

# MANUSCRIPT FORM (MSF)

(rev. 9/26/09)

**NOTE:** Sources for this document are *English Writing Skills*, the 7th edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, the *Holt Handbook (third course 2003)*, and English teachers at Eden Prairie High School.

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## CORRECT MANUSCRIPT FORM (MLA FORMAT) FOR A FORMAL PAPER: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **CHOICE OF INK AND FONT AND SPACING** Use only **black** ink. Use an easily readable font (such as Times New Roman) in which the style contrasts clearly with the italic. Set the font to a standard size (usually 12-point). Keep the font choice and font size consistent. Double-space the entire paper, including quotations and the list of works cited. Leave one space after a period or a question mark or an exclamation point unless your instructor prefers two spaces.
2. **MARGINS** on the left, right, and bottom must be a minimum of one inch. Do not justify right margin. See **SAMPLE #1--FIRST PAGE OF A PAPER** (page MSF 3). If a quotation extends to more than four lines when run into the text (called a “block quotation”), set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and double-spacing (DS) it, without adding quotation marks. See **SAMPLE #2--FIRST PAGE OF A PAPER WITH BLOCK QUOTATION** (page MSF 4).
3. **HEADING AND TITLE** Your heading is placed flush on the left 1” margin. Double-space your name, the teacher’s name, the class title, and the due date (date, month, year). If you are writing the paper with a partner, put both names—each on its own line. Double-space after the heading and center the title. Do not italicize, underline, put in quotation marks or boldface, or type the title in all capital letters. Titles should be capitalized according to rules for capitalization of titles. (See the Grammar Rules Summary, or GRS, rule 3.) Use the same font size for the title as the rest of the paper. Do not put a period after the title.

4. **DOUBLE-SPACE THE TEXT** Double-space down from the title to the first line of the text. No extra spacing should be added beyond the double-spacing.
5. **PAGE NUMBERING** Type your last name and page number in the upper right corner, one-half inch down from the top edge and flush with the 1” right margin. Do not write the word “page” before the page number or any abbreviation for the word “page.” Do the same for all subsequent pages. However, there is no heading on subsequent pages. The text on all subsequent pages begins one inch down. If you are writing the paper with a partner, put both last names in the upper right corner. For example: Hudson and Baldwin 2. See **SAMPLE #3—SUBSEQUENT PAGE OF A PAPER** (page MSF 5).
6. **WHAT ABOUT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS?** Edit your paper carefully before printing, but if you must fix a typographical error on your final copy, all typographical errors may be corrected neatly with correction fluid and black ink. Write your letters no larger than the type used. If a finished page contains more than three or four corrections, however, it should be retyped. A final copy should have no cross-outs. A so-called “typo” is still counted as a spelling error.
7. **USE ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER** Do not type on the back of a sheet of paper.

**SAMPLE #1--FIRST PAGE OF A PAPER***down 1"**down ½"**1" margin*

Samantha Baldwin

*DS*

Mr. Holm

*DS*

English 10

*DS*15 May 2009 *Note: no commas are used!**DS**1" margin*Marriage as a Dubious Goal in *Mansfield Park**indent**DS**1/2"* Jane Austen's 1814 novel *Mansfield Park* begins and ends with the topic of marriage. In

this regard it seems to fit into the genre of the courtship novel, a form popular in the eighteenth century in which the plot is driven by the heroine's difficulties in attracting an offer from the proper suitor. According to Katherine Sobba Green, the courtship novel "detailed a young woman's entrance into society, the problems arising from that situation, her courtship, and finally her choice (almost always fortunate) among suitors" (2). Often the heroine and her eventual husband are kept apart initially by misunderstanding, by the hero's misguided attraction to another, by financial obstacles, or by family objections. The overcoming of these problems, with the marriage of the newly united couple, forms the happy ending anticipated by readers. Sometimes, as in a Shakespearean comedy, there are multiple marriages happily celebrated; this is the case, for example, in Austen's own *Pride and Prejudice*.

Despite the fact that *Mansfield Park* ends with the marriage of the heroine, Fanny Price, to the man whom she has set her heart on, her cousin Edmund Bertram, the novel expresses a strong degree of ambivalence toward the pursuit and achievement of marriage, especially for women. For Fanny, marriage may be a matter of the heart, but for other characters in the novel, marriage—or the desire for marriage—is precipitated by, among other things, vanity, financial considerations, boredom, the desire to "disoblige" one's family (Austen, *Mansfield* 5)

*1" minimum bottom margin*

# SAMPLE #2--FIRST PAGE OF A PAPER WITH BLOCK QUOTATION

*down 1"**down ½ "*  
Baldwin 1*1" margin*

Samantha Baldwin

*DS*

Mr. Holm

*DS*

English 10

*DS*15 May 2009 *Note: no commas are used!**DS**1" margin*

## Ellington's Adventures in Music and Geography

*indent**DS*

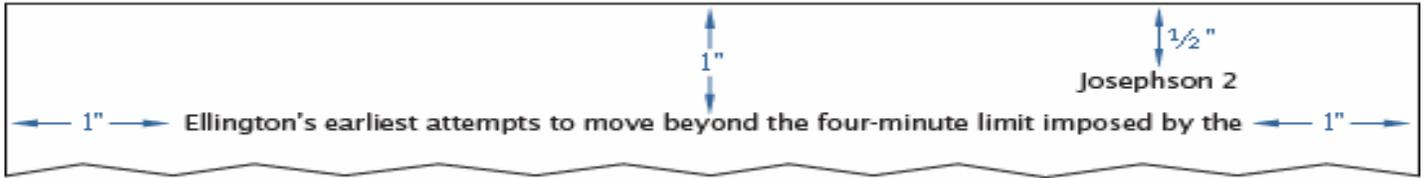
*1/2"* In studying the influence of Latin American, African, and Asian music on modern American composers, music historians tend to discuss such figures as Aaron Copland, George Henry Cowell, Alan Hovhaness, and John Cage (Griffiths). They usually overlook Duke Ellington, whom Gunther Schuller rightly calls "one of America's great composers" (318), because are familiar only with Ellington's popular pieces. Still little known are the many orchestral suites Ellington composed, several of which explore his impressions of the people, places, and music of many countries.

Not all music critics, however, have ignored Ellington's excursions into longer musical pieces. Raymond Horricks compared him with Ravel, Delius, and Debussy:

*indent 1"* The continually enquiring mind of Ellington [. . .] has sought to extend steadily the imaginative boundaries of the musical form on which it subsists. [. . .] Ellington since the mid-1930s has been engaged upon extending both the imagery and the formal construction of written jazz. To this day, critics have marveled at the way Ellington dared to reach such heights. (122-23)

Ellington's earliest attempts to move beyond the four-minute limit imposed by the composers

*1" minimum bottom margin*

**SAMPLE #3--SUBSEQUENT PAGE OF A PAPER**

Type your last name and page number in the upper **right** corner, one-half inch down from the top edge and flush with the 1" right margin. Do not write the word "page" before the page number or use any abbreviation for the word "page." The text on all subsequent pages begins one inch down. If you are writing the paper with a partner, put both last names in the upper right corner in the same order on all pages. For example: Hudson and Baldwin 2.

## REQUIREMENTS AND MANUSCRIPT FORM FOR AN OUTLINE

1. **TYPES OF OUTLINES** The *MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) suggests that if an outline is required and needs to be submitted formally with your paper, you should ask your instructor for the form of the outline you are to use. The two most common forms are the **topic outline** (which only uses short phrases) and the **sentence outline** (which requires the use of complete sentences throughout). No period is required at the end of a topic outline entry. Sentence outline entries must be given proper end punctuation.
2. **CHOICE OF INK AND FONT AND SPACING** Use only **black** ink. Use an easily readable font (such as Times New Roman) in which the style contrasts clearly with the italic. Set the font to a standard size (usually 12-point). Keep the font choice and font size consistent. Leave one space after a period or a question mark or an exclamation point unless your instructor prefers two spaces.
3. **MARGINS** on the left, right, and bottom must be a minimum of one inch. Do not justify right margin.
4. **NAME, PAGE NUMBERING, AND TITLE** Type your **last name and page number** in the **upper right-hand** corner, one-half inch down from the top edge and flush with the 1” right margin. If your outline is the first page of your paper, then your outline will be considered “page one.” Do not write the word “page” before the page number or any abbreviation for the word “page.” Do this on the first page as well as all subsequent pages of the outline.

Do not use the word “outline” as the title of the outline. Use the title of your paper. Center this title one inch down from the top of the page. Put this title in capital letters and lower case letters. Do not italicize, underline, put in quotation marks or boldface, or type the title in all capital letters. Use the same font size for the title as the rest of the paper. Do not put a period after the title. Double-space after the heading and center the title.

5. **WHAT ABOUT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS?** Edit your paper carefully before printing, but if you must fix a typographical error on your final copy, all typographical errors may be corrected neatly with correction fluid and black ink. Write your letters no larger than the type used. If a finished page contains more than three or four corrections, however, it should be retyped. A final copy should have no cross-outs. A so-called “typo” is still counted as a spelling error.
6. **USE ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER** Do not type on the back of a sheet of paper.
7. **SPACING THE OUTLINE** Correctly spacing the outline can be quite challenging. Be sure to turn the auto-formatting feature off. Auto-formatting on most computers does not use MLA defaults. Double-space down from the title to the first line of the outline. As far as spacing the rest of the outline, you have a choice here. Ask your teacher which spacing style he or she prefers. You may either single-space the entire outline (See **SAMPLE #1—SINGLE-SPACED OUTLINE** on page MSF 9) or double-space each section of the outline and double-space between the major sections of the outline (See **SAMPLE #2—DOUBLE-SPACED OUTLINE** on page MSF 10).

8. **INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION** your introduction and conclusion should each have at least **two** major subdivisions (A, B).

9. **HOW IS THE OUTLINE ORDERED?** The descending parts of an outline are labeled like this:

- I.
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
    - 1.
    - 2.
      - a.
      - b.
        - (1)
        - (2)
          - (a)
          - (b)

- II.
  - A.
    - 1.
    - 2.
  - B.
    - 1.
      - a.
      - b.
    - 2.
      - a.
      - b.
  - C.

10. **DIVISIONS IN THE OUTLINE** Use Roman numerals for main topics. Minor topics are given capital letters. Sub-topics are given Arabic numbers. Then, detail is given in lower case letters.

11. **INDENTING** Indent all sub-topics. Indent so that all letters or numbers of the same kind will come directly under one another in a vertical line. Leave one space after the period unless your instructor prefers two spaces. **LINE UP ALL PERIODS!** This is harder to do than you might think it is.

12. **BALANCE THE OUTLINE** All letters or numbers must describe a topic or sub-topic in your outline. If you don't have a topic or a sub-topic for a particular line in your outline, remove the letter or number rather than leaving it blank. However, remember that there must always be at least two sub-topics under every topic. This means there must be a **II** to complement every **I**, a **B** to complement every **A**, a **2** to complement every **1** and so forth. However, if you happen to have three sub-topics under a topic, that doesn't mean you must have three topics under the next topic. For example, if under major division **II**, you have an **A**, **B**, and a **C**, this doesn't mean that under major division **III**, you MUST an **A**, **B**, and a **C**.

13. **WHAT IF THERE REALLY IS ONLY ONE DETAIL?** If you want to include **only one detail**, use a dash (--) beside the entry and then write the detail. Do not space before or after the dash.

Example: I. Staff who office in English department

A. English teachers

1. Mr. Welshons

2. Ms. O'Brien

3. Ms. Wallenberg

4. Mr. Olson

B. Office assistant—Ms. Peterson

14. **CAPITALIZATION** Begin each entry with a capital letter. Only capitalize the first word of each entry unless a proper noun or proper adjective appears in the entry.

15. **TOPICS MUST RELATE** A sub-topic must **belong** under the main topic beneath which it is placed. It must be closely related to the topic above it.

**ERROR example:** I. Dull board games

A. Sorry

B. Monopoly

C. Shuffleboard *Note: Shuffleboard doesn't belong here; it's not a board game.*

**SAMPLE TOPIC OUTLINE #1—SINGLE-SPACED STYLE***½ inch down*  
Anderson 1*DS*  
Historical Significance of *Beowulf*  
*DS*

- 1"* I. Introduction
- A. Attention-getter
  - B. Thesis statement *Note: Only capitalize the "T" in "Thesis," not the "s" in "statement."*  
*DS*
- II. Ideal hero standards
- A. Courage
  - B. Heroic code
  - C. Death over dishonor
  - D. Avoidance of hubris  
*DS*
- III. Social structure
- A. Historical background of origin of the tale
  - B. Explanation of the tribal system
  - C. Expectations
    - 1. King
    - 2. Nation
  - D. Role of women  
*DS*
- IV. Religious values
- A. Existent Christian beliefs *Note: Capitalize the "C" because "Christian" is a proper adjective.*
  - B. Relevant Christian beliefs in the tale
    - 1. Only went to battle with monsters
    - 2. Grendel's relation to Cain
    - 3. God as the final judge of eternal life
  - C. Prevalence of pagan beliefs
    - 1. Impossibility of the coexistence of heroic code and Christian beliefs *1" min.*
    - 2. The importance of fate
    - 3. Moral standards vs. religious guidelines
    - 4. Final important ideas  
*DS*
- V. Conclusion
- A. Restatement of thesis and main ideas
  - B. Concluding observations

*1" min. margin*

**SAMPLE TOPIC OUTLINE #2—DOUBLE-SPACED STYLE 1<sup>st</sup> PAGE***½ inch down*

Harrison 1

*DS*Heroism and *Beowulf*: A Definition or a Feeling?*DS*

- 1"* I. Introduction  
*DS*
- A. Attention getter  
*DS*
- B. Thesis statement  
*DS*
1. Anglo-Saxon lens *1" min.*  
*DS*
2. Modern lens  
*DS*
3. Personal lens  
*DS*
- II. Anglo-Saxon perception of what makes a hero  
*DS*
- A. Deeds  
*DS*
1. Beowulf kills three monsters  
*DS*
2. Helps society  
*DS*
- B. Physical prowess  
*DS*
- C. Confidence  
*DS*
1. Beowulf mirrors Grendel *Note: Capitalize the "G" because "Grendel" is a proper noun*  
*DS*
2. Beowulf defends his claim  
*DS*
- III. Modern perception of what makes a hero  
*DS*
- A. Humility
1. Not shown when Beowulf fights weaponless  
*DS*
2. Not shown with Beowulf's last requests  
*DS*
- B. Leadership  
*DS*
1. Beowulf is last survivor; people don't care  
*DS*
2. Gives up too easily  
*DS*
- a. Compared to firefighters in World Trade Center attacks  
*DS*
- b. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
*DS*
- c. Ruben "The Hurricane" Carter  
*DS*

*1" min. margin*

**SAMPLE TOPIC OUTLINE #2—2nd PAGE**

*½ inch down*  
Harrison 2

*DS*

C. Celebrity status

*DS*

1. Constantly under the radar

*DS*

2. Weaknesses are noticed

*DS*

*1" min.*

*1"* IV. Personal perception of what makes a hero

*DS*

A. Contribution to society

*DS*

B. Above and beyond normal human action

*DS*

V. Conclusion

*DS*

A. Restatement of thesis and ideas

*DS*

B. Conclusion statement

*1" min. margin*