

Your Name

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Quick Reference for Formatting, Etc.

*NOTE: this document is only designed to answer the most **basic** MLA and formatting questions. You have plentiful resources for learning the more complex rules and procedures.

- 1). Always use 12-point Times New Roman font.
- 2). Always double-space your work unless otherwise noted.
- 3). Always include your name, the course, the instructor's name, the date, and the name of the assignment at the top left hand corner. The same MLA rules apply to this header (MLA has a special format for writing dates—see example above).
- 4). Always indent the first line of a new paragraph by tapping the “tab” button once.
- 5). There is no need to use all caps or bold or italics or any other signifiers for the title of a paper. See my example above; you also need not bother with a cover page or a cover sheet or glitter or elbow macaroni.
- 6). Always include a header with your last name and the page number at the top right-hand side of each page.
 - Using the older version of Microsoft Word, click *View*, then click *header and footer*. In the toolbox that pops up, type your last name, hit the space bar 3 times, then select the “insert page number” function. Finally, put the cursor in front of your last name, hit tab until the tag is justified to the right, and you are done.
 - Using Vista-era MS Word (ughhh..), click the *Insert* tab, then drag down the *page number* menu, then drag open the options for *top of page*. Select *plain number 3*, and add your last name so that it precedes the page number.
- *NOTE*: with this newer version, you will have to manually change the font for this header. Once you've added your last name, highlight your last name and page number, click the *home* tab and switch the font back to Times.
- 7). The titles of films should be *italicized*, should you ever need to reference a film.

8). The titles of novels, plays, books, music albums, and anthologies should be *italicized*.
Ex: *The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy.

9). The titles of songs, poems, short stories, and journal articles are always placed in quotation marks. Ex: "Sailing to Byzantium"

10). In most cases, an in-text citation should include the author's last name and the page number from whence the information came; both elements should be enclosed in parenthesis. Note that the sentence's period should fall **after** the parenthesis in the first example. In the second example, the citation occurs at the end of the sentence to indicate that both "terrorist sympathies" and " _____ " have been quoted from pg. 4.

Ex: Some critics suggest that the novel promotes "terrorist sympathies" (Johnson 4).

Ex: Some critics suggest that the novel promotes "quietist sympathies." As Johnson points out, such critics have dismissed the possibility that " _____ " (Johnson 4).

11). Avoid contractions. Contractions are combined phrases such as don't, can't, shouldn't, etc.

12). Spell out numbers that can be written in one or two words. For example, it is practical to write out one hundred, but not as practical to write out 2 ½.

13). In their infinite wisdom, the folks at Microsoft have added a few irritating defaults to their newer Word program. If you find that your papers end up with odd gaps between paragraphs that you have not intended to add, here's how to remove them: highlight and right-click the text in question. Select "paragraph," then check the box that reads "don't add space between paragraphs." You may also want to make sure the "special indentation" box is set to "none."

14). It is usually best to avoid passive voice constructions. Such constructions obscure the agency or action within a sentence.

Ex: *Slaughterhouse-Five* is considered an anti-war novel.

Prufrock is portrayed as a character who _____.

In the novel, women are often subjugated.

Each example demonstrates an obfuscation of agency or action. Who/what considers? Who/what portrays? Who/what subjugates?

15). Write about texts in the present tense.

Ex: In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy Pilgrim ~~survived~~ the firebombing of Dresden.

Fixed: In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy Pilgrim survives the firebombing of Dresden.

16). Spell-checker software will not catch as many errors as you might think. I know you probably will not believe me, so let me reiterate: spell-checkers will not catch as many errors as you think. Find a trustworthy friend with strong enough grammatical skills to help you proofread, or better yet, visit the UWF Writing Lab. Extensive proofreading is the most important tip for producing strong writing.