

Student McStudentpants

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Honors American Literature

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Center Title, Do Not Bold or Underline

Created by Kirby Rideout of Collin County College, this is a template for formatting a research paper in MLA format. The paper has one-inch margins all around. Each page has a header of last name and page number. The paper will be double-spaced throughout, no extra space between sections or paragraphs. The entire paper, including the heading and title, needs to be in the same type and size of font. This template uses Times New Roman 12pt font. Because it is easy to read, this font is definitely appropriate for college essays. Make sure that the essay is left aligned, not fully justified. One space between sentences is standard; however, double-spacing between sentences is okay. Follow your instructor's preference in spacing and be consistent. Hit the enter key only once at the end of each paragraph.

In the MLA format, you document your research in parenthetical citations. This allows you to “acknowledge your sources by keying brief parenthetical citations in your text to an alphabetical list of works that appears at the end of the paper” (Gibaldi 142). Notice that in this brief citation the period goes after the parenthesis. The information in parenthesis should be as brief as possible. You will use the author's last name or a shortened title for unsigned works. If you used the key information (author's last name or the title of an unsigned work) in your text, do not repeat it in the parenthesis. Gibaldi explains:

The information in your parenthetical references in the text must match the corresponding information in the entries in your list of works cited. For a typical

works-cited-list entry, which begins with the name of the author (or editor, translator, or narrator), the parenthetical reference begins with the same name. . . .

If the work is listed by title, use the title, shortened or in full. . . . (238-239)

Notice how the long quote was set off by an extra one-inch margin rather than quotations marks, and in this case, the period goes before the parenthetical citation. Chapters 5 and 6 of the MLA Handbook give more information on works cited and parenthetical citation.

After the last paragraph in an MLA style essay, force the document to begin a new page for the Works Cited page. The Works Cited page will still have the one-inch margins all the way around and have the heading of last name and page number. This page will also be double-spaced throughout with no extra space between entries. Items in a Works Cited page will be alphabetized by the first word of each entry (author's last name or title of work). Each entry will use a hanging indent, in which lines after the first indent half an inch. Because the URLs in a Works Cited page are not underlined, remove the hyperlinks so that URLs will be formatted correctly. To do this, right click on the hyperlink and select remove hyperlink. The sample Works Cited page that follows has the entry for the MLA Handbook and then templates for some of the most common types of sources used. For more information, refer to chapters 5 and 6 of the MLA Handbook, Bedford/St. Martin's guide to using internet sources (<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite5.html>), and Purdue University's Online Writing Lab ([http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_mla.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html)).

Works Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.

Lastname, Firstname. Title of the Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

Lastname, Firstname. "Title of the Article." Name of the Scholarly Journal Volume.Issue (Date): first page-last page.

Lastname, Firstname. "Title of the Newspaper Article." Title of the Newspaper Date, edition: SectionPageNumber+.

"The Title of the Article." Title of Magazine Date: page number. Name of the Library Database: Name of the Service. Name of the library with city, state abbreviation. Date of access <URL>.