Basic MLA Formatting and Documentation

MLA Formatting Basics

- MLA papers have a header in the upper right hand corner with the writer’s last name followed by the page number
- Page numbering begins on the first page
- Papers should be in Times New Roman, sized 12pt font
- The whole paper should be double-spaced
- The list of sources is called Works Cited
  - Sources are listed alphabetically, by the last name of the first author listed on the source, on the Works Cited page
- Sources will utilize a hanging, a.k.a. a reverse, indent and are double-spaced

Page Headers

- To insert an MLA-style page header, open a new document in Word, and click the Insert tab at the top
- Then, open the Page Number drop-down menu, and select the option that is aligned to the right at the top of the page (Plain Number 3); this will insert the page number
- Next, click before the page number in the header, type your last name, and then hit space
- Close the header by double-clicking on the body of the document

Title

- Title pages are NOT required for MLA
- MLA requires that the student’s name, the instructor’s name, the course number and the due date be double-spaced in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of text, as shown in the sample on the right
- The header should be the writer’s last name followed by the page number
- The title of the paper is centered above the introduction

Hanging Indentations

- To apply a hanging indent to a Works Cited page, list all sources first
- After all sources have been listed, highlight the list of sources
- Open the Paragraph menu on the Home tab
- On the next screen, select Hanging from the Special drop-down menu; then, click OK

Citing Sources

Quoted and Paraphrased Material

Author is not introduced in the text:
“As the industrial base of the Northeast and Midwest has declined, millions of Americans have
According to Brush, “[a]s the industrial base of the Northeast and Midwest has declined, millions of Americans have moved to the South and the West, now home to more than half the population—and growing strong” (48).

Author is introduced in the text:

If a source has two authors:
(Smith and Jones 42).

If a source has three (or more authors):
(Smith, Jones and Johnson 64).

Works Cited Entries

Books

Author’s last name, first name. Title of Book. City, ST: Publisher, year.


Journal Articles


Articles from Websites

Author’s last name, first name. “Title of Article.” Name of Website. Date of Article. Web. Retrieval Date.