

MLA Format

Timothy L. Pagaard

Cuyamaca College English Department

FORMAT: TEXT PAGES

Even if it is written in lipstick on a mirror, good writing is good writing. Correctness of format—of such things as typing and layout—is *the last thing you should worry about* when you are trying to produce good writing. But this is not to say that format will be ignored when your essays are evaluated for English classes at Cuyamaca College—that you do not have to worry about format at all. *Just worry about it last.*

One of the objectives of English writing courses is to prepare you for future college writing. The truth is that, justly or not, many of the

teachers you will write for throughout your academic career will care a great deal about how closely you adhere to conventions of style (a concern that translates directly into grades). More to the point, in all college courses after this one you will be held responsible for knowing how to manage these considerations competently.

Below you will find a brief outline of the MLA (Modern Language Association) style specifications for college writing. These are the ones that just about everybody will expect you to observe nowadays.

EVERYTHING in your essay should be typed in upper and lower case (NOT ALL CAPS) and DOUBLE SPACED. Everything: the heading, the title, the text, block quotations, and entries on the Works Cited page (if you do research).

DO NOT SKIP LINES between any of these or between paragraphs.

The heading, your text, block quotations, and entries on the Works Cited page—EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE TITLE—should be ALIGNED FLUSH LEFT, ragged right.

Give a TITLE to every essay you submit. Align CENTERED.

Place the title below the heading and above the text of your essay. Capitalize each word (except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions), but don't type the title in all capitals.

Indent the first line of every paragraph 1/2 inch.

Quotations of 4 lines or more should be set off as "BLOCK" QUOTATIONS indented 1 inch from the left margin; do not indent from the right margin.

Be sure to consult the MLA handbook for proper CITATION FORMAT.

Use 1-INCH MARGINS around all 4 sides of your text—top, bottom, and sides.

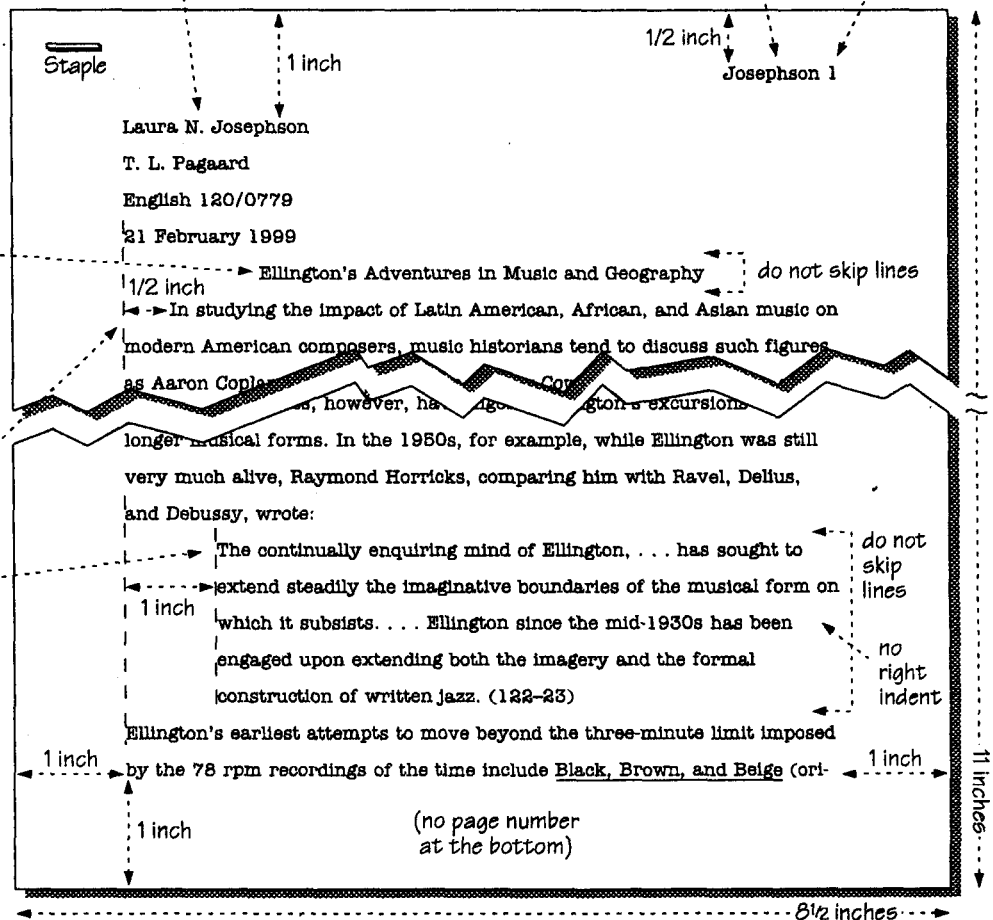
The FIRST PAGE of the essay should feature a HEADING. It should include:

- (1) your full name
- (2) your teacher's name (as shown)
- (3) the name and section number of your English class (as shown)
- (4) the date you submit the essay

DO NOT USE A SEPARATE TITLE PAGE.

Set a "HEADER" to print—automatically—in the upper right corner of every page of your essay, including the first page and Works Cited (if you do research). Align it flush right. The header should include:

- (1) your last name
- (2) the page number



Use 11-POINT TYPE in a standard SERIF face. Use the SAME SIZE type throughout, including in your title. Use only Roman (plain) for your basic text and italics ONLY as an equivalent of underlining. NEVER use bold anywhere.