# Writing Papers for the Language Arts
MLA Style

When writing academic papers for the Language Arts, there is a set of rules that tell you how your paper should look and how you should present your research. This set of rules is called MLA Style. Every paper you turn in to a Language Arts class should be formatted according to these rules, and this handout will tell you just how to do that.

How to make your paper look right:

(If you have already started writing, use your mouse to select everything you've written before you following these instructions.)

1. Select "Home" at the top of your toolbar. Change your font to **Times New Roman**.
2. Change your font size to **12**.
3. To fix the **spacing** of your document, click on the arrow next to "Paragraph" on the bottom of your tool bar. That will bring up the menu shown to the right. Change the information on your menu to match this one. Don't forget to check the box next to "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style."
4. Your margins should automatically be **one inch**. If they are not, click on "Page Layout" at the top of your toolbar, then click on "Margins," and select "Normal."
5. Your paper should show your **last name and the page number** in the top right hand corner of every page. Click "Insert" at the top of your toolbar. Click "Page Number" and then "Top of Page." Choose the image that has the number on the far right. Your cursor will then be at the top right corner of your paper next to the number. Write your last name before the page number, then a space. Highlight both your name and page number, click home, and change the font to Times New Roman 12 pt. Then double click back in the body of your paper to get out of the header.
6. **There should be no extra space between paragraphs**. If it happens automatically, please revisit step #3.
7. Begin each paragraph with a ½ inch indent by pressing the **TAB** button once.
8. Only press the spacebar once after a period. Two spaces is not necessary.
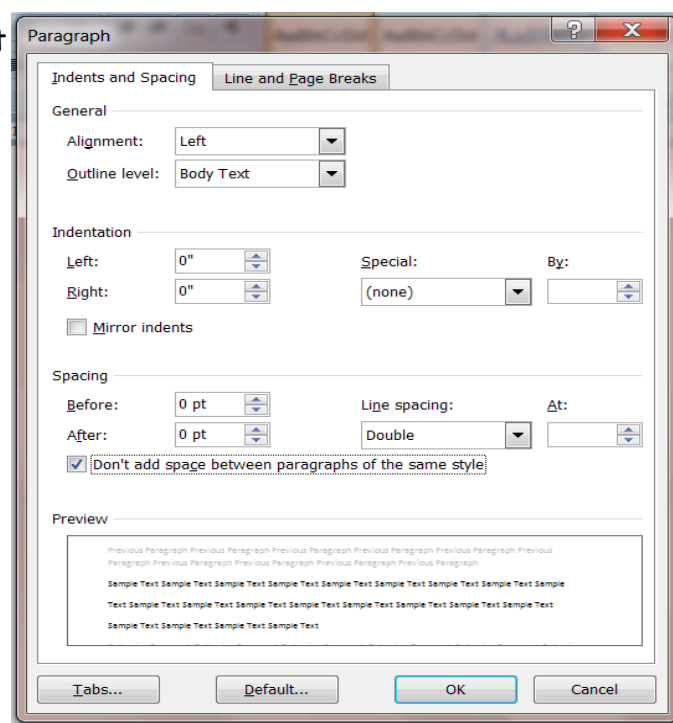
How to make the first page of your paper look right:

MLA Style also tells you how the first page of your paper should look. Below is an example you can follow.

- As you can see, your heading should be aligned to the left.
- There should be no extra space between the lines of the heading, or between the heading and the title (or the main body) of your paper.
- To place your name and page number in the heading, please follow step #5.

Your Last Name 1

Your First and Last Name

Your Teacher's Name

Period Number

Date

Title of Paper (If required)

Write body of your paper here. Write body of your paper here. Write body of your paper

here. Write body of your paper here. Write body of your paper here. Write body of your paper

These are just the basics of MLA formatting. For further explanation and multiple examples, please visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at: http://owl.english.purdue.edu.
Visit and familiarize yourself with OWL as you will be using it as a resource throughout the year.