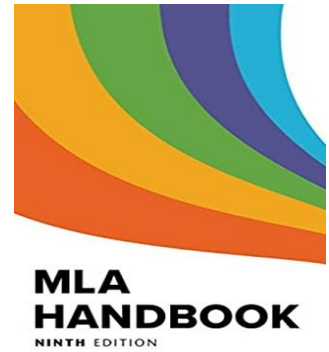


The Modern Language Association (MLA) provides guidance to scholars studying and writing about **literature, culture, and languages, particularly English**. If there is something that is not in this quick guide, please see a Librarian, the MLA Handbook or [OWL Purdue](#).



FORMATTING GUIDELINES

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FONT

MLA requires an easy-to-read “standard style” font in which italics is easily distinguished from regular typeface. Twelve-point (12pt) Times New Roman is the most used font size and typeface.

SPACING

Double space all text including all quotes and works cited entries.

MARGINS

The body of the text should be aligned flush left. The title should be centered.

INDENTATION

Indent the first line of every paragraph a half inch (one hit of the TAB button). The works cited page will use a hanging indent: all lines of the entry except the first are indented a half inch.



NUMBERS

Spell out numbers that can be written in one or two words (seven, nineteen, forty-four, three million) and use numerals for other numbers (3 ¾; 534; 1,003; 55,000,000).

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures, tables, and musical illustrations are used to support or provide information given in the main text. They are placed near the text that refers to them.

FIGURES

- All visuals/illustrations that are not tables or musical score examples (e.g. maps, diagrams, charts, videos, podcasts, etc.) are labeled **Figure** or **Fig**.
- Refer to the figure **in-text** and provide an Arabic numeral that corresponds to the figure; do **not** capitalize figure or fig.
- **Below the Figures:** A flush left label (E.G. Fig. 2) follows figures and do **not** typically make use of titles. Here, Figure and Fig. are capitalized.
- **If you provide source information with your illustrations, you do not need to provide this information on the Works Cited page.**
- If full citation information is provided in the caption, use the same formatting as you would for your Works Cited page.

IN-TEXT REFERENCE:

Some readers found Harry’s final battle with Voldemort a disappointment, and recently, the podcast, *MuggleCast* debated the subject (see fig. 2)

FIGURE CAPTION:

Fig. 2. Harry Potter and Voldemort final battle debate from Andrew Sims et al.; “Show 166”; *MuggleCast*; MuggleNet.com, 19 Dec. 2008, www.mugglenet.com/2015/11/the-snape-debate-rowling-speaks-out

TABLES

- Tables are made up of numbers and/or text arranged in rows and columns.
- Refer to the table and its corresponding numeral in-text. Do **not** capitalize the word table. (e.g. "(see table 2)").
- Situate the table near the text to which it relates.
- Label the table 'Table' and provide its corresponding Arabic numeral.
- On the next line, provide a caption for the table, most often the table title. Use title case.
- Place the table below the caption, flush left, making sure to maintain basic MLA style.

IN-TEXT REFERENCE:

In 1985, women aged 65 and older were 59% more likely than men of the same age to reside in a nursing home, and through 11,700 less women of that age group were enrolled in 1999, men over the same time period ranged from 30,000 to 39,000 persons while women accounted for 49,000 to 61,500 (see table 1).

TABLE REFERENCE:

Table 1

Rate of Nursing Home Residence among People Age 65 or Older, by Sex and Age Group, 1985, 1995, 1997, 1999^a

Sex and age group	1985	1995	1997	1999
Rate per thousand				
Both sexes				
65 and over	54.0	45.9	45.3	43.3
65-74	12.5	10.1	10.8	10.8
75-84	57.7	45.9	45.5	43.0
85 and over	220.3	198.6	192.0	182.5
Men				
65 and over	38.8	32.8	32.0	30.6
65-74	10.8	9.5	9.8	10.3
75-84	43.0	33.3	34.6	30.8
85 and over	145.7	130.8	119.0	116.5
Women				
65 and over	61.5	52.3	51.9	49.8
65-74	13.8	10.6	11.6	11.2
75-84	66.4	53.9	52.7	51.2
85 and over	250.1	224.9	221.6	210.5

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, *Older Americans 2008: Key Indicators of Well-Being*, Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, Mar. 2008, table 35A.

CAPTIONS: Figures, tables, and examples are all followed by captions. Captions include source information and, in some cases, a note. Source information can be displayed in either of the following forms:

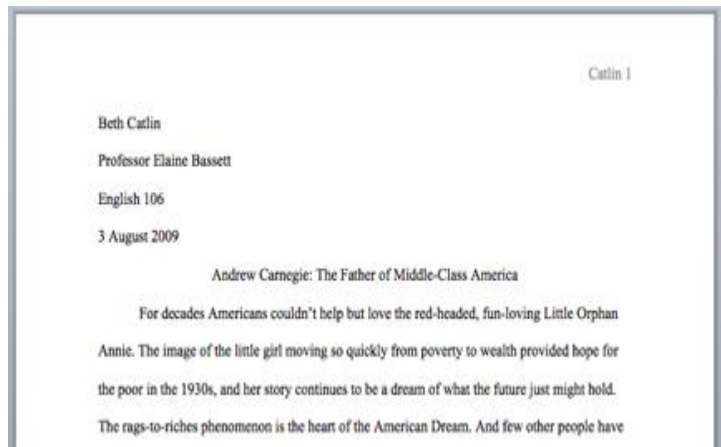
- **PARENTHETICAL CITATION:** Source information can take the form of a parenthetical citation at the end of a descriptive note. Be sure to include a full works cited entry for the source on your works cited page.
- **FULL SOURCE INFORMATION:** In some cases, full source information is included in the caption. If the source is not used elsewhere in the paper, it is not necessary to include the source as a works cited entry.

HEADING: NAME, COURSE, INSTRUCTOR, DATE

MLA does not require a title page. Students will use a heading at the top of the first page (see example) and use the following criteria:

1. Student's Full Name
2. Instructor's Title and Surname
3. Course Name and section number
4. Date in **Day Month Year** format

***NOTE: Check your syllabus to make sure you are putting the information that your professor is requiring.**



TITLE

Type the full title of the paper directly after the heading (no space). Follow these formatting rules:

Type the title of the paper in **Title Case:**

1. **Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks.** Write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
2. Do not capitalize conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet so), prepositions (in, on, by, etc.) or articles (a, an, the) unless they begin the title or subtitle.
3. The title should be in the same font size and typeface as the rest of the text.
4. Do **not** add any additional spaces before or after the title.

PAGE NUMBERS

- Page numbers are in the top right corner of the header.
- Numbering begins on the first page and proceed consecutively through all works cited pages.
- See guidelines on inserting your last name and page number (running head) on page 5 and 6.

RUNNING HEAD

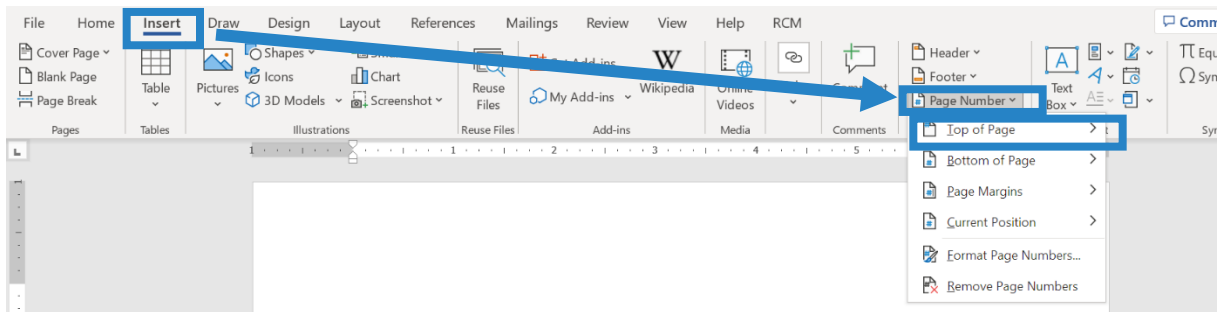
MLA requires the use of a running head.

- A running head is a heading printed at the top of each page of a document.
- It consists of the student's last name and a page number.
- This information is typed in the header and are at the top of the page and aligned flush right. See the sample on page 4.

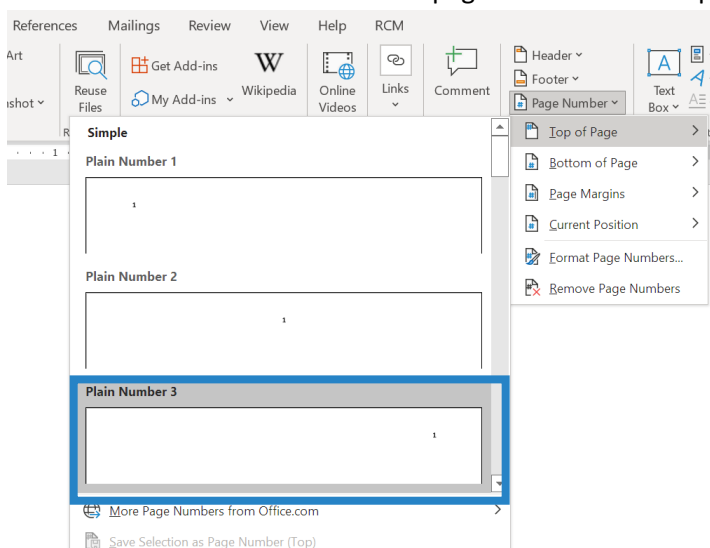
HOW TO INSERT AN MLA STYLE RUNNING HEAD

MICROSOFT WORD

1. Select the **INSERT** tab on the main toolbar.
2. In the Header & Footer group, select **PAGE NUMBER**.
3. On the Page Number drop down menu, select **TOP OF PAGE**.



4. Select **PLAIN NUMBER 3** to insert a page number in the top right corner of the header.

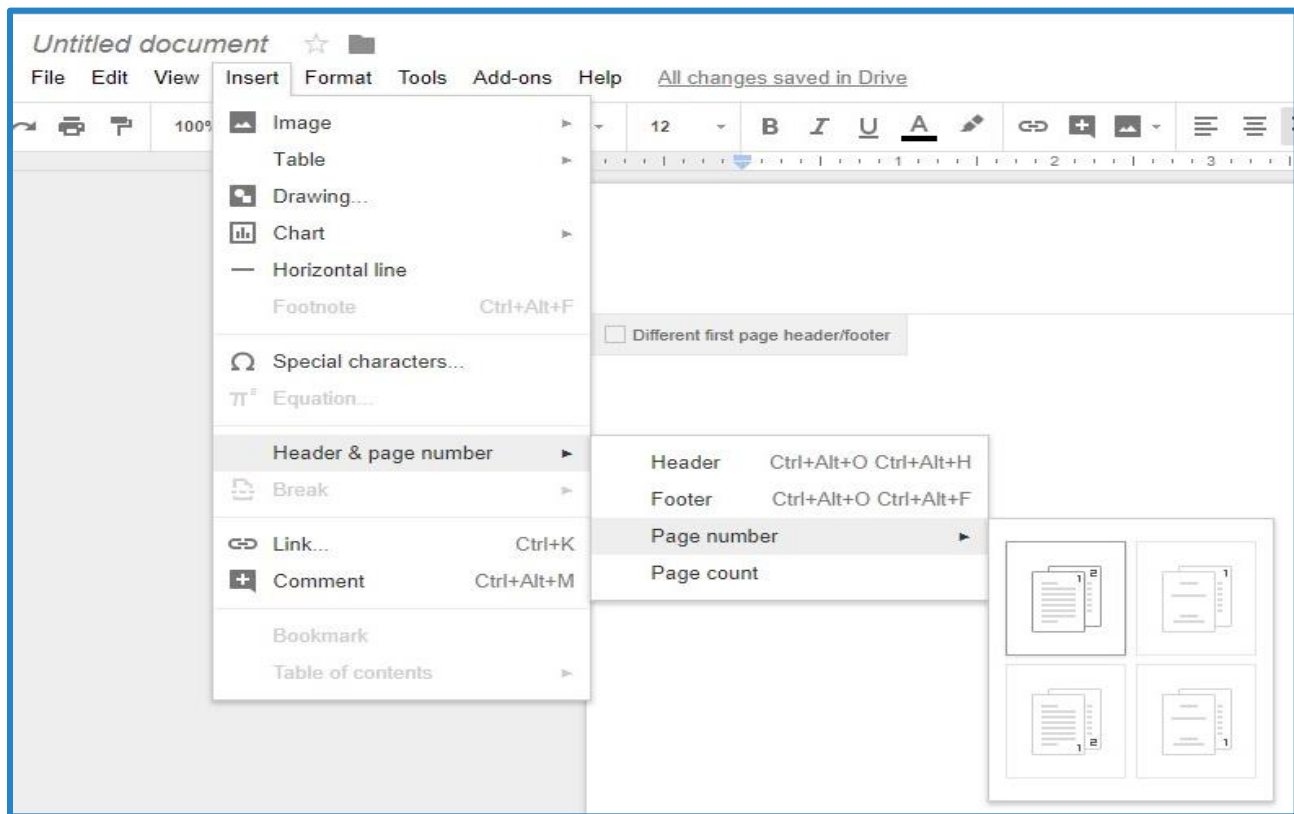


5. Ensure that the cursor is to the left of the number.
6. Type your last name followed by a space.
7. Close the header by double-clicking into the body of the document.

Keesler 1

GOOGLE DOCS

1. Select the **INSERT** tab on the main toolbar.
2. On the drop-down menu, select **HEADER & PAGE NUMBER**.
3. On the menu that appears on the right, select **PAGE NUMBER**.
4. Choose the top left option to insert pages number on the top right corner of all pages.



5. Move the cursor to the left of the number.
6. Type your last name followed by a space.
7. Close the header by double-clicking into the body of the document.

Keesler 1

***NOTE: Check your syllabus to make sure you are putting the information that your professor is requiring.**

QUOTATIONS

MLA requires quotations of all word-for-word source material. When you directly quote the works of others in your paper, you will format quotations differently depending on their length.

In-text citations are short references that appear in the body of a paper and point readers to the source of quotations, paraphrases, and summaries. These short references use the first element of the source's works cited entry, most often the author(s) last name, and relevant page or line numbers that key to or point to a full works cited entry.

PROSE QUOTATIONS

Prose is ordinary language, the way you speak every day. Most papers, textbooks, online sources, and fiction is written in prose. Prose is distinct from poetry and drama.

SHORT OR RUN-IN QUOTATIONS

If a prose quote is no more than four lines of your paper, incorporate it into a sentence enclose the quoted material in double quotation marks - " " .

If the quoted material comes at the end of the sentence, place citation information before the closing punctuation mark.

End of sentence:

- Wallace's, we are told, worried about fiction in the postmodern world, worried that a "lack of genuine concern and respect for the consumer was becoming more prevalent" (McAdams 121).

If the quoted material comes in the middle of the sentence, place any parenthetical citation at the first natural pause and before the addition of an unsourced idea.

Mid-sentence:

- McCort argues that Holden Caulfield is driven by a spiritual riddle which asks, "how he can hang onto the innocence of childhood while moving, inexorably, into the phony world of adulthood . . .," (122) a phony world, it could be said, that Salinger himself evaded.

LONG QUOTATIONS

Long quotes are those that are **more than four lines** of prose and are called a block quotation:

- Appear on a new line and are indented **half an inch** and are still **double spaced**.
- Do **NOT** use quotation marks.
- Your parenthetical citation should come **after the closing punctuation mark**.
- Have an additional first line indent only when multiple paragraphs are included.
- Are frequently introduced with a sentence ending in a colon.

EXAMPLE

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

POETRY QUOTATIONS

SHORT OR RUN IN QUOTATIONS

When quoting three or fewer lines of a poem, integrate the lines into a sentence. Any line breaks should be indicated by a forward slash /. A new stanza is indicated by a double forward slash //.

EXAMPLES

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

LONG QUOTATIONS

Long quotes, those of **more than three lines of poetry**, are set-off in what is commonly called a **block quotation**.

Block quotations for poetry:

- Try to mimic any unusual spacing or formatting seen in the original.
- Retain double spacing.
- Appear on a new line and are indented half an inch.
- **Do NOT make use of quotation marks.**
- Include any parenthetical citation information **after the final punctuation**.
- Are frequently introduced with a sentence ending with a colon.

EXAMPLE

In his poem "My Papa's Waltz," Theodore Roethke explores his childhood with his father:

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.
We Romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself. (qtd. in Shrodes, Finestone, Shugrue 202)

OMISSIONS & ALTERATIONS IN QUOTATIONS**OMISSIONS**

Sometimes it is practical to omit words, sentences, or whole paragraphs from a quoted passage. When omitting text, use an ellipsis (...) to indicate the missing text. Be careful that your omissions do not change the meaning of the source material.

AN OMISSION AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF A SENTENCE REQUIRES AN ELLIPSIS**BEGINNING**

- **ORIGINAL PASSAGE:** "Don't hesitate to satisfy your needs; indeed, expand your needs and demand more.' This is the worldly doctrine of today. And they believe that this is freedom. The result **for the rich is isolation and suicide, for the poor, envy and murder.**" — Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*
- **QUOTE WITH OMISSION:** Dostoyevsky's uses Zosima to argue that the effect of a world that encourages the privileging and fulfillment of personal needs is not freedom, but "**...** for the rich is isolation and suicide, for the poor, envy and murder" (341).

END

- **ORIGINAL PASSAGE:** “The point of marriage is not to create a quick commonality by tearing down all boundaries; on the contrary, a good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of his solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust.” — Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters of Young Poet*
- **QUOTES WITH OMISSION:** In his seventh letter to Kappus, Rilke reveals his position on the Romantic ideal of total intimacy and union of selves by noting that “the point of marriage is not to create a quick commonality by tearing down all boundaries . . .” (13).

AN OMISSION IN THE MIDDLE OF A SENTENCE OR PARAGRAPH REQUIRES AN ELLIPSIS**SENTENCE OR PARAGRAPH OMISSION**

- **ORIGINAL:** “We are sun and moon, dear friend; we are sea and land. It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is: each the other's opposite and complement.” — Herman Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*
- **QUOTE WITH OMISSION:** Narcissus offers an ideal of love that honors rather than obscures separateness, “We are sun and moon, . . . It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is: each the other's opposite and complement.” (Hesse 298).
- Use an ellipsis followed by a period to indicate an omission between two sentences. [. . .]

WORKS CITED PAGE

MLA requires an end-of-text list of sources. **This list includes all sources that you used in the paper.** The information on this list allows writers to credit sources and readers to find, evaluate, and make further use of those sources.

What to include

- Every source you paraphrased, summarized, or quoted in the text.
- Do not include sources that you consulted but did not cite.

How to order the entries

- Works cited entries are alphabetized by the first letter in the entry, generally an author's last name.
- Works cited entries that have no author or editor are alphabetized by title.
- When alphabetizing by title, ignore articles (*A*, *An*, and *The*) that begin the title.
- When an entry starts with a number, alphabetize the entry based on how the number would appear if written.
- When an entry starts with a year, alphabetize the entry based on how the year would be spoken.

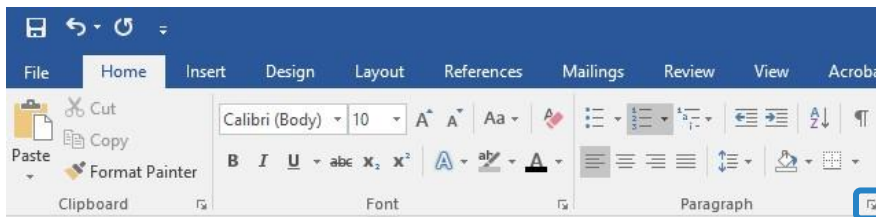
How to format the page

- The works cited list comes after the final page of text and is a new page.
- The list is preceded by the centered heading: Works Cited
- Works Cited entries are double-spaced with **NO SPACE** between entries.
- Works Cited entries make use of a **hanging indent**.

HANGING INDENT

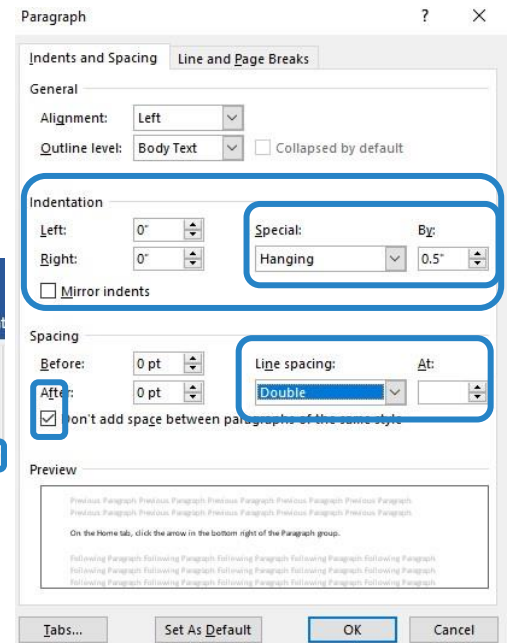
MICROSOFT WORD

1. Select the text that you would like to indent. (You can press **CTRL + T** or **Command + T**.)
2. On the **HOME** tab, click the arrow in the bottom right corner of the Paragraph group.
3. In the Paragraph dialog box, under **Indentation**, in the Special drop-down, select **Hanging**.
4. Under **BY**, set the measurement to **0.5**.
5. Ensure there is **Opt spacing after paragraphs** OR check the box indicating **Don't add a space between paragraphs of the same style**.
6. Click **OK**.



Quick Tip

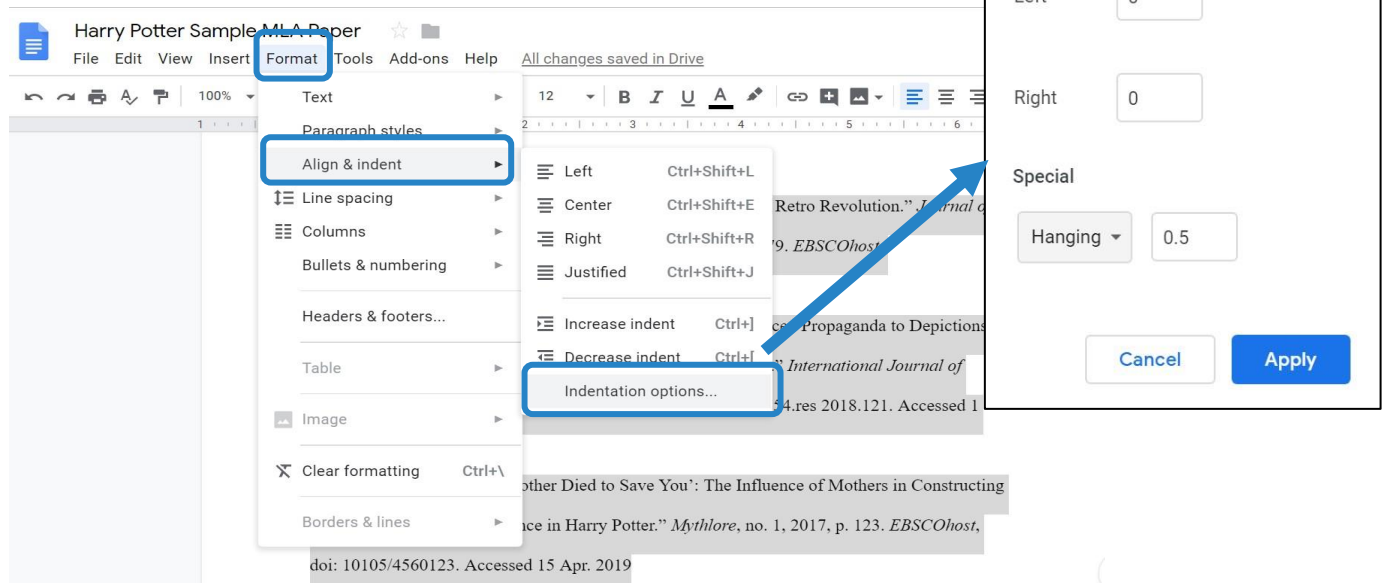
YOU CAN ADD A HANGING INDENT TO YOUR ENTRIES IN **WORD** BY HIGHLIGHTING THEM AND PRESSING **CTRL+T**. SEE NEXT SECTION



***NOTE: MAKE SURE YOU CHECK ALL OF YOUR CITATIONS ARE IN THE CORRECT FORMAT. Doing the Hanging Indent option does not always mean that it worked properly. ***

GOOGLE DOCS

1. Highlight your works cited entries.
2. Open the **Format** tab and select **Align & Indent**.
3. Select **Indentation options ...** from the side menu.
4. When the Indentation options window opens, select **Hanging** from the SPECIAL drop-down menu and specify **0.5**.
5. Click the **Apply** button.



***NOTE: MAKE SURE YOU CHECK ALL OF YOUR CITATIONS ARE IN THE CORRECT FORMAT. Doing the Hanging Indent option does not always mean that it worked properly. ***

For a more in-depth look at these rules and how they're applied, scan the code below to read a sample paper in MLA format from the Purdue University Online Writing Lab.

