

# MLA General Format

## Style and Formatting Guide for Academic Papers

Most professors expect that the layout or format for your written assignments will be clear, concise, and consistent. We recommend that you consult your course syllabus or professor for the format preferred or required in your course. If no format guidelines are specified or available, the following information provides one basic document format, abridged from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (2009), published by the Modern Language Association.

### Margins (4.1)

All margins – top, bottom, left, and right – should be set to one inch.

### Heading (4.3)

The heading is double-spaced and contains your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date. It should be flush with the left margin and begin 1" from the top of the page.

### Spacing (4.2)

The paper is double spaced throughout, including all quotations, any notes, and the Works Cited page.

Note: MLA style does not require a title page, but instructors may require that their students include them.

Jane Doe  
Dr. Smith  
EN 242-50  
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*Media Representations in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye**

In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the childhood experience of young, black girls is drastically contrasted with the model childhoods of their white peers. Through references to popular culture of the 1940s, Morrison shows the effect that the whitewashing of media has on the impressionable minds of children growing up in a culture dominated by racial stereotyping and segregation – especially children, such as Claudia, Frieda, and Pecola, who, in search of acceptance, look to the media for physical representations of innocence. Thus, the media is personified as a silent character throughout the novel; though not human, its presence saturates Morrison's plot and haunts the lives of the young girls who reflect their own images against the unattainable and unrealistic perfection it portrays.

Before readers are introduced to the characters in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison introduces them to the popular culture in which these characters are immersed, framing the story with the national perception of the white experience, the idea that "dreams of a great and inevitable destiny begin at infancy for whites" (Seiter 99). The first pages of the novel open with an excerpt from a Dick and Jane primer, which was frequently used throughout the educational system as an introduction to literacy during the time period in which the novel is set.

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### Page Number (4.4)

All pages in the paper are numbered consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one half-inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Your last name is placed before the page number.

### Title (4.3)

The title is placed one double-space from the date and centered. Titles are NOT underlined, italicized, put in quotation marks, or written in all caps. Do NOT include an additional double-space before, within, or after the title.

### Font (4.2)

Acceptable fonts are Times New Roman, 12 pt. or Courier New, 10 pt.