

Your Name

Instructor's Name

Course Number

Date

How to Format an MLA Paper

Formatting a paper in MLA is probably what you are most familiar with from high school. It is used primarily in the liberal arts and is geared more toward student academic writing than scientific writing. If you are in a science, psychology, or nursing class be certain that your teacher wants MLA. Those courses tend to use [APA](#) instead.

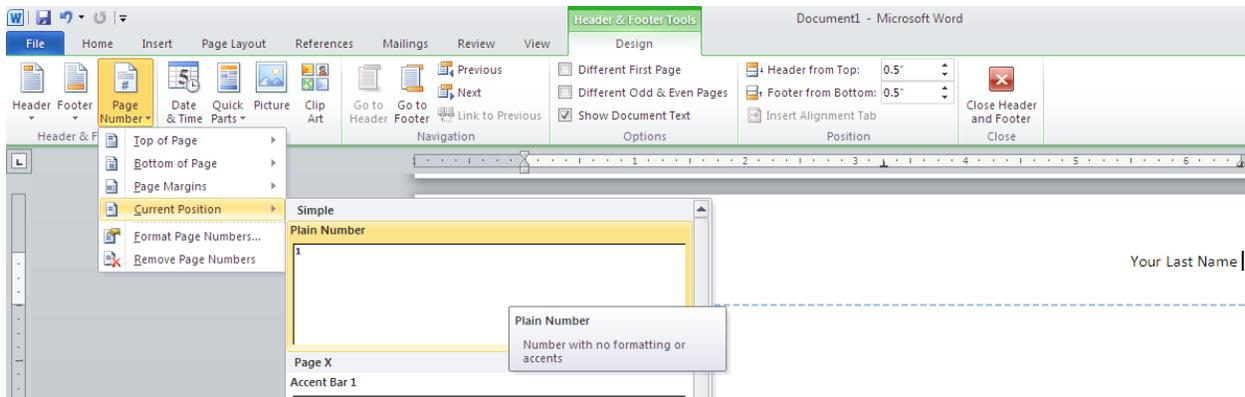
The first thing we're going to look at is general setup of the page. Your margins should be set at 1" all around. The entire paper from your name to the last entry on your works cited page should be double spaced. Finally, the body paragraphs should be aligned to the left margin, or left justified, with a .5" indent at the beginning of each new paragraph. If you are unsure how to do any of those things, please check out [How to Use Word to Format a Paper](#).

Header

Next let's look at the header. MLA has very simple requirements for the header: your last name followed by the page number set against the right margin. If you do not have a word processor that can create a header automatically, it should be half an inch from the top of the page. In Word, open your header. This can be done either by double clicking in the topmost part of the page or by going to the Insert tab, clicking Header, and choosing Blank. Make sure that it is aligned right and type your last name. Next you're going to place the page number. It is important to choose the correct one, because several page numbers will delete anything in the header when they are placed. What you want is the one labeled Current Position, then Plain

Number. This will put the page number where your cursor is with no lines or fancy markings.

And that's all. You can close your header now.



First Page

The next thing we're going to look at is the first page. MLA doesn't require any type of cover page. If your teacher asks for one, follow his/her instructions regarding formatting. What MLA uses instead is the first four lines of the paper. With only one on each line (and double spacing between them), you will provide your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date in that order. Immediately beneath that is the title of the paper, centered, without bolding or italics. The only exceptions would be words you would normally italicize, such as book or movie titles. There no need to have punctuation at the end unless the title is in the form of a question.

And there you have it! You can now begin your paper. One last thing, though this tutorial used headings, MLA generally does not use them inside the body of the paper. Avoid using them unless absolutely necessary.