

GENERAL MLA PAPER FORMAT – from OWL at Purdue¹

MLA style specifies guidelines for formatting manuscripts and using the English language in writing. MLA style also provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical citation in their essays and Works Cited pages. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the purposeful or accidental uncredited use of source material by other writers.

If you are asked to use MLA format, be sure to consult the [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) (7th edition). The [MLA Handbook](#) is available in most writing labs and reference libraries; it is also widely available in bookstores, libraries, and at the MLA web site.

Paper Format

The preparation of papers and manuscripts in MLA style is covered in chapter four of the [MLA Handbook](#), and chapter four of the [MLA Style Manual](#). Below are some basic guidelines for formatting a paper in MLA style.

General Guidelines

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper,
- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font like Times Roman. The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise instructed by your instructor).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides. Indent the first line of a paragraph one half-inch (five spaces or press tab once) from the left margin.
- Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines.)
- Use either italics or underlining throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis.
- If you have any endnotes, include them on a separate page before your Works Cited page.

¹ From: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.