

MLA Paper Template

General Formatting

Page Setup

- ☐ **Paper:** 8.5 × 11 inches (standard letter size)
- ☐ **Margins:** 1 inch on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
- ☐ **Font:** 12-point readable font (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri)
- ☐ **Spacing:** Double-space everything (including quotations, notes, Works Cited)
- ☐ **Alignment:** Left-aligned (not justified)
- ☐ **Paragraph indent:** 0.5 inch (one Tab key)

Page Numbers

- ☐ **Location:** Top right corner of every page
 - ☐ **Format:** Last name followed by page number (no comma)
 - ☐ **Example:** Smith 1
 - ☐ **Start:** Page 1 on first page of text
-

First Page Format

Heading (Top Left Corner)

No title page in MLA. Instead, use this heading:

Your Name Professor's Name Course Name

Date (Day Month Year format)

Paper Title Centered Here

First paragraph begins here with proper indentation. All text is double-spaced throughout the entire paper, including the heading and Works Cited page...

Example:

John Smith Professor Johnson English 101

15 November 2024

The Impact of Social Media on Modern Communication

Social media has transformed the way people communicate in the twenty-first century...

Header Setup

Every page (including first page):

Smith 1

Instructions: 1. Insert header in top right corner 2. Type your last name, space, then page number 3. Use automatic page numbering feature 4. Header appears 0.5 inch from top

Title Formatting

Main Title

- ☐ Centered on first page
- ☐ Title Case (Capitalize All Major Words) ☐ No bold, italics, or underline
- ☐ No period at end
- ☐ Double-space before starting text

Example:

The Role of Technology in Modern Education

Titles Within Your Paper

- ☐ Book titles: *Italicized*
 - ☐ Article/poem/short story titles: "Quotation Marks"
 - ☐ Your own title: Plain text (no formatting)
-

In-Text Citations

Basic Format

Author's last name and page number in parentheses.

Example: Shakespeare describes the character as "complex and troubled" (45).

Variations

No author: Use shortened title: ("Article Title" 23)

Two authors: (Smith and Jones 45)

Three or more authors: (Smith et al. 45)

Author mentioned in sentence: According to Smith, the theory is "well-supported" (45).

Multiple works by same author: (Smith, *Book Title* 45) or (Smith, "Article"

23) **No page numbers (web sources):** (Smith) or use paragraph numbers (Smith,

par. 4) **Entire work:** Smith argues that... (no parenthetical needed)

Block Quotations

When to Use

- ☐ Prose quotations of **4+ lines**
- ☐ Poetry quotations of **3+ lines**

Formatting

- ☐ Start on new line
- ☐ Indent entire quote 0.5 inch (one Tab)
- ☐ Double-space the quote
- ☐ No quotation marks
- ☐ Citation after ending punctuation

Examples

Smith makes a compelling argument about education reform:

Educational systems must adapt to meet the needs of twenty-first-century learners. Traditional methods, while valuable, cannot adequately prepare students for the challenges they will face in an increasingly digital world. Reform is not optional; it is essential. (45)

This perspective challenges conventional thinking.

Poetry example:

Frost captures the moment perfectly:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And
sorry I could not travel both And be one
traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could. (lines 1-4)

Works Cited Page

Page Setup

- ☐ **Title:** "Works Cited" centered at top
- ☐ **New page:** Start on separate page
- ☐ **Continue header:** Last name and page number
- ☐ **Alphabetize:** By author's last name
- ☐ **Hanging indent:** 0.5 inch on second/subsequent lines
- ☐ **Double-space:** Everything, no extra spaces

Entry Format

Book: Smith, John. *Book Title: Subtitle*. Publisher Name, Year.

Journal Article: Johnson, Mary. "Article Title: Subtitle." *Journal Name*, vol. 15, no. 3, Year, pp. 45-67.

Website: Doe, John. "Page Title." *Website Name*, Day Month Year, www.example.com/page.

Online Journal: Lee, Sarah. "Article Title." *Journal Name*, vol. 10, no. 2, Year, pp. 20-35. *Database Name*, doi:10.xxxx/xxxxx.

Two authors: Smith, John, and Mary Jones. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year. **Three or more authors:** Smith, John, et al. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year. **No author:** *Book Title*. Publisher, Year

Sample Work Cited Page

Works Cited

Frost, Robert. "The Road Not Taken." **Mountain Interval**. Henry Holt and Company, 1916, p. 9.

Johnson, Mary. "Modern Education Challenges." **Education Today**, vol. 25, no. 4, 2023, pp. 102-118.

Smith, John. **The Digital Revolution**. Academic Press, 2024.

"The Future of Learning." **Educational Research Journal**, 15 Mar. 2024, www.educationjournal.com/future-learning.

Headings (Optional)

MLA doesn't require headings, but if used:

Format: - ☐ Left-aligned, bold or regular text - ☐ Title Case or Sentence case - ☐
No numbering - ☐ Double-space before and after

Example:

Literature Review

The existing research on this topic reveals...

Tables & Figures

Table Format

Table 1
Survey Results by Age Group [table
content]

Note. Data collected from 500 participants.

Requirements: - ☐ Label: "Table" + number above table - ☐ Title on next line (italicized, title case) - ☐ Notes below table if needed - ☐ Double-space above and below

Figure Format

Fig. 1. Demographic distribution of participants. Data from Smith and Jones (45).

Requirements: - ☐ Label: "Fig." + number below figure - ☐ Caption on same line (sentence case) - ☐ Source citation if not original - ☐ Double-space above and below

Notes (Optional)

Endnotes (if needed)

- ☐ Place on separate page before Works Cited ☐
- Title: "Notes" centered at top
- ☐ Number notes with superscript in text¹
- Continue header with page number

Notes page format:

Notes

¹ This provides additional context not suitable for the main text.

² Another clarifying note here.

Pre-Submission Checklist

Overall Formatting

- ☐ 1-inch margins all sides
- ☐ 12-point readable font
- ☐ Double-spaced throughout (no extra spaces anywhere)
- ☐ Left-aligned text
- ☐ Paragraphs indented 0.5 inch

Header & Heading

- ☐ Last name + page number in top right (every page)
- ☐ First page: Your name, professor, course, date
- ☐ Title centered (Title Case, no formatting)
- ☐ Heading and title double-spaced

In-Text Citations

- ☐ All borrowed ideas cited
- ☐ Author and page number format: (Smith 45)
- ☐ Block quotes indented, no quotation marks
- ☐ Citations placed correctly (before period for parenthetical)

Works Cited

- ☐ Starts on new page
- ☐ "Works Cited" centered at top
- ☐ Alphabetized by author last name
- ☐ Hanging indent on all entries
- ☐ Double-spaced, no extra spaces
- ☐ All in-text citations have entries

Content

- ☐ Every source cited in paper
- ☐ Every Works Cited entry is cited in paper
- ☐ Proper title formatting (italics vs quotes)
- ☐ No "Retrieved from" or "Accessed" dates (unless no publication date)

Common MLA Mistakes

- **Extra spacing** between paragraphs or entries
- Consistent double-spacing only
- **Title page** (not used in MLA)
- Heading at top of first page
- **Wrong title format** (bold, underlined, larger font)
- Plain text, Title Case, centered
- **Missing hanging indent** in Works Cited
- All entries need 0.5 inch hanging indent
- **Comma between author and page** (Smith, 45)
- No comma (Smith 45)
- **“p.” or “pp.”** before page numbers (Smith p. 45)
- No abbreviation needed (Smith 45)
- **Justified text** (even margins both sides)
- Left-aligned only
- **Wrong date format** (11/15/2024)
- Day Month Year (15 November 2024)

MLA 9th Edition Updates

What's new: - ☐ Containers concept for online sources - ☐ DOI preferred over URL -
☐ Optional location info (URLs, DOIs) - ☐ More flexible source types - ☐ “Accessed” dates only if no publication date

Core elements (in order): 1. Author 2. Title of source 3. Title of container 4. Other contributors 5. Version 6. Number 7. Publisher 8. Publication date 9. Location (pages, DOI, URL)

Quick Reference

Date Format

15 November 2024 (not Nov. 15, 2024 or 11/15/24)

Citation Format

(Author Page) - No punctuation between

Titles

Italics for books, journals, websites “Quotes” for articles, poems, short stories

Abbreviations

Use “vol.” and “no.” for volume and issue Use “p.” or “pp.” only in newspaper citations

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

