

MLA Formatting Guidelines

The MLA (Modern Language Association) has specific formatting rules which primarily encompass three areas: page layout, parenthetical citations, and the “Works Cited” page. In general, MLA is most often used in disciplines within Liberal Arts and Humanities.

Page Layout

→ Sample layout of the *first page* of your essay:

Johnson 1
Mike Johnson
Ms. Sanchez
English 1B
8 March 2011
Essay Title
Indent one tab (0.5”) to begin each paragraph. Continue with your body paragraphs and double-space throughout the essay.

- Write your last name and page number in the header of *every page*.
- Set the page margins to one-inch on each side (top, bottom, left, and right). If you have an older edition of Microsoft Word, you might need to use the “page setup” function in order to set the correct margins.
- Use 12-point, Times New Roman font and regular double-spacing.
- The title of your essay should be in regular font and center aligned. Do not use bold or italicized print.

Parenthetical Citations

Parenthetical citations are in-text source citations. These citations are required when you use a quote or offer very specific paraphrased information.

→ Citations for quotes of four lines or less include the author’s last name and page number:

“Good writing, on the other hand, teaches the learning writer about style, graceful narration, plot development, the creation of believable characters, and truth-telling” (King 341).

→ You can also refer to the author’s last name as you introduce the quote:

As King says, “Good writing, on the other hand, teaches the learning writer about style, graceful narration, plot development, the creation of believable characters, and truth-telling” (341).

- ➔ Citations for quotes of more than four typed lines also include the author’s last name and page number. However, there are three specific formatting rules for “block quotes”:
 - Indent the entire quote 1” (two tabs).
 - Do not use quotation marks to enclose the quote.
 - Place the period after the text of the quote and before the parenthetical citation.
- ➔ When you paraphrase specific information, you must include a parenthetical citation. To paraphrase is to convey the ideas of a writer or researcher in your own words. If you use three or more consecutive words from a source, you must use quotation marks (since you are no longer paraphrasing).

As King explains, good writing provides examples of excellent narration, interesting plot, well-drawn characters, and sophisticated style (341).

- ➔ If you come across a very lengthy quote that you would like to use portions of in your essay, you must use ellipsis points [. . .] to indicate an omission within the quote:

“In other words, to read a great book for the first time in one’s maturity is an extraordinary pleasure . . . in maturity one appreciates (or ought to appreciate) many more details and levels and meanings”
(Calvino 735-6).

Works Cited Page

An alphabetized “Works Cited” page is required as the last page of your essay whenever you cite anything in a paper. Titles of books, films, journals, magazines, newspapers, and lengthier works are italicized; titles of essays, short stories, articles, poems, etc. are placed in quotation marks. For every entry, list the publication medium (print, web, film, etc.). The second line and beyond of each entry is indented one tab (0.5”).

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	Works Cited
Website ➔	“City Profile: San Francisco.” <i>CNN.com</i> . 2007. Cable News Network. 15 May 2009. Web.
Newspaper ➔	Huang, Nicole. “Airports in Chicago.” <i>Wall Street Journal</i> 24 Aug. 2006: B1+. Print.
Film ➔	<i>It’s a Wonderful Life</i> . Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, and Thomas Mitchell. RKO, 1946. Film.
Essay in an Anthology ➔	Lubrano, Alfred. “Bricklayer’s Boy.” <i>Creating America</i> . Ed. Joyce Moser and Ann Watters. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005. 342-6. Print.
Interview ➔	Macias, Joseph. Personal Interview. 22 July 2009.
Journal ➔	Mann, Susan. “Myths of Asian Womanhood.” <i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> 59 (2000): 835-62. Print.
Book ➔	Shelley, Mary. <i>Frankenstein</i> . New York: Norton, 1996. Print.