MLA Style Paper

Formatting the paper
The following MLA recommendations have been endorsed by most English instructors.

MATERIALS
Use good-quality 8½" x 11" white paper. Secure the pages with a paper clip. Unless your instructor suggests otherwise, do not staple or bind the pages.

TITLE AND IDENTIFICATION
MLA does not require a title page. On the first page of your paper, place your name, your instructor's name, the course title, and the date on separate lines against the left margin. Then center your title. (See the first page of the MLA sample paper.)

PAGINATION
Put the page number preceded by your last name in the upper right corner of each page, one-half inch below the top edge. Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, and so on).

MARGINS, LINE SPACING, AND PARAGRAPH INDENTS
Leave margins of **one inch on all sides of the page**. Do not justify (align) the right margin.

Double-space throughout the paper. Do not add extra lines of space above or below the title of the paper or between paragraphs.

Indent the first line of each paragraph one-half inch (or five spaces) from the left margin.

LONG QUOTATIONS
When a quoted passage takes up more than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse in your paper, set it off from the text by indenting the entire quotation one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin. Double-space the indented quotation, and don't add extra space above or below it. Quotation marks are not needed when a quotation has been set off from the text by indenting.

WEB ADDRESSES
When a Web address mentioned in the text of your paper must be divided at the end of a line, do not insert a hyphen (a hyphen could appear to be part of the address).

HEADINGS
MLA neither encourages nor discourages the use of headings and currently provides no guidelines for their use. If you would like to insert headings in a long essay or research paper, check first with your instructor. Although headings are not used as frequently in English and the humanities as in other disciplines, the trend seems to be changing.

Preparing the List of Works Cited

Begin the list of works cited on a new page at the end of the paper. Center the title Works Cited about one inch from the top of the page. Double-space throughout.

INDENTING
Do not indent the first line of each works cited entry, but indent any additional lines one-half inch (or five spaces). This technique highlights the names of the authors, making it easy for readers to scan the alphabetized list.

WEB ADDRESSES
Do not insert a hyphen when dividing a Web address at the end of a line. Break the line after a slash. Also, insert angle brackets around the URL.