

The correct format for your essay:

Unfortunately Microsoft Word 2007 and 2010 have their blank page documents defaulted to improper standards for the college essay.

Here are the ways to fix your essays so they fit the proper MLA format standards:

Begin by **selecting all (Ctrl A)** even if you have a blank page

1. MS Word 2007 and 2010 is set to Calibri font, size 11. You want to set your font to Times New Roman, size 12. See the difference?
2. Next, you want to go to the Paragraph category above and make sure the Line Spacing is set to Double (not Multiple). The Spacing should show 0 pt (not 10 pt for After) because you don't want extra spacing between paragraphs.
3. Make sure your margins are set to 1" for top and sides.
4. Start in the upper left of the page and type the Identifying Information (Name, Course number, Assignment name, Date).
5. Do a hard return once, make the text central, and type your title.
6. Do another hard return once, press the tab button and begin your essay.
7. Go to the Insert option above and insert your page numbers (choose the option so the page numbers are in the upper right-hand side of the page). The page numbers will be defaulted to Calibri, size 11, so you'll need to highlight the page number and go to the Home tab and set the page number font to Times New Roman, size 12).
8. You do not need to re-format a Word Document each time you open a new template. Instead, you can save this as your "Default" and this format will open each time you create a New Document. To do this, look up at the Paragraph category and click on the little arrow to the right of the word "Paragraph." Click on that and after a new box of information opens, click on the "Default" button on the bottom. This will ask if you really want to change everything so that this format is the default setting. Click "Yes." Now you will not have to go through these tiresome steps each time you begin an essay. **A correctly formatted first page of an essay follows...**

Jane Doe

WR 121

Essay 1

January 23, 2012

Title Goes Here

Your essay begins here and should look just like this. Make sure you are not adding extra spaces between the identifying information in the upper left and the title (and there should be no extra spacing between the title and first line of your essay's text). From here, you just want to make sure your paragraphs are of an appropriate length. This usually means five to seven sentences per paragraph. But, if you write short sentences that number might be more like eight to ten, and if you write long sentences, that number will be more like four to five. As your paragraph continues, think about how you will finish the focus of that paragraph and begin transitioning into the new paragraph. What's most important, however, is that your transitional phrase does not come at the end of the paragraph; it should come at the beginning of the new paragraph. This is a nice place to end this paragraph—see the length? It's perfect.

This new paragraph should begin with a transition and/or topic sentence. Your transition should subtly reference what came before—either the focus of the earlier paragraph or a word that was used in the last sentence—and what will come next. You will either have your transition combined with the topic sentence or you will have a transition and then a topic sentence that follows the transition. Notice that to begin my new paragraph I have tabbed over one time again so that my new paragraph is indented properly (½"). As I continue to write, I should have a focused new point, and I want to make sure that my focus remains clear and on-topic, never veering off-course. I must keep my paragraph's point pertinent to the thesis and development of

the essay. Each paragraph should have one (or two) primary points to make. If you make five or six points in your essay, then revise it. Each paragraph should have a narrowed focus.