

MLA Tips: Rules of MLA

When writing a paper, it's important that readers know where to find certain information, such as your name and the title of the paper. To make sure that important information is easy to find, writers will format papers in a certain **style**, which is a group of rules that state how a paper should look and how to order of that information, called **elements**, on the page. The **Modern Language Association (MLA) style** is one of the most common styles used in high schools and colleges.

Major Parts of an MLA Paper

There are three major parts of MLA formatting:

- **General formatting:** These are the rules about how the paper looks on the page, including the font, how much space is between the lines, and the margins.
- **Heading:** This is where information like your name, your teacher's name, the class, and date goes.
- **Formatting the title and paragraph indents:** The **title** is the name you give your paper. It should be centered under the heading. There first line of each paragraph starts slightly further in-line than the rest of the paragraph, which is called an **indent**.

General Formatting Rules

There are several elements of general MLA formatting:

Element	What it is	MLA's rules
Font Face	How the text looks	Times New Roman
Font size	How big or small the letters are	12
Spacing	How much space is between the lines	Double-space
Margins	How much empty (white) space is on the edges of your paper	One-inch on each side
Heading	Where you put information about you, your teacher, and the assignment	Placed in the top-left corner on the first page of the paper. It has four parts in the following order: your name, your teacher's name, the name of the class, and the date.
Title	The name of your paper	Centered on the first line of the body of your paper (the first line after the heading.)
Indents	The space at the beginning of a line to show that a new paragraph has started	Five spaces from the margin. <i>The easiest way to indent is to press "tab" on your keyboard.</i>

For step-by-step instructions, view the following MLA Tips guides: [Setting up General Formatting for MLA](#), [Formatting Your Heading in MLA](#), and [Formatting the Title and Indenting Paragraphs for Your MLA Paper](#).