How to Format Your Papers in MLA Style

English and most liberal arts courses require students to use MLA style to format class papers. By following the correct format for your paper, you present your writing and yourself in an appropriate and credible way. A poorly formatted paper reflects poorly on you as a writer and may cause you to lose points on the paper. Follow these instructions to format your papers according to MLA style rules for college papers.

The first page of your essay should look like this page. (Don’t use a title page unless your professor requires it.) Use Times New Roman 12 point font. Set all margins to 1 inch. Set the paragraph alignment to Left, creating a ‘ragged’ right margin, as in this document. Create a header that numbers pages consecutively and includes your last name. To do this in MS Word, set the page number to appear at the top right of the page. Then type your name in front of the number, leaving a space between your name and the number. Set the header at 0.5 inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Type the heading on the first page only, beginning on the first line, flush with the left margin. Type your title on the line right after the heading, centered, in Title Case, and in normal font/size. Double-space the entire document. Leave no extra space between the heading and the title, between the title and the first line of the text, or between paragraphs. Indent the first line of every paragraph 0.5 inch (one tab or 5 spaces).

A paper using MLA format must also follow MLA rules for citing any sources used in the paper. Be sure to consult a reliable MLA resource for citation rules.

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