Hello, this is Gary Enns, English Professor at Cerro Coso Community College, and in this presentation I will help you to format an essay in MLA Style for English class.

If you haven't yet studied my MLA Style handout, then now is a good time to do so. I recommend opening this useful how-to sheet now as I will be leading you step by step through these instructions. You can find it in the Writing Resources section of our class website. If you are not in one of my classes at Cerro Coso, you will find a link to the document on the Youtube page of this presentation. You are free to print it off and use it as needed.

It is very important that you follow every single step of the instructions in order to avoid errors.

So open up a blank Word document now and follow along, pausing this presentation periodically to complete each step for yourself.

Step 1: First, if you're using MS Word 2007-10, set style to Word 2003. Setting the style to Word 2003 should solve a frequent error I see in student manuscripts—too much space between line breaks and paragraphs.

1. Click the HOME tab
2. Under "Styles," click the CHANGE STYLES icon.
3. Select STYLE SET
4. In the dropdown menu that appears, select WORD 2003

Step 2: Next, Set Your Margins. Top, bottom, left and right margins in an MLA paper must be set to one inch.

1. Click the PAGE LAYOUT tab at the top of the screen.
2. Click the MARGINS icon.
3. Select the NORMAL 1 by 1 by 1 by 1 inch option.
4. If you don't see this 1" option, you can also use the CUSTOM MARGINS option to set proper margins.

Step 3: Next, check paragraph indentation. The first line of each new paragraph should be indented one-half inch. Usually the "Tab" button on the left side of your keyboard is defaulted properly, so simply depress that button whenever you wish to indent for a new paragraph. To check the default of your "Tabs" button:

1. Click the HOME tab.
2. Click to open the PARAGRAPH DIALOG BOX (the tiny button to the right of the word "Paragraph.")
3. Click the TABS button at the bottom of the box.
4. Make sure that the DEFAULT TAB STOPS are set to 0.5". If they aren't, use the up and down arrow keys to adjust.
5. Click OK to close.

Step 4: Now set your line spacing. All lines in an MLA paper are double spaced. There are no single, triple, or quadruple spaces—ever. Even the class information and the title are double spaced. Set for double spacing:

1. Click the HOME tab.
2. Under "Paragraph,' click the LINE AND PARAGRAPH SPACING button.
3. Select 2.0 for double spacing.

Step 5: The next very important step is to check spacing between your paragraphs. Again, everything must be double spaced, so make sure that Word is not defaulted to add undesirable extra spaces between your paragraphs. Resetting your "Style" (The first step mentioned in this presentation) probably took care of this, but follow these steps to make sure.

1. If you already have text, click Ctrl+A to select all text.
2. Click the HOME tab.
3. Click the LINE AND PARAGRAPH SPACING button again.
4. Click LINE SPACING OPTIONS to open the paragraph dialog box.
5. Under "Spacing," place a checkmark in the "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style" box.
6. While you're here, also make sure that the "Before" and "After" numbers are both set to 0 pt. and that your line spacing is set to "Double."
7. Click OK.

Step 6: Now, add your header. MLA asks that you number all of your pages in the right of the actual header of each page, beginning with the first page and ending with a Works Cited or Works Consulted page if applicable. Directly to the left of the page number, include your last name followed by three spaces.

1. Click the INSERT tab now.
2. Click the PAGE NUMBER button.
3. Select TOP OF PAGE to open selections.
4. Select the plain option (no formatting or accents) that places the page number to the right. (Once you select this option, you should see the page number appear correctly placed in the right of the header.)
5. Now place your cursor just to the left of the page number and type your last name followed by three clicks of your space bar.
6. Select both your last name AND page number. You can scroll across the text to select or left mouse click on your last name three times. Make sure the page number is selected along with your last name.
7. Change to the font style and size by going to the font section of the HOME tab. I recommend a simple font with serifs—Times New roman 11 point is a good option. Select Times New Roman from the drop down list. Right next to the font list, change the font size to 11.
8. Double click anywhere in the body of your paper to exit the header.

Note again that your header font and size needs to match the font of your text. You can always re-enter your header to change the font of your last name and page number by simply double clicking the top of any page.

Step 7: Now, print your class information: In the upper left corner of your first page and flush with the left hand margin, list the class information specified by your instructor. Use individual, double-spaced lines for each piece of information. In my classes I require the following information. If your instructor is not specific about what to include, using the following format is a safe bet.

1. Type your full name and click Enter.
2. Type your instructor's title and full name. Reference your class syllabus or ask your teacher to see what he or she prefers to go by—Professor, Instructor, or Dr.
3. Type the official course name and number (such as English 101), followed by a space and then the five digit course reference number (CRN) in parentheses. You will find the CRN number of your class toward the top of our course website or in the schedule of classes.
4. Next, type the official assignment name and number, a colon, and the descriptor. Refer to the assignment itself for accuracy. (Example: Essay 2: Synthesis.)
5. Next is the due date, printed formally with the month fully spelled out. Either European style shown here (7 December 2012) or American style (December 7, 2012) is acceptable.

For any of my courses, format your class information exactly in this manner. If you are taking a course from someone else, be sure to ask what specific information your instructor requires in this space. If he or she doesn't care, using the information and order above is a safe bet.

Step 8: The next step is to center your title. After the class information, double space once. Do not add any extra spacing above or below your title. Regular double spaces are correct. To center,

1. Select the HOME tab.
2. Click the CENTER button under the Paragraph section.
3. Type your title. Remember to be creative.
4. Click return and then click the ALIGN TEXT LEFT button or simply hit your backspace key once to return your cursor to the left of the page.

Step 9: Now let's take a moment to check your paragraph indentation by writing your first sample lines of text.

1. Click your tab button on left-hand side of your keyboard. Your cursor should now be indented a half inch from your margin. You can check this by eyeballing the alignment of your cursor line with the half inch mark on your top ruler. (If you don't see your ruler at the top of your window, you can open it by clicking the VIEW RULER button at the top right of your manuscript window.
2. Type at least two lines of sample text so that you can see your tabs and line spacing at work.

Step 10: Now make your font choice for your text. If you'll notice, the font of this essay does not match the font of its header. That's because we have already adjusted the header to our font of choice, but we have not done so yet for your body text. We could have done this before we began the class information section, but I wanted to show you how easily changeable a font is.

1. Hold down the "Ctrl" and "A" keys of your keyboard to select your entire text.
2. Now go to the HOME tab.
3. Under "Font," select the same font you have chosen for your header. In our sample essay here, this is Times New Roman—always a good bet.
4. Select the same size of the font you chose for your header. We chose 11 for the header, so choose 11 now.

Remember that your header font needs to match your text. You can always re-enter the header to make adjustments simply by mouse-clicking twice in the header of any one of your pages.

Congratulations! You've made it to the end of the set-up steps of this presentation. Let's take a look at a sample MLA paper so you can double check the features of your document.

1. Notice the last name and page numbers in the upper right header of this document, and notice the header font which matches the document font.
2. Notice the properly placed and formatted class information section in the upper left of the first page.
3. The margins are all set to one inch.
4. The title is appropriately centered.
5. Everything is double spaced—even paragraph spaces. Look very carefully at the spaces between your paragraphs as too much space is a frequent error in student manuscripts. If the space looks slightly bigger than the regular double spacing of your lines, run through steps 1 and 5 again to close the gaps.
6. Lastly, the tabs used to mark paragraphs are set to the standard .5 or half inch.

This concludes our MLA Style set-up presentation. You are ready to start writing! Before you close, I encourage you to save the document you have set up and then use it as a template whenever you begin a new MLA paper. That way you won't have to repeat all of these steps every time.

If you are using sources in your essay, I encourage you now to watch my follow-up "MLA Documentation" presentation, where we will add parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page to your document.

Thank you for following along. Enjoy your writing!