

Kilgore Trout

Mr. Quale; English A2

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Word Count: 327

MLA Formatting a Writing Assignment

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield makes a humorous comment concerning the will of teachers: “You can’t stop a teacher when they want to do something. They just *do it*” (Salinger 11). Maybe we should keep this in the back of our minds as we create and format writing assignments according to the *Modern Language Association* guidelines. MLA formatting is important so that every essay is visually uniform, but also so that responsible writers can avoid plagiarism by citing their sources efficiently and correctly.

Notice that when this writer started this sentence, he indented to designate a new paragraph, but did not put an extra, useless space between paragraphs. For a font, select Times New Roman, which—although admittedly rather boring—is one of the easiest typesets to read when printed on paper. Be sure to use a font size of 12. Insert a simple header with your last name and the page number, just as Kilgore Trout did in this example. He has “Trout” (his last name), and the page number on every page of his document. MLA formatted writing should have a 1-inch margin all the way around your document. The entire document should be double-spaced (including the Works Cited page). Shorter essays (up to 3,000 words) generally do not need a separate title page. Furthermore, the author Joseph Gibaldi states, “Do not underline your title or put it in quotation marks or type it in all capital letters” (133). On the last page of your document, create your Work or Works Cited page, formatting your sources using the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* as a reference tool.

Works Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th edition. New York: The

Modern Language Association of America, 2004.

Salinger, J. D. *The Catcher in the Rye*. Boston: Bantom Books, 1968.