**How to format a paper (MLA)**

How to format a paper in MLA style. Appropriate formatting is part of submitting a finished writing project. If you don't pay attention to formatting, your writing may have less of an impact on your readers.

MLA documentation offers the following guidelines for submitting a paper. Set 1 inch margins on all sides of the paper. Justify or align the text at the left margin, not centered, not aligned on the right, and not aligned on both sides, which can leave strange spaces in your text. Double space throughout the paper. Indent the first line of each paragraph 1/2 inch from the left margin. Choose a standard readable font, such as Times New Roman in 12 point size, unless your instructor specifies something else.

Place a heading in the upper left hand corner of the first page. Write your name, your instructor's name, the course title, and the date on separate lines against the left margin. Put your last name followed by the page number in the upper right corner of each page, 1/2 inch below the top edge. This is called a running head. Center the title of your paper on the first page unless your instructor asks for a separate title page.

At the end of the paper, create a list of works cited on a new page. Center the title “Works Cited” at the top of the page. Continue to double space the entries and set up a hanging indent for each entry that indents every line after the first. The running head, which includes your name and the page number, continues as in the rest of the paper.

This simple, clean formatting won't distract readers, so they'll be able to concentrate on what you're writing about. And that's how to format a paper in MLA style. For more information on formatting and citing sources, consult your handbook's MLA documentation section.