MLA 8 Formatting Guide

Introduction

MLA stands for Modern Language Association. It is a format that is used to present information. This style is most commonly used in humanities with the exclusion of social sciences. This style of writing is used for documenting sources in scholarly writing. MLA style was updated in 2016 to the eighth edition. The MLA format consists of three parts: the title page, the body, and the work cited page.

General Guidelines of Formatting

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on a standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper
- Double space the text of your paper
- You should use a legible font. Times New Roman is widely considered the standard or default font of this format. The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after punctuation marks (i.e. periods, commas, semicolons, etc.)
- Set the margins of your document to one inch on all sides
- Indent the first line of each paragraph one half-inch. You can do this by pressing the tab key
- Use italics throughout your paper for the titles of longer works. MLA recommends that italics should contrast enough to be recognizable

The Title Page

The first page of your paper is not a traditional title page. This means the title of your paper will not have its own page. In the upper left hand corner of your first page you
should list your name, your instructor’s name, the course, and the date. Be sure this list is double spaced like the rest of your paper. Next, go one line down and center the text. Here you will write your title. Do not underline, italicize or place your title in quotation marks. Instead your title should be in Title Case format. This is standard capitalization in which you capitalize the first letter of each word in the title. You will also need to create a header in the upper right hand corner that has your last name followed by the page number. This page will also start the body of your work.

Example of a title page:

The Body

The body of the paragraph of your paper is where you will continue to write your paper. The format of this section should follow the general guidelines we have already covered. It is important to mention that your header that includes your last name and page number should appear this page and every page starting with your title page.
The Work Cited Page

The work cited page is the last page of any MLA formatted paper. This page is where you aggregate and cite all the sources you referenced throughout your paper. The first element of this page is to title it “Work(s) Cited” (it’s only plural if you have more than one work cited). This title should be centered in the middle of the page. Next, you list your citations in alphabetical order. The second and any subsequent lines of each citation should be indented one half-inch.

Example of a work cited page:
Sources Referenced

“MLA Formatting and Style Guide.” Welcome to the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.

“MLA General Format.” Welcome to the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/24/.