

Steps for creating an MLA Formatted Research Paper

Basic MLA Page Formatting

There are 4 different MLA page types. The four page types are:

- Title Page
- Outline Page
- Report Page
- Works Cited Page

Some important notes about the different page types are:

- The Report page type and the Works Cited are required components of an MLA Research paper.
- The Title Page and Outline Page are optional depending on the wishes of the teacher assigning the paper. When a teacher assigns a Research Paper instructions should be provided to the students concerning whether to include a Title Page and Outline Page.

When using Microsoft Word to create these documents, each of the different page types share a common set of Word features, page formatting and text formatting, including:

- Word Toolbar set up
- Page Layout and Orientation
- Margins
- Spacing
- Font attributes

The “Basic MLA Page Formatting” module reviews the Word features and the common formatting shared by all the different MLA page types. Learn this setup once, create a separate file which contains all of the basic formatting and you can use it to set up all the other MLA page types.

START OF INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The assumption in all of the MLA Instruction weblets is that the templates we create will be stored in the “My Documents\Research Papers\MLA Templates” folder. If you are going to follow along, you should create these directories before proceeding or remember what local directory you are using for this purpose and substitute it each time we reference this folder. You can put this video on hold now, create the folders and then restart the video when ready
2. To get started, Open a new blank Word Document
3. We are going to use Word Toolbars during this exercise, so the next step is to verify that we are all looking at the same toolbars. There are only three toolbars necessary for creating all four MLA Page types.
4. To set up those toolbars, select View then select Toolbars and then verify that the “Standard”, “Formatting” and “Outline” Toolbars are checked. These three toolbars should be viewable while creating the MLA document. If you already have a checkmark by any of these, you do not need to select it again.
5. These toolbars are productivity aides. They have many of the features of Word necessary for creation of this type of document. Without the toolbars you would need to click on one of the Word Menu items and then select the action you wish to perform. With the toolbars you just select the action with one click.
6. When these toolbars are initially selected they will appear at the top of the Word Window in the order they appear on the Toolbar list. The Standard Toolbar will be at the top, the formatting Tool bar will be on the second row and the outline toolbar will be on the third row, when only these three toolbars are checked.
7. Buttons and dropdowns on a toolbar all have a toolbar “Tip” associated with them. A toolbar tip helps users figure out what the button or dropdown is for. To see the tip, move your mouse over the toolbar button or dropdown and wait for the tip to appear. In this example, I’ve moved my mouse over the Formatting Toolbar, Font dropdown. The word “Font” appears.
8. Another Word feature which is useful while creating an MLA research paper is to view the file in “Page Layout Mode”. The page layout mode allows you to see the document as it will look when it is printed. It is called a “What you see is what you get” mode.
9. To set up Page Layout, select view, then select Page Layout.

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10. We've completed setting up our Word features and we are ready now to set up the basic required MLA page and text formatting.
11. Margins in MLA documents 1 inch on top, bottom and both sides. To set this up in Word, select File, then Page Setup.
12. A "page setup" popup window will appear. There are three tabs on the page setup popup window. Select the "Margins" tab. On the Margins tab verify or change the left, right, bottom and top margins to be 1 inch.
13. While on the page setup popup, verify that the page orientation is Portrait by selecting Portrait.
14. The standard font style, name and size is Normal, Times, and 12. To use a standard font, on the Formatting Toolbar select
 - "Normal" for font style
 - "Times" for name of the font
 - "12" for font size
15. All pages of an MLA Documents are double spaced. To set up the document for double spacing, on the Formatting Toolbar select
 - Click on the "Line Spacing" drop down button and select the double space list item
16. Because all of the formatting which you just applied to the document is common to all the different MLA page types, it is a good idea to save this as a separate document and use it as a starting point for all the documents. Click on "File -> Save As".
17. In the "Save In" drop down, select "My Documents/Research Papers/MLA Template"
18. In the "File Name" type "MLA Basic Page Format.doc"
19. Now that you have the basic page format, you can select the instruction weblet for any of the MLA page types. The instructions for creating those pages will start with the "MLA Basic Page Format.doc".

Good-Luck creating your MLA Research Paper.