

MLA PAPER FORMAT

A basic guide

THE BASICS:

- Use **12-point type** in Times New Roman or a similar plain font.
- **Double-space** the entire paper, including block quotations and the Works Cited list.
- **Indent** each paragraph by half an inch (1.25 cm).

THE FIRST PAGE:

Put your name, the teacher's name, the course and number, and the due date.

Audrey Anderson
Professor Johnson
Humanities 103
22 November 2016

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The header should contain your family name and the page number on every page.

Centre your title on the line after the date.

Tobacco Advertising:
A Major Cause of Addiction

The actual text of the paper begins here on page 1; there is no separate title page. If your title is long, it is best to divide it so that it will not be mistaken for a line of text. Note that everything in the paper is double-spaced, and, as usual, no additional spacing is left between one paragraph and the next.

Text begins on the line after the title.

Type the text of the paper, adding citations where required.

Use the tab key to indent each paragraph. Make sure the paragraphs of your essay are aligned to the left of the page, leaving jagged lines on the right side. Do not justify the paragraph alignment. Citations should be provided either "with direct quotes" (Johnson 23) or through paraphrase (Chan 45).

- **Tip:** Double space and indent automatically using a word processor such as Microsoft Word.

ADDING PAGE NUMBERS:

- In Microsoft Word, click Insert > Page Number." Select the option which places the page number at the top right.
- In Google Docs, click Format > Page Numbers.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS:

- All research information—whether quoted, paraphrased, or summarized—must be cited.
- An in-text citation usually consists of **an author's family name** and a **page number** (Smith 56), but sometimes with a title if there is no named author.
- See the Academic Skills Centre's **MLA Citations** [handout](#) for models and instructions.



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Continued

A TYPICAL PAGE:

Don't use **subheadings** unless required. Begin a new paragraph to make each new point.

Put **brief quotations** (fewer than four lines) in quotation marks.

Put a **citation** after quotations, summaries, and paraphrases. A period or comma may follow it.

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The text of the entire paper is double-spaced, with no extra space between the paragraphs.

Indent using the tab key when beginning each new paragraph, and remember the importance of topic sentences. When quoting fewer than four lines from a source, integrate the quotation into the text of your paper, "being certain to use quotation marks" (Smith 56). Note that the citation follows the quotation immediately. See the Academic Skills Centre handouts or the current edition of the *MLA Handbook* for correct citation forms.

When presenting longer quotations—of over four lines—note that they must be set off in block form as shown here:

Block quotations do not require quotation marks since their form and position identify them as quotations. Use the tab key once on each line to indent block quotations properly, and note that the closing punctuation in this special case—normally a period—comes before the citation. (Martinez 89)

When the text of your paper then resumes, you may continue the previous paragraph or indent and start a new one at this point.

It is essential to understand citation procedures in order to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Visit the Academic Skills Centre if you have any questions.

A **block quotation** (more than four lines long) is introduced with a **colon**.

Indent each line once without quotation marks. The **citation** comes after the period.

WORKS CITED PAGE:

The **Works Cited** page, a bibliography, appears at the end of your essay or research paper.

Entries should be in **alphabetical order**. Ignore "A," "An," or "The."

After the first line of each entry, the text is indented. This is called a **"hanging indent."**

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Works Cited

Abrams, Joseph T. *A Short History of Television: 1950–1970*. 4th ed., Gilmore Publishers, 2005.

Bailey, Elizabeth F. *Media: Methods and Madness*. U of Northampton P, 1987. *Google Books*, books.google.com/books?isbn=0761941002.

"Culture of Mayhem: Barbarity in the American Media." *US MediaWatch*, U of Ohio, 2006, www.unioh.edu/usmediawatch.cm/7j6/cm/001. Accessed 26 March 2021.

Feinstein, G. L. "An Essay on Current Trends in Docudrama." *The Media and the Audience: An Anthology*. Edited by Catherine J. Habberfield, Midwest Press, 1998.

---. *A History of Twentieth-Century Documentary Film*. 2nd ed., Pacific Publishers, 2010.

Munching, Phillip H. "Prejudice: Alive and on the Air." *Media Journal*, vol. 52, no. 8, Aug. 2013, pp. 112–25. *Goldmine Database*, www.goldbase.org/media/phm/stable/0582U87.0.

If an author appears **more than once**, put three dashes (---) instead of their name for the following entries.

Long URLs must be broken to avoid awkward gaps. Break them after a dash, dot, or slash.

How to Create Hanging Indents:

- **Highlight** all entries in your Works Cited. Go to the **horizontal ruler** just above the page. **Drag** the lower triangle **halfway to the number 1**, keeping the upper marker at the margin.



For more information, consult the *MLA Handbook* or contact the Academic Skills Centre.