

# A guide to formatting your paper

## Why MLA?

The short answer: Your professor chose it.

The long answer: MLA format is likely the default format of any upper academic essay. Aside from the sciences, MLA format serves as a useful format to cover a range of subjects. It features the key elements within its format that make essays easier to read and information easier to find.

## Before you begin writing:

Microsoft Word is user friendly. Be sure to follow these steps **before** you begin writing the content of your essay. Attempting to format your essay after writing it can result in inconsistent and therefore incorrect formatting.

\*If your essay has already been typed out, make sure to highlight all of the text, header included, and follow the steps for general formatting below.

**Disclaimer:** This guide is formatted to Microsoft Word 2013. Newer or older versions of Microsoft Word will have the same or similar formatting options, but they may not appear in the same places described or shown in this guide.

## General Formatting:

Click the File tab on the left hand side to form a new document.

Click the Font tab at the top of the page.

Click the drop down arrow of the font box and

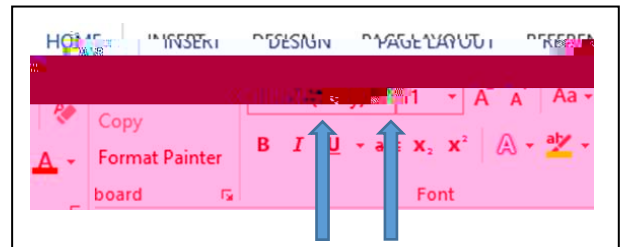


Figure 1

Figure 2.

This can also be achieved by right clicking anywhere on the document and selecting

Font and a window appears

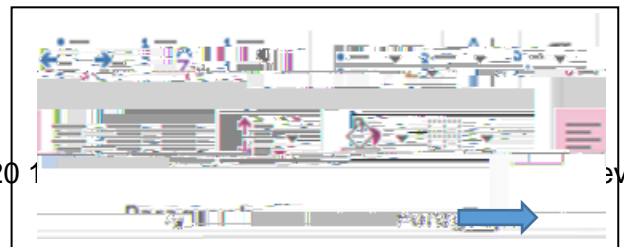


Figure 2

Underneath that, checkmark the box next to 'Apply to previous paragraph' between paragraphs of the same style. Checkmark and not a filled in black box. See

Figure 3.

Click the top-left corner of the page, or press Enter.

Your margins should be aligned correctly automatically, but to check and make sure, click the top-left corner of the page.

On the left side, click the top-left corner of the page.

1" means there is 1 inch on the top, bottom, left, and right margins.

bottom of the list.

Top, Bottom, Left, and Right boxes.

Click the top-left corner of the page, or press Enter.

### The Heading:

Your cursor should be aligned to the upper left hand side.

First, type your first and last name.

Press Enter.

Type the name of your instructor with the prefix Mr., or Ms.

Press Enter.

Type the title of the course the essay is for with the class number if applicable.

Press Enter.

Type the date the assignment is due in the format Day Month Year.

Press Enter.

See *Figure 4* for an example heading.

### The Title:

Your cursor



Select the left aligned line icon to return the cursor to the left side.

Type or copy/paste your first citation into the paper.

Once your citation(s) have been typed, highlight *all* the citations. Do *not* highlight the Works Cited heading.

Access the Paragraph window by either clicking the arrow icon on the dashboard or right-clicking the text.

Click the drop-down arrow of the box under the Paragraph window.

Select the left aligned line icon.

Click the OK button in the Paragraph window or press Enter.

Congrats! This was the last step. You made it.