MLA Formatting Guidelines

The MLA (Modern Language Association) has specific formatting rules that 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

- Write your last name and page number in the header of every page (in the right-hand corner).
- Include your name, the instructor’s name, the class title, and the due date of the assignment in the upper left-hand corner of the first page.
- Set the page margins to one-inch on each side (top, bottom, left, and right).
- Use 12-point, Times New Roman font and regular double-spacing throughout the essay.
- Include the title of your essay on the first page, in regular font and center aligned. **DO NOT** use bold or italicized print.

Johnson 1

Mike Johnson

Professor Sanchez

English 1B

8 October 2013

Essay Title

Indent one tab (0.5”) to begin each paragraph. Continue with your body paragraphs and double-space throughout the essay.

Parenthetical Citations

You must use a parenthetical citation when you refer to the words or ideas of others in your essay. You use these citations to give credit to the original author(s). These citations are necessary when you use a quote or offer specific paraphrased information.
• Parenthetical citations for quotes of four lines or fewer include the author's last name and page number. Do not place a comma between the author’s last name and page number. The period is placed after the citation.

*Example:* "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).

• Another citation option is to refer to the author's last name in-text as you introduce the quote. If you choose to provide the author’s name in-text, you still must include the page number of the quote in the parenthetical citation.

*Example:* 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." Note that you only use these rules for quotes that exceed four typed lines.

  o Indent the entire quote 1" (two tabs).
  o **DO NOT** use quotation marks to enclose the quote.
  o Place the period after the text of the quote and *before* the parenthetical citation.

• Parenthetical citations are also necessary when you paraphrase information from a source. To paraphrase is to convey the ideas of a writer or researcher in your own words. (NOTE: If you use three or more consecutive words from a source, you must use quotation marks because you are no longer paraphrasing.)

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

• If you come across a 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:

*Example:* "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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1+. Print.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film/Movie</td>
<td><em>It’s a Wonderful Life.</em> Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, and Thomas Mitchell. RKO, 1946. Film.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Macias, Joseph. Personal Interview. 22 July 2013.</td>
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