# MLA: Essay Format

## MLA essays should:

- Be typed
- Double-spaced (with no single spacing and no extra spacing anywhere)
- Use a 12pt. standard serif font (ex. Times New Roman or Courier)
- Have 1" or 2.54cm margins

## MLA header:

- Include the last name of the essay's author, followed by a space with a page number, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin, numbering all pages consecutively

## MLA first page:

- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list double-spaced your name, your instructor's name, the course number and the date
- Spell out the month using the universal or European style of the "day month year" format, without any slashes or commas

## MLA title:

- Align the title so it sits in the center of the paper
- Write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters and do not underline, italicize, or place the title in quotation marks. Only include italics or quotation marks if the title includes the name of another source

## The main body of an MLA paper:

- Paragraphs should be indented five spaces or one-half inch by pressing Tab once
- All sections should follow each other without any extra breaks or line spaces

## MLA in-text citations:

- The in-text citation will be the author's last name, or an abbreviated source title, with a page number, not separated by any letters or punctuation, and enclosed in parentheses
- For a source with two authors, include both last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation connected by "and"

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- For a source with three or more authors, include all last names in the text or only the first author's last name in the parenthetical citation and replace the additional names with "et al."

## MLA SIGNAL PHRASES:

- Introduce quotations with a signal word or phrase—usually the author's last name. The citation does not need to also include that information. Keep the citation brief and do not repeat any information
- Use present tense to discuss literary works, the actions of characters and the developments of plot
- If primarily discussing the historical context of a work, the past tense may also be used

## MLA WORKS CITED LIST:

- Each source cited in the paper must appear in the Works Cited list
- Core elements common to most works are assembled in a specific order and followed by specific punctuation

   **Templet:**   Author. "Title of source." *Title of container*, contributors, version, number, publisher, publication date, location.

- Not every source will have every core element available, and it is expected that entries in a list will vary in form

## MLA AUTHOR NAMES:

- Entries begin with an author's last name, written last name first; first and middle names following. If there is no author, the article or webpage title is used instead
- Multiple authors are ordered the same way they are presented. The first author is written in last name, first name format; subsequent authors appear in first name last name format.
- Three or more authors should begin with the first author's name followed by et al.

## MLA TITLES AND CONTAINERS:

- Short titles and sections of work, such as a chapter in a book or an episode of a TV show, carry double-quotation marks
- Larger titles, or containers, such as a book or an album, and visual artworks including paintings, films, etc., are italicized

## MLA LOCATIONS:

- The location is where the source can be found, such as the page number or range, the uniform resource locator (URL) or a digital object identifier (DOI)
- Use the DOI if the source has one. Or, for online sources, give the URL. Use a retrieval date for a Web source only if the contents are likely to change

## MLA HANGING INDENT:

- Flush left the first line of the entry and hanging indent subsequent lines
- Under Indentation, use the Special pull-down menu to select hanging indent by 0.5" or 1.27cm