



MLA Rules for Formatting A Research Paper

These guidelines are provided by the MLA and reflect their new eighth edition. Always check with your teacher regarding specific expectations as they may differ from the model shown here.

Source:

The Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook*. 8th ed. Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

MARGINS: one inch at top and bottom and both sides of text

TEXT FORMATTING

Typeface: choose an easily readable typeface such as Times New Roman in which the regular type style contrasts clearly with italics; and set to a standard size (e.g. 12 points).

Spacing: Left justify. Double-space the entire essay, including quotations, notes and the Works Cited. Indent the first line a paragraph half an inch from the left margin (one tab). Indent set-off (four lines and more) quotations one tab as well. Leave one space after a period or other concluding punctuation, unless your instructor prefers two spaces.

HEADING AND TITLE

A research paper does not need a title page. Instead, beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin, type your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date on separate lines, double-spacing the lines. On a new, double-spaced line, center the title. Do not italicize or underline your title, put it in quotation marks or boldface, or type it in all capital letters. Italicize only the words that you would italicize in the text. Begin your text on a new, double-spaced line after the title, indenting the first line of the paragraph half an inch from the left margin. See next page for an example. If your instructor requires a title page, follow his/her instructions.

RUNNING HEAD WITH PAGE NUMBERS

Number all pages consecutively through the paper in the upper right-hand corner, half an inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Type your last name, followed by a space, before the page number. Do not use the abbreviation p. Before the page number or add a period, hyphen or any other mark or symbol. Your writing program will probably allow you to create a running head of this kind that appears automatically on every page. Some instructors prefer that no running head appear on the first page. Follow your teacher's instructions.

Example:

↑1/4"
Johnson 1

↑1"
Laura N. Johnson

→ 1" Mr. Reid

ENG 4U1

8 May 2016

Hamlet's Fatal Flaw

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the title character finds himself in a situation....

PLACEMENT OF THE WORKS CITED

The Works Cited appears at the end of the paper. Begin the list on a new page. Continue with the same page set up, including page numbering. Centre the title an inch from the top of the page. If the list contains only one entry, make the heading Work Cited. Double-space between the title and the first entry. Begin each entry flush with the left margin. If an entry runs more than one line, indent the second and subsequent lines half an inch from the left margin. Double-space within and between entries.

Example:

↑
1"

↑1/2"

Johnson 15

Works Cited

←1 " →

Edwards, Brent Hayes. "The Literary Ellington." *Representations*, no. 77.
Winter 2002, pp.1-29. *JSTOR*, doi:10.1525/rep.2002.77.1.1.

Gaines, Kevin. "Duke Ellington," *Black, Brown, and Beige, and the Cultural
Politics of Race.*" Radano and Bohlman, pp. 585-602.

More examples can be found on the MLA formatting page. These pages also provide examples for the inclusion of tables and illustrations.

<https://style.mla.org/formatting-papers/>