

BASIC MLA FORMAT GUIDELINES

WHAT IS MLA AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

MLA (*Modern Language Association*) style is most commonly used to format papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities disciplines, and specifies guidelines for formatting manuscripts and using the English language in writing. MLA style also provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical citation in their essays and Works Cited pages.

GENERAL FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font such as Times New Roman or Arial. The font size should be 11 or 12.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Use the TAB key to indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin.
- Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin, and include your last name before the page number.

FORMATTING THE FIRST PAGE OF YOUR PAPER

- Do not make a title page for your paper unless requested by your instructor.
- Beginning on the first line of text, type your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date.
- Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case, not in all capital letters.
- Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title
- Double space between the title and the first line of the text.

GENERAL FORMATTING OF SOURCES USED

- The list of sources that you used is the Works Cited page and begins on a new page after the end of the paper. Put “Works Cited” (without quotation marks) centered at the top of the page in regular text (do not underline, italicize, or bold).
- Arrange the items on your Work Cited page in alphabetical order by author’s last name. If there is no author, use the first word of the text.
- Double space all lines.
- Indent the second and following lines one half inch, called a hanging indent.
- Abbreviate the names of all months except May, June, and July.