

The MLA Style

A Guide for Formatting Your Essay/Paper

FORMATTING YOUR WORD DOCUMENT:

When you open your word processor, the first thing you should do is format your document.

- **FONT:** For my class, you are required to write in 12-point, Times New Roman font.
- **SPACING:** You will need to set your document to double spacing. You also need to “Remove Space After Paragraph” in the line spacing options.
- **HEADER:** You will need to set your header to include your last name and the page number justified to the right of the page. Click “Insert” and select “Page Number.” You want to use “Plain Style 3” and then type your name.
- **MLA Heading:** Your Name, My Name, Course and Period, Date in MLA Format
- **TITLE:** Every essay or paper you write should have a title. This is your chance to influence your audience (that would be me) before she begins to read (or grade) your paper. Titles should be creative and *not* boring or generic.
- **BEGIN TYPING:** You do not need to enter any extra spaces. You should only hit “Return” once every time you start a new paragraph. Each paragraph should be indented.
- **PARENTHETICAL CITATION:** Each time you use a source (whether directly quoted or paraphrased), you must make a parenthetical citation to note that the ideas expressed come from an outside source (that is, outside of your head). You do this by putting the author’s name and page number in parentheses at the end of the citation. Example: (Lamont 6) Failure to provide proper citation is PLAGIARISM.

Green 1

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The Influence of a Powerful Queen in Shakespeare’s Comedies

Queen Elizabeth I of England is one of the most fascinating characters in British history.

The Golden Age of her reign coincides with the English Renaissance and the careers of great English playwrights William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Johnson. Shakespeare’s use of the powerful woman in his comedies is reflective of his powerful Queen. In *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, the presence of the strong woman and the ways with which she is dealt by the men around her is influenced by the life of Queen Elizabeth, the relationship she held with her court, and the political and social issues which encompassed her reign.

FORMATTING QUOTATIONS

SHORT QUOTATIONS

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, 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," though others disagree (Foulkes 184).

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

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

LONG QUOTATIONS

For quotations that extend to more than four lines of verse or three lines of prose, 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 **one inch** from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by an additional quarter inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. 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)

When citing two or more paragraphs, use block quotation format, even if the passage from the paragraphs is less than four lines. Indent the first line of each quoted paragraph an extra quarter inch.

In "American Origins of the Writing-across-the-Curriculum Movement," David Russell argues:

Writing has been an issue in American secondary and higher education since papers and examinations came into wide use in the 1870s, eventually driving out formal recitation and oral examination. . . .

From its birth in the late nineteenth century, progressive education has wrestled with the conflict within industrial society between pressure to increase specialization of knowledge and of professional work (upholding disciplinary standards) and pressure to integrate more fully an ever-widening number of citizens into intellectually meaningful activity within mass society (promoting social equity). . . . (3)

ADDING OR OMITTING WORDS IN QUOTATIONS

If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states, "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or words by using ellipsis marks, which are three periods (. . .) preceded and followed by a space. For example:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale . . . and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

***Please note that brackets are not needed around ellipses unless adding brackets would clarify your use of ellipses.

FINAL NOTE

You **MUST** include both direct quotation and paraphrasing from your sources and all information that comes from your sources must be properly cited (with parenthetical citation).

HOWEVER, remember the **70/30 RULE** for Research Papers. Only 30% of your research paper may be directly quoted from outside sources. The other 70% should be your own original observations written **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. The purpose of a research paper is not to merely regurgitate information from your sources. You are to **SYNTHESIZE** the information and **ANALYZE** what you have learned. This is a complex process that requires you to use your own knowledge. There is no short cut, no substitute for quality research. Poor efforts receive poor grades.