MLA STYLE FORMATTING

General Guidelines

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space the text of your paper.
- Use Times New Roman font in black ink.
- The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks. (Two spaces after periods are ok, but be consistent.)
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin. Use the Tab key as opposed to pushing the Space Bar five times, but make sure there is a tab setting for .5”. It’s usually the default.
- Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Insert the page number (look for the # symbol) rather than typing the number itself.
- Use italics throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis.

Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Do not make a title page for your paper.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name (first name then last name), your instructor's name, the assignment/text/prompt, the course, and the due date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Place the title on its own line and center it. Maintain the double-spacing, but do not put any extra spaces above or below it. Do not underline, italicize, bold, or place your title in quotation marks. Use the same font, color, and same font size for the title. Write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text: Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas as Morality Play; Human Weariness in "After Apple Picking".
- Again, maintain the double-spacing. Place the first line of the text on its own line, and indent it half-inch (using the tab button).
- If you haven’t already done so, create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Insert the page number (look for the # symbol) rather than typing the number itself.

There is a sample of the first page of a paper in MLA style on the back of this page:
Man’s Humanity to Man

Robert Burns claimed in 1784 in his poem “Man Was Made to Mourn: A Dirge” that “Man’s inhumanity to man / Makes countless thousands mourn” (lines 55-6), ironically characterizing cruelty as an inhuman and primitive trait despite the human tendency to be cruel, which his poem so clearly acknowledged and illustrated. Shirley Jackson, author of the short story “The Lottery,” would disagree with the assumption that cruelty is inhuman. She had no such illusions or expectations of humanity’s essential benevolence. Examined through the lens of Marxist Criticism, Jackson’s story “The Lottery” reveals how the economic and social wellbeing of the community is linked to its rituals, which in turn paint a picture of humanity as inherently, naturally cruel and condemns humanity as ultimately irredeemably savage.

While the villagers do not seem to know precisely why the annual ritual sacrifice is necessary, nor does Jackson choose to reveal the rationale to the reader, suggesting that religious rites and brutality have no reason and need no reason to exist, it is believed by the villagers to be necessary for the continuing economic and social wellbeing of the community. Old Man Warner, the oldest resident, reminds the others of the saying, “Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon” (967), which makes the most direct connection between the ritual and prosperity, suggesting that the villagers or their ancestors, rather, believed that a good harvest was made possible by this ritual sacrifice. The fact that the village is still a farming community makes it