



MLA Formatting Tips

MLA style offers guidelines on how papers should be formatted. This handout provides some basic tips on how to format your title page, abstract, and document in MLA style.

Document Formatting

Your paper should be typed using a legible font that allows a clear distinction between regular and *italic* type. Times New Roman is a good choice. Unless otherwise specified, your font size should be 12 pt. and your document should have 1 inch margins on all sides. The first line of each paragraph should be indented one half inch from the left margin (the tab key is set up to do this in MS Word). You should only leave one space between sentences after each period. You do not need to include a title page with your document, unless specifically instructed to do so. The document, including block quotes and works cited entries, should be double-spaced throughout.

The First Page

The first page of your paper should include a heading in the upper left corner of the page with the following information:

- Your name
- Your instructor's name
- The course name
- The date

Each of these elements should appear on a separate line and should be single-spaced. On the next line after these elements, your title should appear in the center of the page, followed by the body of your essay. There should be no additional spaces between the heading and the title or between the title and the body of your essay. The title of your paper should not be in *italics*, **bold**, or quotation marks. If the title of another work appears in your title, you should use quotation marks (for shorter works) or italics (for longer works), as appropriate, for example:

The Use of Imagery in Byron's "She Walks in Beauty"

The Header

Each page of your document should include a header that appears in the "header" section of the document, not in the first line of text. The header should consist of your last name and the page number and should be flush left on the page, for example, Smith 17.

Use of Block Quotes

If you are quoting a section of text that exceeds four lines, you will need to do a "block quote." Set the quotation off from the rest of your text by beginning a new line and indenting one inch from the left margin. The quotation should still be double-spaced, but quotation marks should be omitted. With a block quote, the period ending the sentence should precede the citation. For all other in-text citations, the ending punctuation should follow the citation.

For more information on this topic and a sample first page, please see:

Russell, Tony, et al. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The Purdue OWL*, Purdue U Writing Lab, 31 Aug. 2016, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01>.