MLA Format for Essay Writing

Start your introduction paragraph. Introduce the topic of your paper in a way that makes the reader want to continue reading. The first paragraph should lead your reader logically to the last sentence of your introduction paragraph: the thesis statement, the statement that tells the reader what your paper will prove.

Each body paragraph should support and give evidence to prove your thesis statement. Evidence comes in many forms, such as quotes from relevant, credible people, news articles, studies, documentaries, books, movies, TV programs, magazines, etc.

Be sure to indent each paragraph five spaces (or one tab) to show the reader that you have another piece of evidence or reason to prove your thesis statement.

Do not put an extra line space between paragraphs.

When you cite evidence from outside sources, you need to use quotation marks and parenthetical documentation to show the reader where you found the evidence. For example, the Purdue website that shows examples of the MLA format states, “Writers who properly use MLA also build their credibility by demonstrating accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the purposeful or accidental uncredited use of source material by other writers” (OWL Purdue).

When a typed paper goes to a second page, the student’s last name and page number should appear in the upper right-hand corner.