Modern Language Association (MLA) Paper Checklist for College Writers

The *MLA Handbook, Eighth Edition* provides guidelines for formatting papers in English, Literature, Humanities, as well as other disciplines. This self-editing checklist can be used by students to ensure that their papers meet MLA standards. This checklist can also serve as a guide for proofreading and editing MLA formatted papers, which will ultimately facilitate the development of students’ future writing, proofreading, and editing skills.

**Basic Formatting**

- □ Have you used the font Times New Roman or a similar font for the entire paper? NOTE: If you are unsure of the font guideline for the assignment, it is recommended that you review the assignment guidelines or contact your instructor.
- □ Is your font size set at 12 point for the whole document, including the title and Work Cited page?
- □ Are the margins one inch on the sides, top, and bottom of the paper?
- □ Has your line spacing been set to double spacing (2.0)?
- □ Did you check to ensure that there is only one double space between the title and the introductory paragraph and only one double space between each of the following paragraphs?
- □ Has the space after the paragraph been removed from the entire document? (See the Academic Center for Excellence’s handouts *MLA Formatting in Word 2010*, *MLA Formatting in Word for Macs*, and *Formatting an Academic Paper in Google Docs* for additional information on formatting line spacing)

**Header**

- □ Are your last name and the page number included in the header?
- □ Are your last name and the page number aligned to the right?
- □ Have you inserted the page number?
Has the font of your last name and the page number been changed to the font required by your instructor? NOTE: Microsoft Word uses the default font Calibri in the header unless the default setting has been adjusted by the user.

Has the font size of your last name and the page number been adjusted to 12 point? NOTE: Microsoft Word uses the default font size 11 point unless the default setting has been adjusted by the user.

First Page Heading
- Do your name, the instructor’s name, the course title, and the date appear at the top left of the first page?
- Is your date in the correct MLA format? EXAMPLE: 23 May 2014

Title and Body
- Is your title centered below the first page heading and above the introductory paragraph, with no unnecessary bolding or underlining?
- Is the first line of each of the paragraphs in your paper indented half an inch?

In-text Citations
- Are you using parenthetical citations? For examples, see the Academic Center for Excellence’s handout MLA Format.
- Are all quotes and paraphrases from external sources properly cited in-text?
- Are citations correctly formatted in MLA style? To view examples, refer to the Academic Center for Excellence’s handout MLA Format.
- Do your citations occur after the quotation marks and before the period?

Block Quotations
- Have you used a quote that is more than four lines or longer in the paper? (If YES, continue with this section. If NO, proceed to the Works Cited section.)
- Did you begin on a new line before starting the text of the block quote?
- Are all the lines in the block quote indented half an inch?
√ Did you omit the quotation marks from your block quote?
√ Does the citation for the block quote come after the period?
√ Is there a double space between the end of the block quote and the next line of text?

Works Cited
√ Does the Works Cited page begin on a new page?
√ Is the title “Works Cited” centered at the top of the page?
√ Are all of the sources used in your paper included on the Works Cited page?
√ Are all of the citations in alphabetical order?
√ Do all of the citations include a hanging indent?
√ Is each citation double spaced?
√ Is there a double space between each citation?
√ Is each citation correctly formatted in MLA style according to the type of source cited? (See Academic Center for Excellence’s handout MLA Format for more information on formatting sources.)
√ Are the dates for each citation correctly formatted? EXAMPLE: 23 May 2016

For further information about the MLA style, take a look at the Academic Center for Excellence’s handouts MLA Format, MLA Formatting in Word 2010, MLA Formatting in Word for Mac, MLA Sample Paper, and Formatting an Academic Paper in Google Docs.

There are also numerous MLA online resources available in the Germanna Academic Center for Excellence’s website’s Writing Center section.

Additionally, Academic Center for Excellence offers MLA information in on-campus workshops, online workshops, and online webinars. Contact Academic Center for Excellence’s Locust Grove center at (540) 423-9148, the Fredericksburg center at (540) 891-3017, or the Barbara J. Fried Center at (540) 834-1993 for further information about on-campus workshop
and webinar scheduling, or check out the on-campus workshop schedule on the Academic Center for Excellence’s website to view the dates and times for scheduled on-campus workshops.