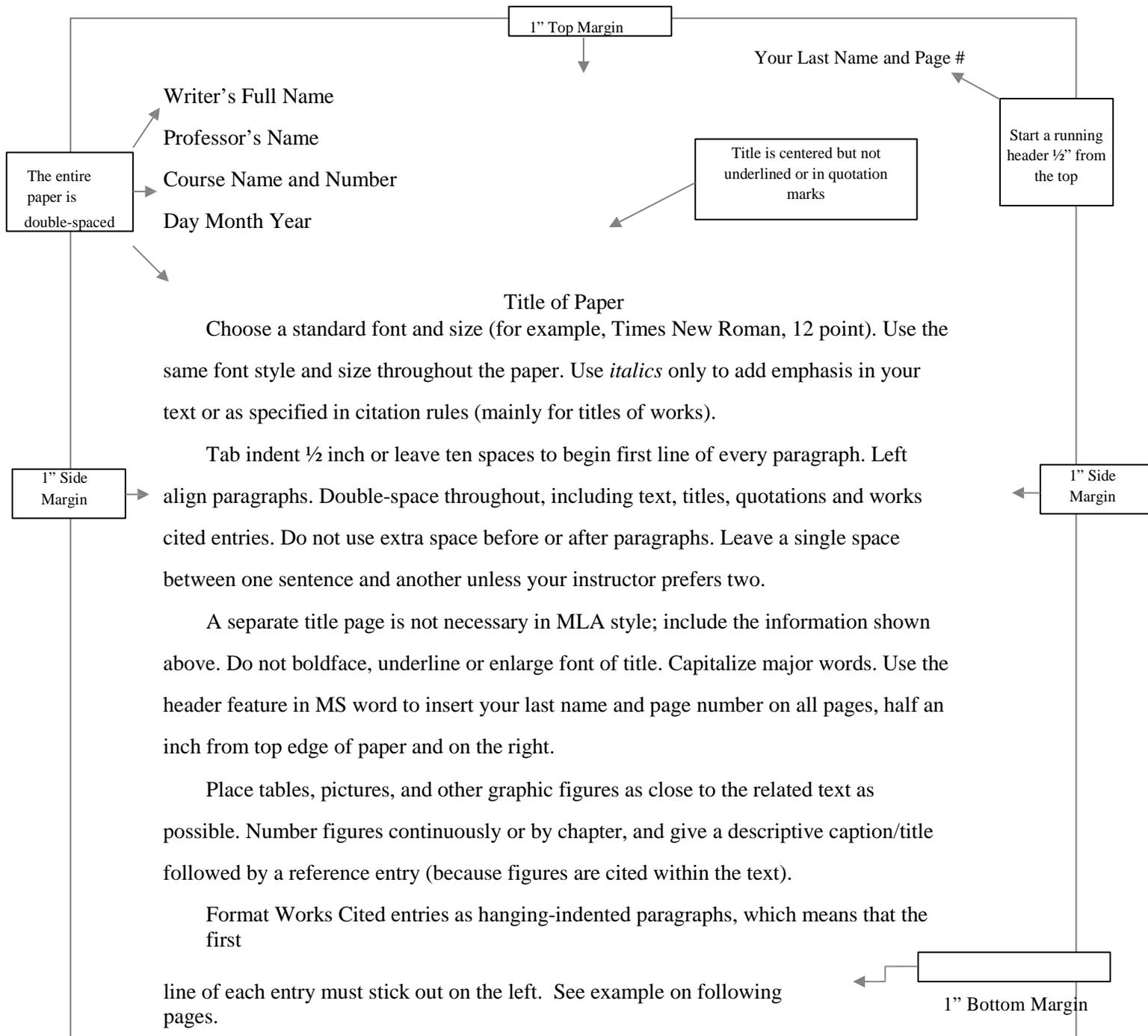# MLA FORMATTING AND STYLE

This brief handout was compiled using the Modern Language Handbook (MLA), eighth edition. Examples were adapted from various sources and revised in 2016. For further information, please refer to the MLA handbook. The MLA formatting and citation style is commonly used in the humanities.

THE FIRST PAGE

Below is a diagram of the first page of an MLA formatted paper.

1" Top Margin

Your Last Name and Page #

Writer's Full Name

Professor's Name

Course Name and Number

Day Month Year

The entire paper is double-spaced

Title is centered but not underlined or in quotation marks

Start a running header ½" from the top

Title of Paper

Choose a standard font and size (for example, Times New Roman, 12 point). Use the same font style and size throughout the paper. Use *italics* only to add emphasis in your text or as specified in citation rules (mainly for titles of works).

Tab indent ½ inch or leave ten spaces to begin first line of every paragraph. Left align paragraphs. Double-space throughout, including text, titles, quotations and works cited entries. Do not use extra space before or after paragraphs. Leave a single space between one sentence and another unless your instructor prefers two.

A separate title page is not necessary in MLA style; include the information shown above. Do not boldface, underline or enlarge font of title. Capitalize major words. Use the header feature in MS word to insert your last name and page number on all pages, half an inch from top edge of paper and on the right.

Place tables, pictures, and other graphic figures as close to the related text as possible. Number figures continuously or by chapter, and give a descriptive caption/title followed by a reference entry (because figures are cited within the text).

Format Works Cited entries as hanging-indented paragraphs, which means that the first

line of each entry must stick out on the left. See example on following pages.

1" Side Margin

1" Side Margin

1" Bottom Margin

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

In-text citation is a brief reference to the source of other writers' words or ideas included in your text. This reference is meant to help the reader locate the corresponding Works Cited entry.

ONE WORK BY ONE AUTHOR WITH A PAGE NUMBER	*One of the paradoxes of democracy is that "individual freedom is possible when there is discipline regulated by the society" (Doe 23).*
ONE WORK BY ONE AUTHOR WITHOUT A PAGE NUMBER MULTIPLE WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR	*John Doe discusses this paradox of democracy when "individual freedom is possible when there is discipline regulated by the society" (23).* If you cite two or more works by the same author, add the title of the work between author name and page reference. Shorten title using key word(s) if it is long. *(Doe,* Policy *23).*
ONE WORK BY UP TO THREE AUTHORS THREE OR MORE AUTHORS	Cite all authors: *(Doe, Smith, and Williams 183-84)* Either write list all names or the first author's last name followed by "et al.". Do not use a period after "et" or a comma after "al." *Doe, Smith, and Williams argued that technology is not value-free (122).* *Technology is not value free (Doe et al. 122).*
WORK WITH NO AUTHOR	If your source has no author, then you default to the source's title. For example, if the title of the piece is "Vermont Food Producers Prepare for GMO Labeling," this will take the place of the author's last name in the in-text citation. Usually, though, you can abbreviate a title to the first three words, so the in-text citation would look like the following: ("Vermont Food Producers"). This is a web source, so it has no page numbers. On the Works Cited page, you would also replace the spot of the author with the full title in quotation marks and alphabetize by the first letter of the first word in the title.
ELECTRONIC AND OTHER NON-PRINT SOURCES WITHOUT PAGE NUMBERS	Try to give the section or paragraph number and indicate that the number does not refer to a page. You need not give page number of a one-page source. *(Doe, par. 3)* or *(Myth of Poverty, sec. 3)*
INDIRECT SOURCE	On occasion an author will quote another author/text. *Researchers Botan and McCreadie point out that "workers areobjects of information collection without participating in the process of exchanging the information . . ." (qtd. in Kizza and Ssanyu 14).*