

# Guidelines for Formatting Your Paper in MLA

This resource is an abridged version of the document cited.

## General Guidelines

- Use standard white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space your text.
- Use standard, easy to read, 12 point font such as Times Roman or Arial.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- Set margins to 1 inch on all sides.
- Indent the first line of a paragraph one half-inch.
- 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.
- Use italics throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis. Underline titles only when hand writing an essay.

## Formatting the First Page of Your Paper (see example on the back of this sheet)

- A title page is **not** necessary—use only if your instructor has requested one.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the **first** page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Double space again and center the title. **Don't underline your title or put it in quotation marks**
- Use quotation marks and italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text, e.g.,
  - *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.
- Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. **(Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit last name/page number header on your first page. Always follow their guidelines.)**

(Perdue OWL).

## Sample: First Page of an Essay in MLA Style

Smith 1
Pete Smith
Dr. B. Boilermaker
English 106
12 October 2008
Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand
Ross-Ade Stadium
During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten Conference Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years, and played every game in front of a sold-out crowd. Looking ahead . . .

(Purdue OWL)

### Works Cited

Purdue OWL. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 10 May 2008. Web. 15 Aug. 2009.  
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>>.