











Standard Document Format

Below are guidelines that tend to apply to most college papers. Individual instructors will have alternate or additional requirements. Check with your instructor regarding the format of your papers.

General Guidelines

-  Drafts and final versions of papers should be typed on computer.
-  Paper should be white, 8 1/2 X 11”.
-  Type only on one side of each sheet.
-  Margins should be standard (1 inch top & bottom, 1 inch or 1.25 inch left/right). Your writing should fill the entire page. Do not make margins wider or hit return to create page breaks at the bottom of a page.
-  Text should be aligned or justified to the left margin, so that the right side of the text is ragged. Do not justify the right margin. (Justifying the right margin makes the document look nice, but it creates irregular spacing between words, which can be distracting to a reader.)
-  Paragraphs should be indented five spaces (or one tab). Do not create extra spaces between paragraphs.
-  Use standard font. (In most word processing programs, the default font will be standard: Times or Times New Roman, 12 pt.)
-  Double space all text.
-  Long quotations (more than four lines) should be blocked: indented with two tabs and double spaced. (Note: Some instructors do not consider long quotations to be part of the overall length of the paper.)
-  Your last name and the page number should appear in the upper right corner of every page except the first page. For example: *Smith 5*. Use the “header” or “insert page numbers” function so that this heading appears within the one inch margin.

Format for the First Page

- ✎ The **heading** should appear in the upper left, consisting of the following four lines of information. These four lines should be double spaced.

your name

course and section

instructor's name

date

- ✎ The **title** appears next, double spaced from the heading, centered. If the title takes more than one line, it should be single spaced. The title should not be in a larger font, and extra spaces should not appear above or below it. Do not underline your title or enclose it in quotes.

- ✎ The **text** of your essay should start double spaced after the title.

Submitting Your Paper

- ✎ Papers should be stapled or paper clipped, depending upon the instructor.
- ✎ Do not put the paper in a folder or any other container unless the instructor requires it. Some instructors require folders for submission of supplementary materials with the final draft.
- ✎ Do not use any plastic covers. (A plastic cover might make a paper look nice, but it gets in the way when one is trying to grade an essay carefully. Many professors prefer no covers.)
- ✎ Title pages are usually not necessary except in some disciplines.

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