General MLA essay guidelines:

1. Double-space the whole document, including heading, quotations, and the Works Cited page. There should be no greater or fewer than one extra space between any line.

2. Use one-inch margins all around.

3. Use a running header: on each page in the upper right corner should appear your last name and the page number. MS Word helps insert running headers.

4. Print black ink on white 8.5 x 11 paper.

5. Use no cover sheet. Instead, in the upper left corner of page 1, provide your name, your instructor’s name, course number, assignment number, and essay due date.

6. Below that header, center the essay title. Do not underline the title, do not put it in quotation marks, and do not type it in capital letters.

In-text citations: MLA format requires in-text, parenthetical citations of sources. The Modern Language Association of America instructs writers to “insert a brief parenthetical acknowledgement in your paper wherever you incorporate another’s words, facts, or ideas” (214)—as exemplified here.

Works Cited page: MLA format requires, at the end of the essay, a list of sources actually cited (quoted or paraphrased), not a list of works consulted. Begin this list at the top of a new page, number its pages sequentially with the remainder of the essay, and double-space it. The centered title for this page is Works Cited. List entries alphabetically, and use a hanging indentation for each entry.

Sample entries: Here are sample entries for frequently used types of sources. For further help, consult the MLA Handbook or Hacker.

Important changes:
- No more underlining—italicize instead
- Include the medium of publication—Print, Web, DVD, Lecture, PDF file, etc—for every entry
- URLs are no longer required. Use only if reader will have trouble locating the source without it. (Use angle brackets<> to surround URLs)
- The location of a database (library name) is no longer required

Book—single author/editor [Author. Book title: Subtitle. City of publication: Publisher, publication date. Medium.]


Book—two or three authors/editors

Work in an Anthology/Collection [Author (of work). “Title.” Anthology title. Ed. editor’s name. City of publication: Publisher, publication date. Page(s) on which the select work appears. Medium.]


Journal or Magazine Article (From an Online Database)—E-SOURCE [Author. “Title of Article.” Journal Volume.issue (year): pages. Medium. Database. Date accessed.]


Article in a Newspaper [Author. “Title.” Newspaper day Mon. year, edition: page(s). Medium. Date Accessed—online sources only]


Article in a Newspaper—E-SOURCE

Magazine Article [Author. “Title.” Magazine day Mon. year: page(s). Medium. Date accessed—online sources only.]


Newsmagazine Article—E-SOURCE