

PAPER FORMATTING IN MLA STYLE, 9TH EDITION

SUMMARY OF MAIN GUIDELINES

The guidelines provided in this document may differ from your professors'. **Always follow their guidelines.**

Additionally, keep in mind that master's and doctoral theses and dissertations usually have their own more detailed formatting guidelines. Otherwise, those provided in this handout should suffice for most student papers.

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FONT AND SIZE

MLA style does not state a font preference, but it recommends choosing a simple, legible font, such as **Times New Roman (12 points) or similar**; you can ask your professor if they have a preference. Whatever you choose, make sure it is **consistent** throughout the whole paper.

MARGINS AND PARAGRAPH ALIGNMENT

- Margins are **2.54 cm** (1 inch) on all **four sides** of the page.
- **Do not justify your text. Align** the text to the **left only** and let each line end “unevenly.”

PAGE NUMBERS

- **Count and number all pages**, including the first page.
- Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) for all page numbers.
- Place page numbers in the **upper right-hand corner** of the page, in the header (without any punctuation or “p.”), preceded by your **last name** and a single space. Example:
Kowalski 1

- You'll first need to add the page numbers in the header (using your word-processing program's automatic page-numbering feature) before typing in your name. This creates a running head with your last name and the page number on every page.
- You may need to change the running head font to the one you've chosen for your paper; word-processing programs often use their default font, such as Calibri, for page numbers and header/footer text.

LINE SPACING

- Double-space the entire document, including block quotations and the list of works cited (**within** and **between** entries).
- Do **not** add extra spacing between paragraphs; regular double-spacing applies.
 - You may need to modify the spacing between paragraphs in the Paragraph tab of your word-processing program; it automatically adds space that is unnecessary.
- **Indent** the **first line** of **each paragraph**.
 - Use your keyboard's tab key, not the space bar.

BLOCK QUOTATIONS

If your quotation consists of **four lines of text or more**, it must be **set apart from the main text** in a **separate** block paragraph.

- Start it on a new line.
- **Double-space** it.
- **Indent** the entire quotation 0.5 in from the left margin.
 - Do not use the space bar; select the entire quotation and use your keyboard's tab key to move it.
- Do **not** use quotation marks.
- Place the citation (author year) in parentheses **after** the final punctuation (see example below).
 - You can also cite the author in the narrative **before** the quotation and place **only the page number in parentheses** after the quotation's final punctuation.
- Your text continues on the **next line**, without any additional space.
 - If it is a **new paragraph**, simply **indent** the first line.
 - If it is **not** a new paragraph, simply **align left** (see example below).

BLOCK QUOTATIONS (CONTINUED)

Block quotation example:

On the other hand,

the variety of opportunities the religious organizations make available for people to be together and talk out their emotional concerns become quite a different thing when assayed from the point of view of Sullivan's philosophy. Perhaps the champion, at least during the earlier periods of development, for most parish counselors, especially in Roman Catholic Ranks, has been Carl Jung. (Jackson 12)

This suggests that...

HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS

Headings are **generally unnecessary** in short papers; check with your professor.

MLA style does not provide preset formatting guidelines for headings; it is up to you to choose how to format your headings yourself (font size and colour, in bold and/or italics, etc.). However, it does make the following recommendations:

- Headings should **always be flush with the left margin, never indented or centred**.
- Add a blank line **above** and **below** each heading.
- Each level of heading should be different enough from the others to avoid confusion.
 - Make sure that the formatting you choose for each level matches its “importance.” For example, a heading that is 14 points and in bold is logically more important than a heading that is 12 points and in italics.
- Each level of heading’s formatting must be **consistent** throughout the paper. In other words, all headings of the same level must look the same everywhere.
- Do not add numbers (1, 1.1, etc.) or letters (a, b, c, etc.) to your headings.
- Avoid using all capital letters for headings.
- Use **title case** for headings (major words are capitalized; most minor words are lowercase).
- **Do not add a period** after your headings.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

This section provides guidance on formatting the works cited list only. For examples and information about works-cited list entries, consult our MLA 9 citation handout.

- Place the heading Works Cited centred at the top of a new page (in regular, full-sized font).
- **Double-space the entire list** (between the heading and the first entry, within each individual entry, and between entries). Do not add extra space between entries.
- Each entry has a **hanging indent of 0.5 in.**—i.e. the **first line is flush with the left margin and all subsequent lines are indented 0.5 in.** from the left margin (see examples provided in the MLA 9th ed. citation handout).

TITLE PAGE

There is no title page in MLA style. Instead, it uses a title “block,” where all relevant information is provided at the top of the first page of text. **See example on next page.**

- **Double-space the title block;** do not add extra space before or after.
- List the following four items (each on its own line) in the top left-hand corner: your full name; your professor’s name; the course code and name; the due date.
- Place the title of your paper on the **next line**, centred and in regular font.
 - **It must not be in bold, in italics, or underlined.**
- Begin your text on the next line, with an indent.

FIRST PAGE OF THE PAPER

In header: your last name
followed by a space and the
page number

Kowalski 1

your name

Anne-Marie Kowalski

Professor Louis Nguyen

your professor's name

course code
and name

PHI 3707: Ethics, Multiculturalism and Immigration

April 11, 2023

due date

double-spaced
throughout

title of paper,
centred, in the
same font as
your text

The Role of Community in Rehabilitation

Your text
begins on the
next line, with
an indent

The Canadian prison system is not suited to the social and demographic realities of the 21st century. Based on a premise of punishment rather than rehabilitation, it does not prepare incarcerated individuals for reintegration into society. This is all the more true for individuals of colour who are overrepresented in Canadian prisons.