

MLA Style Guide for Essays. Compiled for The University of Winnipeg Collegiate by Anna Beauchamp. 2003 edition

Step 1: At a blank page, choose <File Page Setup>. From the margin tab, change top margin to 1.5 inches, side and bottom margins to 1 inch. If working in metric 3 cm top margin, 2.5 cm side and bottom margins.

Step 4: Type your name, teacher's name, course, date submitted. Press enter after each entry.

Step 7: Set line spacing to double space before you start your typing. Click on <Format, Paragraph>. Choose double from the line-spacing drop down arrow. Click OK. Press tab once to indent first line of each new paragraph.

Jane Student
Ms. Instructor
English 40S, section Z
October 27, 2003

A Condensed MLA Style Guide

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In your past experience as an essay-writer you have likely been given a variety of rules and regulations regarding the correct way to present your finished copy. You are probably aware of the horror of footnotes, title pages, and bibliographies, and of the confusion of trying to figure out whether **this** instructor wants your essay double or single spaced. Although there are variations, the intention of these guidelines is to clarify the sources of your information and to make life easier for your reader. One commonly used set of style guidelines was developed by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA). The essay you are reading, in addition to explaining the main points of the MLA style, is itself presented according to MLA guidelines. Use it as a model when you prepare your own final copy.

You will have noticed first of all that there is no title page on this essay. Instead, listed at the top of the first page on the left-hand side is the writer's name (yours!), the name of your instructor, the name of the course, and the date on which the paper is handed in. This information is followed by the title, which is neatly centered, and which is interesting, informative, and original. If your title is very long, split it over two lines. Each new paragraph is indented five spaces. Notice also that **everything** is double spaced, and that there is a triple space after the title. Your essay must be on 8½" x 11" unlined white bond if it is typed, or on lined three-ring binder paper if handwritten. You will leave a margin of approximately one and a half inches at the top and one inch at the sides and bottom. Notice that there is only a number "1" in the top right hand corner of the first page, but that the page numbers on the remaining pages are preceded by the writer's name. This is in case the pages get

Step 2: Enter header. Instructions on page 2.

Step 3: Type the number 1 at left margin, highlight and right align.

Step 5: Title centered.

Step 6: Press enter twice after typing title. This makes a triple space. Click on the Show/Hide icon ¶ to display formatting marks. You should have two below the title.

identifying your essay

title

paper

page numbering

1. Insertion point should be at the top of page 1.
2. Click on <View, Header and Footer>. You should be in the header/footer screen.
3. Press the tab key until your insertion point is at the right margin.
4. Type your first name initial followed by your last name as shown in the example (J. Student).
5. Press the space bar two times, then click on the <Insert Page icon>. A second number "1" digit will appear on the page. Don't worry, the suppress procedure will take care of that.
6. Close the header/footer screen.
7. To suppress the header on page one, click on <File, Page Setup>. Choose the Layout tab. Click on <Different first page>, then click <OK>.
8. The header is now suppressed on page1, and should appear on all other pages.

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separated by accident. Consult with your instructor to determine whether you should use one or both sides of the paper.

One important function of the MLA style guide is to provide you with a simple technique for documenting the sources of your information. If you **don't** accurately identify the source of a quote, chart or graph, or even someone else's idea rephrased in your own words (paraphrase), you will be guilty of plagiarism, which the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* defines as the "act of using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source" (Gibaldi and Acltort 20).

Plagiarism is academic theft, and it can mean the loss of all your marks for an assignment, course, or year. It can mean expulsion from university.

If you quote from a source, be sure to use an accurate parenthetical reference which can be found in your Works Consulted. If you paraphrase (write in your own words) an author's ideas, use a summary parenthetical reference which includes the pages from which you took the idea. A third important place to use a parenthetical reference is when you quote a statistic. If you are not sure of these guidelines, ask your teacher for help.

If you want to use a direct quotation of four lines or less in length, such as the one above, include it in the text of your essay, and put it in quotation marks.

header
instructions for
student's name
and page number

PLAGIARISM

parenthetical
references

short quotes

A quote of more than four lines is placed in block formation and indented ten spaces from the left. A block quotation does not go in quotation marks. Here is an example:

The list of works cited at the end of your research paper plays an important role in your acknowledgment of sources..., but it does not in itself provide sufficiently detailed and precise documentation. You must indicate exactly what you have derived from each source and exactly where in that work you found the material. The most practical way to supply this information is to insert brief parenthetical acknowledgments in your paper wherever you incorporate another's words, facts, or ideas. **[Anything**, in fact, that is not "common knowledge."] Usually, the author's last name and a page reference are enough...(Gibaldi and Achtert 136)

Note that the three periods or "ellipsis" in the third line of the quote indicate that I left out a part of the original text. The ellipsis at the end of the quotation has four periods to indicate that it includes the end of a sentence. Note also where I have used square brackets to insert a comment that was not part of the original text. If, in introducing my quotation, I had already told you that Gibaldi and Achtert had written the original, I would not need to repeat the names in the parentheses: I would include only the page number (138). If I were using two sources with the same author, I would have to include the title of the work as well (Gibaldi and Achtert, *MLA Handbook* 137). Note that the final punctuation comes **before** the parentheses with a block quotation and **after** the parentheses in all other cases. Note also that titles of books and other major works are always underlined, whereas titles of short works such as individual chapters, articles, or stories are generally placed in quotation marks.

Underlining, which means the same as *italics*, is also used for foreign words (words not in the language you are writing in) and occasionally for emphasis (but don't overdo it!) If you are using a computer that can create italics, use italics. *You should only underline when you cannot create italics.*

After typing the long quote, highlight, and use the first line indent on the ruler bar to drag the block 10 spaces to the right.

long quotes

ellipsis

square brackets

parenthetical references:
punctuation

italics/underling

When citing a play you should give act, scene, and line numbers when available, and when citing a poem, give line numbers. When citing an electronic source, simply give the author's name in parentheses immediately following the quote. If your electronic source doesn't have an author, it may not be appropriate to use. Check with your instructor.

The rest of the information needed to accurately identify your sources will be provided by a Works Consulted list which is a separate page that follows the last page of the text of your essay. This is a complete list of every book, article, essay, film, pamphlet, or other spoken or written source that has provided ideas and information used in your paper, in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names. A Works Cited lists only those works you have referenced in your paper, again in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names. If you have used several works by one author, list these alphabetically by title, and instead of repeating the author's name, use three hyphens followed by a period. (Following this essay, you will find a sample Works Consulted page that also includes some books not used in writing this paper, just to give you a variety of examples.) The Works Consulted page is double spaced, and after the first line of each entry each subsequent line is indented five spaces. If working at a computer, the second line indentation is called a hanging indent. The normal order for the information in a Works Consulted entry is as follows:
Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Work." *Title of Complete Work*.

Name of editor, translator, or compiler. Edition, volume, series name [if relevant]. Place of publication: Name of publisher, year of publication. Page numbers [if you only used part of the book].

If your source is electronic, the standard format is as follows:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Document." *Title of Complete Work* [if applicable]. Version or file number [if applicable]. Document date or date of last revision [if different from access date.] Date of access. Protocol and address, access path or directories.

citing plays
and poems

citing electronic
source

Works Consulted

Works Cited

standard Works
Consulted format
for a book

standard Works
Consulted format
for an electronic
source

Refer to the Works Consulted page for an example, and if you have problems, ask your instructor, consult the *MLA Handbook* or check the MLA website at <http://www.mla.org>.

The appearance of your essay makes a silent statement about the value you place on the effort and ideas that went into it. Always proofread your final copy very carefully. The best computer spell-checker will not catch certain types of errors. For example, "there," "their," and "they're" are all correct spellings, but your spell checker won't know which one you should be using when! Printing your paper is part of creating a good package. Use the print preview in your software application package to check the appearance of your pages before you print. In print preview, check for single lines standing alone, and whether your final page has at least three lines. If you are printing in the Collegiate lab, room 1W07, the printer you are printing to may be set up for double-sided printing. Ask the lab assistant or one of the instructors to help you set up MS Word to print on just one side of the paper. Neat work and careful proofreading signal to your reader that you believe your paper is worth the time it took to make it look good. Nothing sells your product like a good-looking package!

appearance of
your essay

printing your paper

Proofread

Sample Works Consulted Page.

Note: punctuation and italics

triple space after the main title

all items in alphabetical order

hanging indentations

body of Works Consulted double spaced

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Works Consulted



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