



Formatting a Paper Using Modern Language Association Style

Handout courtesy of Lori Williams & Sally Wallace

Introduction: Many faculty require that their students use the Modern Language Association (MLA) style of paper formatting. Follow these basic requirements when preparing your essay:

1. Type or word-process paper in 12-point font such as Times New Roman.
2. Double-space entire paper and maintain 1-inch margins on all four sides.
3. Your last name and page number are on each page in the header as show in the diagram below. Your full name/instructor's name/course/date/title are only needed on the first page.

<i>½ inch from top of paper</i> Your last name page number
Your first and last name
Your instructor's name
The name of the course and its section number
Date the assignment is due
Your Paper's Title <i>The title should be centered but should not be underlined or in quotation marks.</i>
Begin your first paragraph with the text indented 5 spaces or ½ inch (one tab). Continue double-spacing your sentences, and indent each new paragraph 5 spaces or ½ inch (one tab).
Type your last name and page number in the upper-right corner of each new page in the header space. An academic essay typically involves an introductory paragraph, several body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. Although there is no standard length for an effective paragraph, it usually contains several sentences, not just one or two.