

John Smith (Your name)

Instructor Merk (The name of your instructor or professor)

ENG 121 (the name of the class)

3 October 2016 (date, written in this format: military style)

Title of Essay (Centered, same size font)

All essays written in MLA format need to include the information above and should be typed, double spaced, with 12 point, Times New Roman font. Make sure to not have an extra space between paragraphs, which is something that must be changed in the settings; otherwise, Microsoft Word will automatically put extra spaces between paragraphs. To make this change, click on the “Paragraph” drop arrow, check the box that reads “don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style,” and make sure the spacing before and after boxes are set to zero. Lastly, all margins of the essay should be one inch, which is the default setting for Microsoft Word.

MLA format requires that all sources be cited both within the text and on a works cited page that should appear at the end of the essay. Sources include quotations, opinions, paraphrases, and often other forms of information that originate from another source. In-text citations require author last name, if available, and page number, if source includes one. If no author name can be found (this is sometimes the case with internet sources), the title of the source needs to be included in the text. This information can either be placed in the sentence itself, or in parentheses after the information is given like this: (Merk 42). When the information is placed in parentheses, it is called a parenthetical citation. Page numbers should always be cited parenthetically.

The first paragraph of every essay should introduce the topic and tone of the essay. The

opening paragraph should capture the reader's interest and slowly narrow the topic down to the thesis statement, which is the most important part of any introductory paragraph. The thesis statement should occur towards the end of the introduction in most essays.

Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence. This will be followed by several supporting sentences that provide facts and evidence to support the claim made in the topic sentence. Remember that academic essays are written differently than other types of writing like novels and newspaper articles; therefore, body paragraphs in academic essays will consist of multiple sentences. The purpose of the paragraph is to provide one main point related to the thesis and then explain and support it. Thus, the best paragraphs in short essays will consist of between six and twelve sentences. Most essays should have approximately two or three paragraphs per page.

The final paragraph in every essay should contain a conclusion. A concluding paragraph is important because it shows the reader exactly how all of the points made in the paper fit together to support the thesis. Think of the concluding paragraph as a math problem. Point one plus point two plus point three equals the thesis. Concluding paragraphs should bring the paper to a satisfactory end and should not introduce new points. The thesis should be restated; important info can be restated as well, but it is important to not just repeat. Additionally, well-written concluding paragraphs will emphasize why the information is important and will re-connect to the beginning and/or the examples/evidence from the body paragraphs.