

## Formatting a Paper in MLA Style

This is what the top of your first page should look like:

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Smithson 1

↑  
↓ 1 inch ↓

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American Literature





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The Gothic in "The Raven" and "Young Goodman Brown"

Gothic fiction was very popular in the nineteenth century, and both Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne frequently used its conventions in their work. Both men were trying to support themselves and their families by writing, so it made sense for them to choose a kind of atmosphere and

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Here's how to make it look this way:

1. **Spacing:** The entire paper, including the heading, the title, indented quotations and the list of works cited, should be double-spaced. [In Word, click on Format → Paragraph and change the drop-down menu under Line Spacing to say "Double."]
2. **Font and Printing:** Use a standard, readable font like Courier or Times New Roman. The font size should be 12. Be sure the printer you use produces clear, easily visible print. Do not print the text in color.
3. **Justification:** The paper should be left-justified (have an even left margin). The title should be centered.
4. **Margins and Indentations:** There should be a 1-inch margin on all sides (top, left, right, and bottom), although the page number will appear in the top margin. [In Word, you will need to click File → Page Setup to check the margins. When an element must be indented, follow these rules:
  - a. **Paragraph** should be indented ½ inch (or 5 spaces). [In Word, use the Tab key at the beginning of each paragraph, clicking on Format → Tabs if you need to reset the first tab to ½ inch.]
  - b. **Indented Quotations** (more than 4 typed lines of prose or more than 3 lines of poetry) should be indented 1 inch (or 10 spaces). [The most efficient way to do this in Word is to use the Increase Indent icon: .]
  - c. **Items in the Works Cited** list should be typed with a hanging indentation. [In Word, click on Format → Paragraph and change the drop-down menu under Indentation, Special to say "Hanging."]
5. **Page Numbers:** Type the page number ½ inch from the top of the page in the right-hand corner. Put your last name before the number. [In Word, click View → Header and Footer. Press Tab twice to move to the right side of the header. Type your last name; then space. Next, click the page number icon: . Click Close.] Page numbers appear on all pages, including the first page and the Works Cited page.
6. **Heading:** Unless your teacher specifically told you to do so, do not use a title page. Instead, begin the first page with a double-spaced heading typed even with the left margin. The first line is your name, the second is your teacher's name, the third is the course name/number, and the fourth is the date.
7. **Title:** Double-space after the heading and type the title, centering it. [In Word, use the Center icon: . Use the Align Left icon:  to turn centering off.] DO NOT BOLD, ITALICIZE, OR UNDERLINE TITLE. Only double-space between title and first paragraph.
8. **List of Works Cited:** Use Ctrl-Enter to force the material to go to a new page. Type the heading "Works Cited," at the top, centering it. (Do not put it in quotation marks.) Then type your entries, using a hanging indentation (see #4) and double spacing (see #1). Do not put extra space between the items.