

***MLA Style Research Paper***  
*based on the 7<sup>th</sup> ed. of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Created Nov 10, 2009.*

Your last name, and page # on upper right corner of each page ½ inch from top border.

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Your name

John Smith

Professor

Professor Williams

Course name

American Studies 104

Date

14 March 2008

Use Times New Roman 12 pt. or similar easy to read font.

Title is centered

Found Voices: Carl Sagan

Double space entire paper

Indent 1 inch from left border

Carl Sagan was perhaps one of the most influential scientific minds that the world has ever experienced. When he learned that stars were actually extremely distant suns, his world was changed and the magnitude of the universe opened up to him. Another strong motivator into science came with his reading of a popular science fiction book of the time, *The Burroughs Tales*. The stories were not extremely sound scientifically, but still presented ideals of adventure and the unknown. The idea that life could exist elsewhere in the universe fascinated Sagan and remained with him for the rest of his life (Eicher).

Italicize names of books, plays, poems, television shows, newspapers, magazines, websites, databases, art, ships, and space craft.

Indent additional ½ inch when beginning a new paragraph

Perhaps one of Sagan's most famous individual accomplishments was his involvement with the *Pioneer 10 Space Probe*. The probe was created to be the first object to exit our galaxy. Sagan acknowledged that the chances of anything actually discovering the probe were astronomical, but believed that it was important to promote public appreciation for science and thought the project to be "all in good fun" (McDonough 50).

In-text citation pointing to a specific source in the works cited list.

Citation with page number of quotation.

Public appreciation for science was, in fact, what made Sagan the "superstar scientist" that we hear of today. His ability to portray complex

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science as attainable was what made him such a sensational figure. The greatest example of this was his *Cosmos Series*. In this thirteen part television series Sagan presented and explained a large variety of scientific topics ranging from the origin of life to our place in the universe. It was the most watched series in the United States for ten years after its release in 1980 (Cohen).

Another work of his similar to *Cosmos* was his book *Pale Blue Dot*. In the book Sagan instills a sense of perspective and wonder into man's position in the universe (Carl Sagan - *Pale Blue Dot*). This is one of the most widely known works by Sagan and many believe it to be his greatest work.

Along with this interest and promotion of science, Sagan also tried to push people away from pseudo science. His work in exobiology made it inevitable that he would eventually have to address the growing belief in UFOs that was so prevalent in the 60s era. Sagan investigated and acknowledged extraordinary claims but remained extremely skeptical in his approach. He believed that investigating and disproving popular paranormal claims would raise scientific awareness (Morrison, Sagan 30).

Sagan was a strong proponent of ending the arms race. This may have been motivated in part by his study of exobiology. While considering the probability of other life in the universe he surmised that industrial societies would bring about their own extinction rather quickly (Morrison, Carl 57).

Leave a 1 inch margin from bottom of paper

When there are two different sources by one author, in the in-text citation provide additional information to direct the reader to the correct source.

Some of Sagan's ideas were not as publicly displayed. In 1971 Sagan published an essay considering the use of marijuana under the pseudonym of Mr. X. He had had experience with the drug, and claimed that it had provided him with valuable life experience. He summarized his opinion by saying:

When cannabis is legalized, I hope to see this ratio as one of the parameters printed on the pack. I hope that time isn't too distant; the illegality of cannabis is outrageous, an impediment to full utilization of a drug which helps produce the serenity and insight, sensitivity and fellowship so desperately needed in this increasingly mad and dangerous world (Sagan).

All of these ideas and opinions together constitute a consistent message. Sagan was an example of what a scientist and intellectual should be. He was a rational, skeptical and curious individual whose voice is severely underrepresented in all aspects of culture and life today. His work in promoting scientific literacy has had lasting affects and contributed greatly to the collective human knowledge. He will be remembered as an intelligent and thoughtful scientist and human being.

If a quotation runs more than 4 lines indent an additional ½ inch with no quotation marks.

**MLA Style Works Cited**

Your last name, and page # on upper right corner of each page 1/2 inch from top border.

Arrange sources alphabetically by the author's last name, or if no author, by the first word in the citation.

Include the medium of each source: **print, web, CD, DVD, television, radio, film, e-mail, film, performance** etc.

Indent each source 1 inch from border, double space, and indent second and consecutive lines.

Online reference source

Date you accessed article

Include the URL only if the instructor requires it, or the source cannot be found without it.

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