

MLA Formating Guide with Attention to Quotations  
(Owl Purdue, 2020)

### General Guidelines

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space the text of your paper and use a legible font (e.g. Times New Roman). Whatever font you choose, MLA recommends that the regular and italics type styles contrast enough that they are each distinct from one another. The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise prompted by your instructor).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Indent the first line of each paragraph one half-inch from the left margin. MLA recommends that you use the “Tab” key as opposed to pushing the space bar five times.
- Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines.)
- Use italics throughout your essay to indicate the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, provide emphasis.
- If you have any endnotes, include them on a separate page before your Works Cited page. Entitle the section Notes (centered, unformatted).

### Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks. Write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text. For example: *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as Morality Play; Human Weariness in "After Apple Picking"
- Double space between the title and the first line of the text.

## Short quotations

To indicate short quotations (four typed lines or fewer of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks. Provide the author and specific page number (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the in-text citation, and include a complete reference on the Works Cited page. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation.

Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage, but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text.

For example, when quoting short passages of prose, use the following examples:

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

## Long quotations

For quotations that are more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse, place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented ½ **inch** from the left margin while maintaining double-spacing. Your parenthetical citation should come **after the closing punctuation mark**. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.)

For example, when citing more than four lines of prose, use the following examples:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)