



Tips for correctly formatting a research paper in MS Word

MLA and APA guidelines call for:

- one-inch margins all around;
- double spaced lines throughout;
- uniform typeface and point size (recommended: Times New Roman, point size 12);
- page headers with numbered pages;
- hanging indents for the Works Cited/References page;
- Works Cited (MLA)/References (APA) starting at the top of a separate page.

Follow these paths to format your paper. Most of these settings should be selected before you begin typing. To change settings for text you have already typed, highlight the affected text before you choose the settings.

Margins – To set margins, File → Page Setup → Margins, then scroll through the settings for left and right margins to set them at one inch.

Double Spacing – To double space your paper, Format → Paragraph → find the Spacing section → Line Spacing menu → choose Double. For a long quotation (4 lines or more) within the body of your paper, highlight the quotation and follow the same path to single space the quotation.

Font – To choose Times New Roman size 12, use the standard toolbar visible at the top of your window. If the toolbar is not visible, Format → Font → make your selections.

To maintain the recommended style, you must remove the underlining from URLs and change the color to black. Highlight the URL and go to Format → Font → Font color → Automatic and Underline style → None.

Header – To create page headers*, View → Header & Footer → in the header frame, type your last name (for MLA style) or the short title of your paper (for APA style) then click once on the number symbol (pound sign) in the floating toolbar. In the standard toolbar, click on the “Align right” icon, then close the floating toolbar.

*If you are asked to suppress the header on the first page, complete the instructions for creating page headers, then Insert → Page Numbers → find the phrase “Show number on first page” and uncheck the box in front of the phrase.

Indents – To create hanging indents, type your citations entering only one hard return (pressing the Enter key) at the end of each citation, then highlight your list of citations, go to Format → Paragraph → find Indentation section → Special menu → choose Hanging.

Page Break – To start a new separate page, place your cursor immediately in front of the word References (for APA style) or the phrase Works Cited (for MLA style), then go to Insert → Break → Page break.