

How to Create an MLA-Style “Works Cited” Bibliography

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These instructions assume you’re using Microsoft Word on a Macintosh computer (although any word processor will do). If you’re using MS Word on a Windows computer, the same keyboard shortcut commands are available as shown here, except that you substitute the <Ctrl> (“Control”) key for the <Command> (“Open-Apple”) key shown here; also some menu commands will be in different places. An example “Works Cited” bibliography to which you can refer is at the end of these instructions.

In general...

The “Works Cited”—like the rest of your paper—uses 1-inch margins all around. It is double-spaced, with the title “Works Cited” centered at the top of the page. You do not number your entries! Instead, all entries are in **alphabetical order by whatever comes at the beginning of each entry**.

The page number goes ½-inch from the top of the page, flush against the right margin, after your last name (e.g. “Smith 10”). Since this is “outside” the margin, this means you’ll create a “header” and type this in that header area, aligned flush right. You number the page (or pages) of the “Works Cited” as a continuation of your paper: if the text of your paper ends on page 9, the first page of your “Works Cited” is page 10.

You can create a separate file for your bibliography, or add it to the end of the file containing the text of your paper. If you add it to the end of an existing file, go to the very end of your paper, and use (top menu) **Insert | Break | Page Break** to force a new page. Remember to save often!

Steps to follow...

1. Set the line spacing to “Double”: (top menu) **Format | Paragraph...Line Spacing: Double**.
2. Set the alignment for this paragraph to be center-aligned with <Command>-<E>.
3. Type the title (without the quotes): “**Works Cited**”; then hit <Return> once.
4. Set the alignment to left-aligned with <Command>-<L>.
5. Set the alignment to hanging-indent: **Format | Paragraph...Special: Hanging**. Be sure By: is set to **0.5”** before you click OK.
6. Look over your rough draft or notes for all your bibliography entries. Decide which entry is first alphabetically by whatever is at the beginning of each entry (or see “Tip” for step 8, below).
7. Type your first entry, being careful to include all punctuation and abbreviation specified by MLA style (see “Taking Source Notes—What To Write and How” handout for examples).

☞ **Do not hit <Return> until you’ve typed the complete entry!**

Word considers a long URL to be a single word, and so may “wrap” it to a new line, leaving a large amount of white space at the end of the previous line. If this happens, go back and try putting a space *after one of the slashes* in the URL. MLA style allows URLs to be broken at the end of a line, but only after a slash.

8. Type your (alphabetically) next entry, being sure to not hit <Return> until it’s complete. Continue with all your other entries. Only hit <Return> once after each entry; there are no “extra” blank lines between entries except for the normal single blank line caused by the double-space setting.
- ☞ Tip: Rather than figuring out the alphabetical order of your entries in advance, you can type them all in any order, then have Word alphabetize them for you. To do this, type all your entries, then do a Save. Then **select (highlight) all the entries**—including the paragraph marker at the end of

the last one (which may be invisible; click the “¶” button in the toolbar to make all paragraph markers, tabs and spaces show up...Don’t worry, they won’t print). Finally, select (top menu) **Table | Sort**, and click “OK”. If the sort doesn’t turn out the way you wanted it to, close the document (*click on “Don’t Save”!*), then re-open it again and try again.

9. Create your header with **View | Header and Footer**. Set right-alignment with <Command>-<R>, then type **your last name and a space**. Then...

If this “Works Cited” is in the same file as your paper...

- In the header/footer toolbar that popped up, click once on the **icon immediately to the right of “Autotext”**...the one that looks like a bent-cornered sheet of paper with a big “#” in the middle of it. (Do *not* click the icon *three* over, which looks similar except has a hand pointing to it.) Then click “Close” on the toolbar. This will create the header with your last name and the page number—automatically the number of whatever page that is—throughout your entire paper, starting with page 1.

☞ MLA style does not require a separate title page for a research paper. However, *if you created a title page and made it the first page in this file* (before your first page of text), creating a header this way will make the header appear on that title page as well as the other pages. You can make that disappear from the title page—and then have Word number your pages starting with the first page of your text (rather than count that title page as page 1)—by doing the following:

- A. Use **File | Page Setup...** Under the drop-down list in the upper left, select “**Microsoft Word 2001**”.
- B. Click the “**Margins**” button, then the “**Layout**” tab. In the “Headers and Footers” section, check the “**Different first page**” box. Click “OK”.
- C. Go to the first page of your text (page 2—the first page after your title page), where you’ll see your header grayed-out. **Double-click in that header area** and the header toolbar pops up.
- D. Click the **icon third-to-the-right** of “Autotext” (bent-cornered sheet of paper with small “#” in the middle, and a hand pointing to it). In the “Page numbering” section, click the “**Start at:**” **radio button**, and set it to “**0**” (zero). Click “OK”.

If this “Works Cited” is in a file by itself (not the same file as your paper)...

- A. In the header/footer toolbar that popped up, click once on the **icon immediately to the right of “Autotext”**...the one that looks like a bent-cornered sheet of paper with a big “#” in the middle of it. (*Not* the icon *three* over, which looks similar except has a hand pointing to it.)
- B. Next, click the **icon third-to-the-right** of “Autotext” (bent-cornered sheet of paper with *small* “#” in the middle, and a hand pointing to it). In the “Page numbering” section, click the “**Start at:**” **radio button**, and set it to **one greater than the last page of your text** (e.g. if the last page of your text is 9, set this to 10). Then click “OK”.

This will create the header for your “Works Cited” with your last name and the page number—the number of whatever page that is in your entire paper. If your “Works Cited” runs onto a second page, that page’s number will be correct as well.

Works Cited

- “Africa.” The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia. 15th ed. 2002.
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- Jacobs, Walter, Meredith R. Baker, and Shirley Reynolds. Daily Life among the Aztecs. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
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- McGeary, Johanna “The Trouble with Inspectors.” Time 16 Dec. 2002: 24-31.
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- Wilcox, Rachel. Turning the Tide: Alternative Energy from the Seas. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.