

Your Name

Instructor's Name

Class Name

21 December 2008

MLA Format Handout  
(your original title for the assignment)

This sample provides advice for how to format your papers properly according to the Modern Language Association (MLA). It is in paragraph form to show you how your papers should look.

Follow the heading sample as provided above. The title of your paper should indicate what the paper is about, but should never be the same as the title of the work you are writing about. If your paper is about Dickens's Tale of Two Cities, Tale of Two Cities might be in the title, but should not be the title itself. Do not underline the title; underline only the title of major works. Titles of shorter works or works published as part of a collection (short stories, poems, songs) should be in quotation marks: "Smells Like Teen Spirit," for instance.

When writing a formal essay in proper MLA format, there should be a one-inch margin all the way around the page. Double-space every line in the essay, never hitting return twice and never single-spacing anything. Set your word processor to double-space before you type a single word so that you maintain the double-spacing all the way through the paper. All paragraph indentations are one-half inch; use tab or your word processor's indent function. Never indent with the space bar. Choose an ordinary, twelve-point font, usually something like Arial or Times New Roman. It is standard to put one space after a period, not two.

Use either underlining or italics for the titles of independently published works or for emphasis. Keep your choice consistent (use italics or underlining, but not both). Never use bold or other font modifications.

When citing sources and page numbers in parentheses, put the page number in parentheses if the source is identified in the text of your paper: In Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus is described as the "man of twists and turns" (77). Note that the page number follows the closing quotation mark, but precedes the period. If you need to identify the source, use the author's name in your parenthetical citation with no comma before the page number: "Chicago will be ours!" (Sinclair 341). If there is more than one source by the same author in your list of works cited, cite the source rather than the author: Odysseus is also described as "trusty" (Iliad 82).

A quote must be longer than four lines to be inset. The whole inset quote should be indented one inch. No change should be made to the right indent of an inset quote. Do not use quotation marks on an inset quote; the fact that it is inset shows that it is a quote so quotation marks are unnecessary. When you cite a page number after an inset quote, put it in parentheses after the period. (37)

If the paragraph continues after the inset quote, do not indent the first line.

The works cited page is always a separate page at the end of the essay. Center the words "Works Cited" at the top of the page. Please note that all cited works are arranged alphabetically and double-spaced with a 1/2-inch hanging indent. If citing more than one source by the same author, use "---" for all entries by that author after the first instead of typing the author's name again (see the example of the works by Homer). The following page provides an example of a works cited page and a number of sample citations for various types of sources. The list is not

exhaustive; there are a number of kinds of works that you might need to cite that are not included.

## Works Cited

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