOURSELF

Use your RESOURCES

CELEBRATE when you are done!!!