Formatting an Essay in MLA Style
(For MS Word 2016)

Alignment and Double Spacing:

Your entire paper should be double-spaced, including your heading and title. Also, the heading and body of your paper must be aligned to the left. (Do not use “justify.”) Your title should be centered.

Before you begin typing ANYTHING, follow these steps:

- Click on the “Home” tab (on the Menu Bar at the top)
- Click on ↘ in the “Paragraph” section of the formatting Ribbon.
- On the “Indents and Spacing” tab, under “General,” select “Left” alignment.
- Under “Spacing” ...
  - Change “Before” and “After” to “0 pt.”
  - Change “Line spacing” to “Double.”
  - Check box “Don’t add space between paragraphs of same style.”
- Click OK
- Tip: On your own computer, to avoid having to make these changes each time you write a paper, click the “Default” button before clicking “OK.”

Margins:
MLA guidelines specify one-inch margins all the way around: Top, Bottom, Right and Left. To set your margins at one-inch, follow these steps:

- Click on the “Layout” tab (on the Menu Bar at the top)
- Click on the “Margins” icon in the “Page Setup” section of the formatting Ribbon.
- Click on “Normal” for 1” margins

Header—Last Name and Page Numbers:

Your last name and the page number should appear in the top right hand corner of every page of your essay, including the Works Cited page(s).

- Click on the “Insert” tab (Next to the “Home” tab on the Menu Bar)
- Click on the “Page Number” icon in the center of the formatting Ribbon
- Move the pointer over “Top of Page,” then click on “Plain Number 3”
- Type your last name and a space before the number
- Select your name and the number, click on the “Home” tab, and change the font to the font you are using in the body of your paper (usually Times New Roman 12 point font)
- Double-click in body of the document to exit the header.

Font:

- Use a standard font style and size, such as Times New Roman 12 point font.

Note: The header is in the top margin of your paper. It includes your last name and page number only, is right-aligned, and appears on every page. The heading appears on the first page only, below the header and above your essay title. It is left-aligned and double-spaced, and includes your first and last name, your instructor’s name, your course title and number (e.g. English 1301), and the date, in that order, each on its own line.