Formatting Your MLA-Style Paper in Microsoft Office Word 2013

A professor may require that you format your paper according to MLA (Modern Language Association) Guidelines. Here's a brief guide:

Formatting the Page

Set the font to 12-point Times New Roman.

1. From the **Home** tab, select **Times New Roman** in the **Font** group.
2. From the **Home** tab, select **12** for the font size in the **Font** group.

Set the page margins to one inch all around.

1. Select the **Page Layout** tab.
2. Click **Margins** in the **Page Setup** group.
3. Choose **Normal**, which uses 1" Margins all around.

Set the line spacing to double. *All text is double spaced, including quotations from other sources and the Works Cited list.*

1. On the **Home** tab, in the **Paragraph** group, click **Line & Paragraph Spacing**.
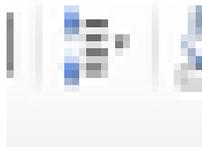
2. Click **2.0**.

Adding the Header

1. On the **Insert** tab, in the **Header & Footer** group, click **Header**.
2. Click **Edit Header**. You may need to return to the **Home** tab and click **Align Text Right** in the **Paragraph** group to right-align the header.
3. Type your **Last Name**. Add a single **blank space** after your name.
4. Return to the **Insert** tab, and, in the **Header & Footer** group, click **Page Number**, then **Current Position**, and finally **Plain Number**. It will automatically place the current page number on every page of your report.
5. You can look at the top right-hand section of your page to see the header. It appears faint, to remind you that it is automatic; when you print your paper it will not appear faded.

Adding the Title Block

MLA style does *not* call for a separate title page. Instead, you should begin your paper with a title block (described below).

- Note that the title is not simply "Research Paper" or "Hamlet's Madness."

- Don't type spaces to center the title. Instead, click the **Center** icon   located under the **Home** tab in the **Paragraph** group.
- See the example below for the first page of a paper formatted according to MLA Guidelines.

<div style="border:1px solid">

                                               Lastname 1

Firstname Lastname

Professor J. Doe

ENGL 1101

31 January 2008

<center>Finding A Good Paper Title:</center>

<center>Informing and Intriguing Readers</center>

     You'll begin typing your paper here. To indent paragraphs, press the **Tab** key once. Indent each paragraph only once and do not put an extra line between paragraphs. If you use a "quote like this one," you'll need to cite that information internally (Doe 2).

</div>

Indenting Long Quotations

This section explains how to format long quotations in your paper using MS-Word 2013. A quotation is considered "long" if it takes up four or more lines on your paper.

Note: using long quotations to pad your paper is a fairly obvious ploy. Rather than quote a whole paragraph from an outside source, just quote a single sentence, or even just a few words; use the space you save to write more of your own original thoughts.

If you do use a long quote, indent it one inch:

1. Press **Enter** to start a new paragraph.
2. Type the quoted material (without adding any quotation marks).
3. Highlight the quotation by clicking and dragging over the whole quotation.
4. Indent the text by simply pressing the **tab key** twice.

Formatting the Works Cited List

This section describes how to use MS-Word to format the works cited list in MLA style. Check any freshman composition textbook or the *MLA Handbook* (available at the reference desk of any library) for help on how to cite specific sources.

Here is a step by step list for creating a "Works Cited" list using MS-Word:

1. **Append a blank page**. (If you put your works cited list in a separate document, you may forget it when you submit your paper.) Instead of hitting "return" multiple times to get blank lines, **force a page break** -- if you add or subtract from the body of your text, you won't have to re-align the works cited page.
    1. Move the cursor to the very end of your document.
    2. Click the **Insert** tab, then **Page Break** under the **Pages** group.
    3. Click the **Center** icon on the **Home** tab under the **Paragraph** group.
2. Type **Works Cited** (or **Work Cited** if you've used only one source**)**. Press **Enter.**
3. Click the **Left Align** icon on the **Home** tab under the **Paragraph** group.
4. In the **Home** tab, open the **Paragraph Dialog Box** by clicking the square with the

   arrow.
5. In the **Indents and Spacing** section there is a **Special** window. At that window click the down arrow to open up a set of options. Click **Hanging** and then click **OK**.
6. Type your entries and press **Enter** after each entry.

Disclaimer: The Middle Georgia State University SSCs offer this handout as a guide only. Please defer to the requirements of your professor when they differ from the guidelines presented here.

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