

FORMATTING IS LIKE

NAME: _____

Setting the Table

OBJECTIVE:

I can format an essay document in MLA style

Have you ever noticed that fancy meals have a standard way to set a table? Each person's place setting has the same dishes and tableware in the same tidy setup, and the table overall looks clean and coordinated (such as candles or flowers as centerpieces).

Restaurants and families put in that extra effort for a reason, such as making others feel welcome or impressed. Seeing a nice table can set the tone for the rest of the experience. If you set up your essay document correctly too, then your reader will appreciate it, too!

However, in writing, you can't just set the table however you want. (Save your personal expression for the writing itself!) As you know, all genres of writing have their own unique "look"; a newspaper looks different than a novel, and a letter looks different than poetry. There are social norms (genre conventions) for how an essay should look, too. If you don't follow those norms, then your ideas won't be taken seriously.

In proper dining etiquette, there are rules for what items are placed where. Likewise, in MLA Style, there are rules governing how your essay should look.

Just think:

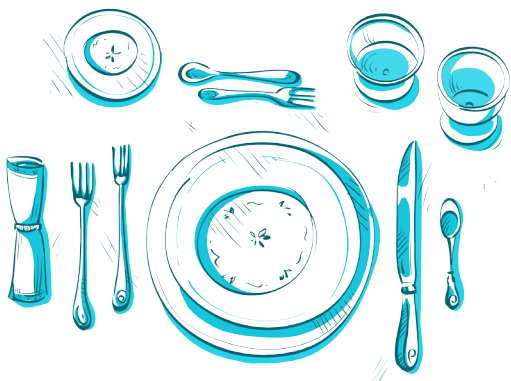
If you are reading a letter, essay, or resume that's sloppy, what will you probably think about the writer?

REVIEW

What do you already know is true about turning in a nice, correct final draft?

PREVIEW

What do you notice about these two drawings? (What do they have in common?)



OUR OBSERVATIONS:

READY TO FIND OUT? TURN THE PAGE!

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SET THE TABLE! Here are the actual rules for an MLA paper.

HINT: You may want to save this checklist for future use, and not just during this unit

Silverware	Paper margins	<input type="checkbox"/> 1" margins on all sides (top, bottom, right, left) <input type="checkbox"/> Typed draft. (Handwritten essays are rare; if you're allowed to, then ask about the teacher's rules, such as writing in pen or pencil)
Cup(s)	Header*	<input type="checkbox"/> Upper right-hand corner; be sure it's in the actual document header and not just the first normal line <input type="checkbox"/> Write your last name and the page #; use the word processor's automated button for this <input type="checkbox"/> If you've done it right, the header should appear on every page with the new, correct page number on it
Bread plate	Heading*	<input type="checkbox"/> Upper left-hand corner <input type="checkbox"/> Contains the following, in this order: name, teacher's name, class name, and due date
Plate	Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Below the heading <input type="checkbox"/> Centered in the middle of the page <input type="checkbox"/> Only ONE space above and below it – no excessive spacing around a title <input type="checkbox"/> Do NOT bold, underline, or italicize it <input type="checkbox"/> Make your title appropriate to the assignment. You can probably do better than "English Essay" or "Assignment #2", but don't get too carried away or silly, either. Be creative but professional
Food	Essay	<input type="checkbox"/> Font: Times New Roman, size 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Double spacing <input type="checkbox"/> No extra spaces between paragraphs <input type="checkbox"/> Normal paragraph indenting, only ½ inch <input type="checkbox"/> Please note that some teachers or genres may allow fonts OTHER than Times 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Always check with a teacher, especially since Word, Docs, and Pages sometimes have other default fonts (like Arial or Calibri) <input type="checkbox"/> Before you print, confirm if double or single sided printing matters.



* I know it's confusing, but the header and heading are not the same thing!

TEACHER'S NOTE

The guidelines above do not include a cover page. Some very formal research papers and other assignments might require one; the Purdue Owl website is a great source to learn more about cover pages and other formatting issues.

CLASS CHALLENGE

Once you are done applying this checklist to YOUR paper, get a classmate or teacher to double-check it and verify that you haven't missed a step or done something incorrectly. Have that person sign here to give their stamp of approval:

LET'S PRACTICE

Do you think YOU have the perfect essay formatting? If not, do you know someone in the room who does? Let's find out if anyone has a perfect page.

EXIT TICKET

Explain why paying attention to doc formatting could matter in your future, whether that's in college, a job, or somewhere else.