

MLA Format Checklist

Overall Formatting

Margins & Spacing

- ☐ **1-inch margins** on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
 - ☐ **Double-space** entire paper (including heading, quotes, Works Cited)
 - ☐ **No extra spaces** between paragraphs or sections
 - ☐ **Left-aligned** text (not justified)
 - ☐ **12-point font** (Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri)
 - ☐ **First line indent** 0.5 inch on all paragraphs
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Header (Every Page)

- ☐ **Top right corner** of every page
 - ☐ **Last name + space + page number** (no comma)
 - ☐ **Example:** Smith 1
 - ☐ **0.5 inch from top** of page
 - ☐ **Automatic page numbering** used
 - ☐ **Appears on every page** including first page and Works Cited
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First Page Heading (No Title Page)

Top Left Corner

- ☐ **Your full name** (first line)
- ☐ **Professor's name** (second line)
- ☐ **Course name/number** (third line)
- ☐ **Date in Day Month Year format** (fourth line)
- ☐ **Example:** 15 November 2024 (not 11/15/24)
- ☐ **Double-spaced** between all lines
- ☐ **Left-aligned** (not centered)

Title

- ☐ **Centered** on page
- ☐ **One double-space** below date
- ☐ **Title Case** (Capitalize All Major Words)
- ☐ **No bold, italics, or underline** on your title
- ☐ **No period** at end of title
- ☐ **Quotation marks** only if quoting something in title
- ☐ **One double-space** between title and first paragraph

Example:

John Smith
Professor Johnson
English 101
15 November 2024

The Impact of Technology on Modern Education

First paragraph begins here...

In-Text Citations

Basic Format

- ☐ **Author and page number** in parentheses (Smith 45)
- ☐ **No comma** between author and page
- ☐ **No “p.” or “pp.”** before page numbers
- ☐ **Before ending punctuation** for parenthetical citations
- ☐ **After ending punctuation** for block quotes

Author Variations

- ☐ **Two authors:** (Smith and Jones 23)
- ☐ **Three or more:** (Smith et al. 45)
- ☐ **No author:** (“Article Title” 12)
- ☐ **Author in sentence:** Only page in parentheses (45)

Special Cases

- ☐ **No page numbers:** Use (Author) or (Author, par. 4)
 - ☐ **Multiple sources:** Separate with semicolons (Smith 45; Jones 67)
 - ☐ **Multiple works by same author:** (Smith, *Book Title* 45)
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Block Quotations

When to Use

- ☐ **Prose:** 4 or more lines of text
- ☐ **Poetry:** 3 or more lines of verse

Formatting

- ☐ **Start on new line**
 - ☐ **Indent entire quote** 0.5 inch (one tab) from left margin
 - ☐ **Double-space** the quote
 - ☐ **No quotation marks** around block quote
 - ☐ **Citation after ending punctuation** with no period after parentheses
 - ☐ **Example:** text. (Smith 45)
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Titles Within Your Paper

Italics (Longer Works)

- ☐ Books: *Book Title*

- ☐ Journals: *Journal Name*
- ☐ Websites: *Website Name*
- ☐ Films/TV shows: *Film Title*
- ☐ Albums: *Album Title*

Quotation Marks (Shorter Works)

- ☐ Articles: “Article Title”
- ☐ Chapters: “Chapter Title”
- ☐ Poems: “Poem Title”
- ☐ Short stories: “Story Title”
- ☐ Episodes: “Episode Title”
- ☐ Songs: “Song Title”

Works Cited Page

Page Setup

- ☐ **Starts on new page** at end of paper
- ☐ **“Works Cited”** centered at top (not bold)
- ☐ **Continue header** with last name and page number
- ☐ **Double-space** everything (no extra spaces between entries)
- ☐ **No extra spacing** between letters of alphabet

Entry Formatting

- ☐ **Alphabetize** by author’s last name (or title if no author)
- ☐ **Hanging indent** (0.5 inch on second and subsequent lines)
- ☐ **Author format:** Last, First Middle (first author only)
- ☐ **Subsequent authors:** First Middle Last
- ☐ **Title Case** for all titles
- ☐ **Italicize** book/journal titles
- ☐ **Quotation marks** for article/chapter titles

Common Elements

- ☐ **Date format:** Day Month Year (15 Nov. 2024)
- ☐ **URLs:** No “http://” or “https://” (start with www)
- ☐ **DOI preferred** over URL when available
- ☐ **No periods** after URLs or DOIs
- ☐ **Publisher info** (remove “Inc.,” “Co.,” “Publishers”)

Content & Citations

Every Source

- ☐ **All borrowed ideas cited** in text
- ☐ **All quotes cited** with page numbers
- ☐ **All paraphrases cited** properly
- ☐ **Every in-text citation** has matching Works Cited entry
- ☐ **Every Works Cited entry** is cited in paper

Avoid Plagiarism

- ☐ **No uncited quotes** or paraphrases
 - ☐ **Clear distinction** between your ideas and sources
 - ☐ **Proper integration** of source material
 - ☐ **No patchwriting** (too close to original wording)
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Tables & Figures (If Used)

Tables

- ☐ **Label:** “Table” + number above table
- ☐ **Title** on next line (italicized)
- ☐ **Notes** below table if needed
- ☐ **Double-space** above and below

Figures

- ☐ **Label:** “Fig.” + number below figure
 - ☐ **Caption** on same line as label
 - ☐ **Source citation** if not original
 - ☐ **Double-space** above and below
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Common MLA Mistakes to Avoid

Formatting Errors

- ☐ **NOT using a title page** (MLA doesn’t use one)
- ☐ **NOT justified text** (use left-aligned only)
- ☐ **NOT extra spaces** between paragraphs or sections
- ☐ **NOT single-spacing** anywhere (double-space everything)

Header/Heading Errors

- ☐ **NOT missing header** on any page
- ☐ **NOT wrong date format** (use Day Month Year)
- ☐ **NOT centered heading** (should be left-aligned)
- ☐ **NOT formatted title** (no bold/italics/underline on your title)

Citation Errors

- ☐ **NOT comma in citation** (Smith, 45) → should be (Smith 45)
- ☐ **NOT “p.” or “pp.”** in citations → just page numbers
- ☐ **NOT missing page numbers** for quotes
- ☐ **NOT & symbol** → use “and” (Smith and Jones)

Works Cited Errors

- ☐ **NOT missing hanging indent** on entries
- ☐ **NOT wrong alphabetical order**
- ☐ **NOT extra spaces** between entries
- ☐ **NOT wrong author format** (should be Last, First)
- ☐ **NOT including “Retrieved from”** (unless no date)
- ☐ **NOT wrong title capitalization** (use Title Case)

Pre-Submission Final Check

Document Setup

- ☐ **Margins:** 1 inch on all sides
- ☐ **Font:** 12-point readable font
- ☐ **Spacing:** Double-space throughout
- ☐ **Alignment:** Left-aligned
- ☐ **Indentation:** 0.5 inch first line of paragraphs

Header & First Page

- ☐ **Header present** on every page (Last name + page #)
- ☐ **Heading complete** (name, professor, course, date)
- ☐ **Title centered** and properly formatted
- ☐ **Date in correct format** (Day Month Year)

Body Content

- ☐ **All paragraphs indented** 0.5 inch
- ☐ **Citations present** for all borrowed material
- ☐ **Block quotes formatted** correctly (if used)
- ☐ **Titles formatted** correctly (italics vs quotes)

Works Cited

- ☐ **On separate page** at end
- ☐ **“Works Cited” centered** at top
- ☐ **All entries alphabetized** correctly
- ☐ **Hanging indent** on all entries
- ☐ **Double-spaced** with no extra spaces
- ☐ **Every source cited** in paper
- ☐ **Every citation has** Works Cited entry

Proofreading

- ☐ **Spell-checked** entire document
- ☐ **Grammar-checked** entire document
- ☐ **No typos** in citations or Works Cited
- ☐ **All URLs working** (if applicable)

Quick Reference Numbers

Key MLA Numbers to Remember: - **1 inch** = Margins on all sides - **0.5 inch** = Paragraph indent & hanging indent - **12-point** = Font size - **4+ lines** = Block quote for prose - **3+ lines** = Block quote for poetry - **Double-space** = Everything in entire paper

Verification Questions

Ask yourself before submitting:

1. Does my paper have a header with my last name and page number on EVERY page?

2. Did I use a heading (not a title page) on the first page?
3. Is my entire paper double-spaced with no extra spaces anywhere?
4. Are all paragraphs indented 0.5 inch?
5. Did I cite every borrowed idea, quote, and paraphrase?
6. Does every in-text citation have a matching Works Cited entry?
7. Is my Works Cited page alphabetized with hanging indents?
8. Did I use "and" (not "&") in my citations?
9. Did I avoid using "p." or "pp." in my citations?
10. Is my date in Day Month Year format?

If you answered YES to all 10 questions, your MLA formatting is correct!

For complete MLA guidelines: *MLA Handbook* (9th ed.) or style.mla.org