**How to present your essay**

As with other aspects of writing, knowing your audience and purpose is vital in choosing how to present your essay; for example, if you were writing a scientific or engineering report, it would probably look quite different from an essay for English class—for one thing, it might have standardized headings, whereas the English essay would probably not. A research essay, too, must conform to the documentation style of your discipline; on the other hand, if you are writing a personal essay and not using references, presenting your essay may mostly be a matter of following directions for title, typeface, margins, spacing, indentation, page numbering, and appropriate identifying information.

Although there can be considerable variability in document design, there is one thing you can be sure of: if your professor asks you to format your essay a certain way, he or she will look to see that you followed these instructions. The way your essay *looks* will help determine those important first impressions. Therefore, if you are unsure about essay presentation, seek clarification by asking.

Unless you are told otherwise, you can refer to the following; it is based on MLA guidelines:

* Most instructors today require essays to be typed. Use good-quality white paper, printing on one side. If you wish to conserve paper by printing on both sides, check with your instructor first; one-sided printing is considered neater and more professional looking.
* Leave 1-inch margins (2.5 cm) on all sides. The first page should include identification information positioned flush left (i.e., starting at the left margin). List information beginning with your name (and student ID, if applicable). Follow with instructor’s name: use the title that your instructor prefers—for example, if he identifies himself as Professor Carl Leggo, refer to him this way on your essay; if she identifies herself as Ms. K. Blank, etc., you should identify her this way as well. Also include course number and section, if applicable, and submission date. Double space, then insert the essay’s title centred.
* Double space the text of your essay; this makes it much easier for the instructor to correct errors and add comments. Also double space any notes, the Works Cited page, and block quotations. Some instructors permit 1 1/2 spacing (I do!)
* Indent each paragraph 5 spaces—do ***not*** use quadruple spaces to separate paragraphs**—**and leave a single space (not two spaces) after each period before beginning the next sentence.
* Number pages using arabic numerals in the upper right-hand corner preceded by your last name; place about one-half inch (1.25 cm) from top and flush right; you can probably create this kind of header automatically using the “Insert” or a similar function. If you need to include prefatory pages (such as a table of contents or a formal outline), use lower case roman numerals for those pages.
* Title pages are usually optional, though some instructors ask for them (I don’t!) Position the essay’s title approximately one-third of the way down the page with your name about half-way down; near the bottom of the page include course number, instructor’s name, and submission date. All items should be centred. Begin your essay on the second page (numbered 1) under the title, which is centred.
* No illustrations or colours, other than black and white, should be on any pages unless you use graphics directly relevant to your essay—for example, charts or diagrams for a scientific study. Use a paper clip to attach the pages (some instructors ask for stapled pages)—especially, don’t dog-ear them. Don’t use folders, clear or coloured, unless asked for (**No, don’t use them!!**). (If you do use a folder, the left-hand margin should be slightly wider than the other margins to enhance readability.)
* Prefer common fonts, such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Garamond (not Courier New or cursive ones). Use 10- to12-point size. *Do* ***not*** justify margins in academic papers or reports (i.e., use a *ragged* right margin). Finally, though it seems obvious, ensure that the text of your essay is easy to read. An essay printed in draft mode or from a cartridge that is almost out of ink will not be easy to read, and your instructor will probably not read it.

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The Effects of Violent Media on Children and Adolescents:   
How Parents Can Protect Their Children

For many young people, experiencing violence as a form of entertainment through electronic media is a daily part of life. Whether they watch cartoons in the morning, play computer games after school, or watch movies at night, children and adolescents are being exposed to an increasing amount of violence. At the Congressional Public Health Summit on July 26, 2000, six American medical associations highlighted the issue of violence in electronic media.