MLA Style Formatting

Most writing within humanities uses the Modern Language Association (MLA) Style.

MLA Style helps writers to be consistent in formatting their text, allowing the reader to focus on Additionally, incorporating and citing sources in MLA Style increases the writer's credibility and directs others to resources where they can learn more about the subject or topic.

This handout, based on MLA Handbook, Eighth Edition and The MLA Style Center Online (style.mla.org), focuses on formatting text in MLA Style, but writers should always tailor their work to their audience and assignment. For each topic, the corresponding handbook section is listed in parentheses; if no section is listed, the information is found at the MLA Style Center Online. **Note:** Formatting for MLA Handbook, Eighth Edition is the same as the seventh edition.

General Format (MLA Handbook sections 1.3 and 3) and In-text Citations

Font: Clear, easily readable; standard size (e.g., Times New Roman, 12 pt. font) **Line Spacing:** Double-spaced; no extra lines between heading, title, or body

Margins: 1-inch margins

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African American Studies 202

Professor Miller

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Economic Determinism and Ambition in the Migration Series by Jacob Lawrence

The Migration series by Jacob Lawrence is a sequence of sixty paintings (with captions)

portraying the mass movement of African Americans from the rural South to cities in the North

and West during the beginning of the twentieth century. The artist was the child of African

American migrants, and he grew up during the 1930s in Harlem, where he took art classes. In

planning the series, Lawrence did a lot of library research on the history and causes of the

migration. Reading the series from beginning to end, the viewer can see that he puts the fruits of

his learning into the scenes and captions. This paper explores how the series represents the

First it might be helpful to discuss what historians say about the causes of the Great
Migration. Often they describe economic factors labeled "push" and "pull," as explained in an
encyclopedia article: "The pull of labor shortages in northern industry and the lack of white male
labor combined with the push of the devastation of the cotton crops so many blacks labored on
by flood and boll weevils to create conditions for migration" (Adams 504). This is to say that
migrants were pushed out of the South and also pulled to the North and West by economic

difficult farming conditions in the South and greater job opportunities in the North, as providing

the basis for the mass movement, but I also think that he shows hope and ambition as playing

Header: Right-align last name and page number, ½ inch from the top of the page

Heading: Left-align name, professor's name, class, and due date

Title: Centered; same size and format as the body of the paper

In-Text Citations (MLA Handbook section

3): Provide author's last name and page number (either in the body of the text or in the parenthetical citation). For more information on in-text citations see our "MLA Style Citations" handout.

Example: Adams calls this "pull of labor" (12).

This is called "pull of labor" (Wright 12).

Fig. 1. Sample MLA formatted paper from MLA Style Center; "Second-year course in African American studies." *The MLA Style Center*, Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

development of Lawrence's style. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., an important scholar of African American culture, emphasizes the role of the individual in two artistic movements: Lawrence's Migration series is an attempt to resolve the two central competing modes of representation in the African American tradition that clashed and struggled for dominance in the 1920s and 1930s: a naturalism that sought to reveal how individual "choice" was always shaped and curtailed by environmental forces and a modernism that sought to chart the relation of the individual will to the chaotic environment. (17) It is interesting to think about what Gates says and compare it to the idea of the "push" and "pull" causes for the migration. These causes can be seen as "environmental forces" that make people do things (like migrate) even when they might think they are making a choice. Gates also

Fig. 2. Sample block quote from MLA formatted paper from MLA Style Center; "Second-year course in African American studies." *The MLA Style Center,* Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

Block Quotes (MLA Handbook section

1.3.2): When using a quote that extends more than four lines (using 1" margins) you must use block quote format: indent ½ inch from the left margin, double-space, *do not* use quotation marks, and place the citation *after* the period.

Works Cited Format (MLA Handbook section 2.7)

The works cited page is formatted like the rest of the paper: 1 inch margins, double-spaced, a right-aligned header that includes last name and page number. List sources alphabetically with no extra lines between sources.

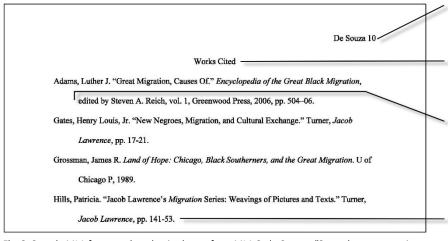


Fig. 3. Sample MLA formatted works cited page from MLA Style Center; "Second-year course in African American studies." *The MLA Style Center,* Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

Header: Continue the pagination from the rest of the paper

Title: Center and use same size and format as the body of the paper.

Hanging Indent:

Set a ½" indent for citations over one line. (To set the indent in MS Word, highlight citations, right-click and select *Paragraph*. Under *Indentation*, select *Special Indent*. Click *Hanging*, and set it to ½".)

Page Numbers: List page numbers efficiently (e.g., 141–48 instead of 141–148).