Modern Language Association (MLA) formatting in Word 2007

**WARNING:** Before attempting a step, save in case something goes wrong and you need to reload.

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Before starting:

A. **Using double spacing.**
   
   MLA requires that papers be double spaced; this will let you type without concern to formatting without worrying about trying to hit “enter” twice at each line
   
   1. Click the “Home” tab on the Ribbon.
   2. At the bottom of the “Paragraph” box, click the “show dialog box” button ( ). This will open the dialog box shown to the right.
   3. Change the blue circled area to read “Double,” by clicking the box and clicking “Double.”
   4. In the same area, make sure spacing “After” is set to 0 pt.

B. **Changing the font**
   
   Using an appropriate font with the appropriate size is part of typing a good paper
   
   1. Click “Home”
   2. Inside the “Font” box there should be a large box with something (most likely “Calibri (Default)” or “Calibri”) written inside. Click it and you should find a drop down menu with various fonts listed.
   3. Find an appropriate font from the list and click it (usually “Times New Roman”).
   4. Make sure the number to the right is “12,” if not click the box and type “12.”

C. **Fixing the margins**
   
   Word 2007 uses 1” margins on all sides, but it is worth checking in case Word is using something different.
   
   1. Click “Page Layout” on the Ribbon.
   2. Inside the “Page Setup” box, there is a button labeled “Margins”; click it.
   3. If “Normal” is not selected (the picture will have an orange box around it), click “Normal”
   4. Click the “Margins” button again if it does not close automatically or “Normal” is already selected.

D. **Creating the MLA page number**
   
   MLA has an oft-forgotten page numbering system. Use this method to make Word number your pages automatically and always keep the page number at the top of the page.
   
   1. Click “Insert” on the Ribbon.
   2. In the “Header and Footer” box, click “Page Number.” Then click the “top of page” option and “Plain Number 3,” which places the page number in the top right-hand corner.
   3. In the gray cursor area, type your last name and a space. To change the font of the name and number, highlight the text and right click to view and select from the drop-down font menu.
   4. Click the “Design” tab on the Ribbon. Make sure the “different first page” box is checked.
   5. Close the header by clicking the “Design” tab on the Ribbon, then clicking “Close Header and Footer” (both are on the far right of the Ribbon).

E. **Changing the defaults (optional)**
   
   These settings will allow you to avoid changing the above settings when you turn on Word again
   
   **WARNING:** Changing these settings cannot be reversed by opening an earlier copy of the document.
   
   1. Click the “Home” tab
2. Click the “Show Dialog Box” Button ( atroc) inside the “Font” box.
3. Click “Default” (the button should look exactly like the button circled in green on the other side), then click “Yes.”
4. Repeat with the “Paragraph” box (under “Home”) and the “Page Setup” box (under “Insert”).

Before typing your title:

F. Switching between centered and left justification.

MLA requires that the majority of the paper be aligned on the left (left justified), with the exception of the paper’s title and the words “Works Cited” on the works cited page.

1. Click the “Home” tab. Inside the paragraph box, click the “Align Text Left” button ( atroc) to have all the text line up normally
2. Next to the “Align Text Left” button, click the “Center” button ( atroc) button to center the text
3. Realize that every line in Word will have one and only one form of alignment.
4. You will need to change these settings at the proper lines on your paper

After finishing the body of information, starting on the Works Cited page:

G. Inserting a new page.

Rather than keep a separate document with the works cited, follow this step and write the Works Cited page without worrying about making sure it lines up correctly at the top of the last page.

1. Click to place the cursor at the end of your document.
2. Click the “insert” tab, then click “page break” (inside the “Pages” box).

H. Using hanging indents.

MLA requires “Hanging Indent” for the works cited page. Rather than trying to use enter and tab, just follow these steps and type the information without concern for formatting or indentation

1. Click the “Home” tab on the Ribbon
2. At the bottom of the “Paragraph” box, click the “show dialog box” button ( atroc). This will open the dialog box shown on the other side.
3. Under “Indentation” and “Special” (see red) select “Hanging” from the drop-down menu.

If you need more help or need to reference MLA formatting guidelines:

- See Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.
- SanJac Writing Centers are in the administration buildings of the Central and the South Campuses.
- The campus computer labs should have people on staff who can answer your questions.
- The official MLA handbook is available in the campus libraries and Writing Centers.

FAQs:

Q) What’s the Ribbon? Where are the buttons I am trying to hit?
   A) The Ribbon is the official name for the set of buttons at the top (normally) of Word. All the buttons you need to click are above or inside this area. If you can’t find it, press the “alt” key on the keyboard multiple times. The flashing letters are the top of the ribbon.

Q) I tried clicking and a box came up to the right of my cursor (arrow). How do I fix this?
   A) You probably opened the shortcut menu. Click on your document and use the other button.

Q) The colors of my buttons are different. Is this a problem? Can I change my colors?
   A) The color isn’t important. It is possible to change the colors by going to the Windows button, clicking “Word Options” and changing the color scheme inside the “Popular” tab.

Q) My text just got deleted! Help!!! Is there any way to get it back?
   A) Calm down. Click the Windows button at the top left, then click “Open.” Reload your paper. If you made a keystroke in error, click the “Undo Typing” button (the backward-pointing arrow) in the top left of the screen next to the picture of the disk. Clicking this will reverse/undo previous keystrokes.