

MLA Format for Essays and Research Papers

Introduction

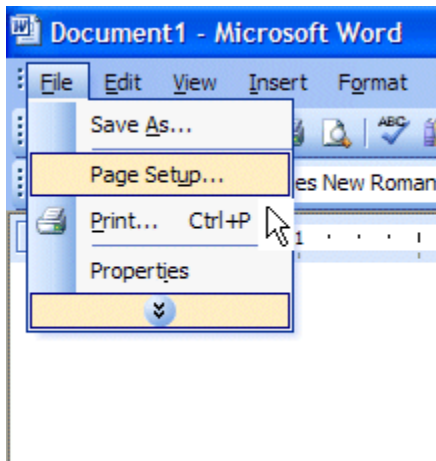
The Modern Language Association (MLA) specifies a standard format for essays and research papers written in an academic setting:

- One-inch page margins.
- Double-spaced paragraphs
- A header with author's last name and page number one-half inch from the top of each page.
- Name of author, name of professor, title of course, date of paper on the first page of the paper.
- A works cited page beginning on a separate page at the end of the paper.

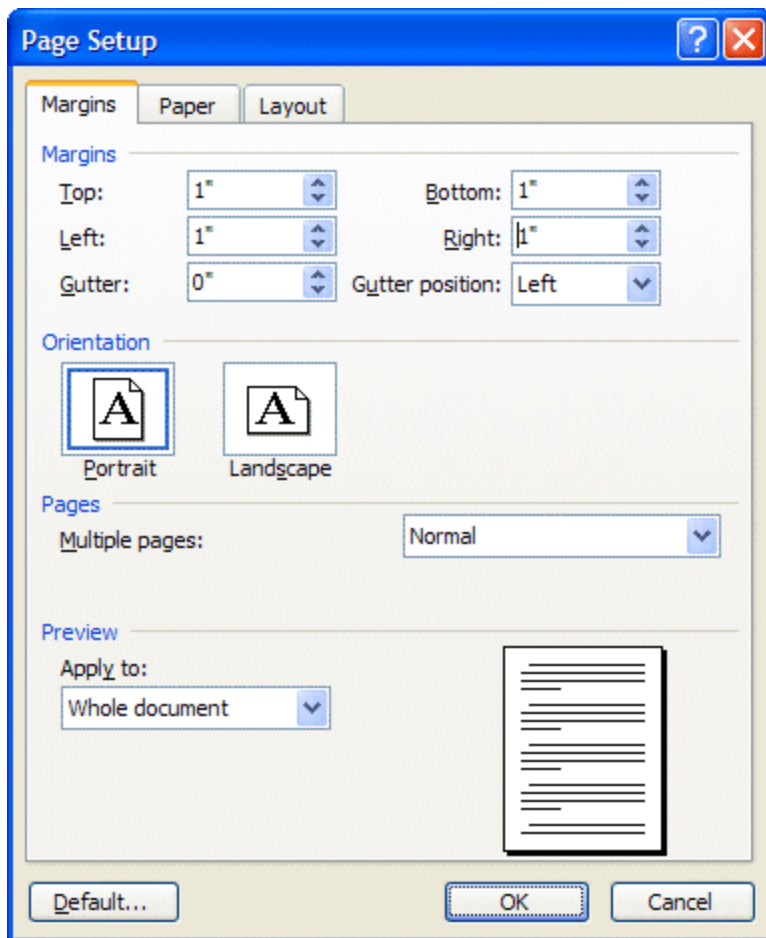
Follow the steps below to format your essay or research paper according to MLA whenever you use Microsoft Word. Before you begin, however, make sure that you can see the [Standard and Formatting toolbars](#) displayed on two rows on your screen.

1. Set the page margins to one inch.

1. To set the margins, select **F**ile and **P**age **S**etup from the Menu Bar:

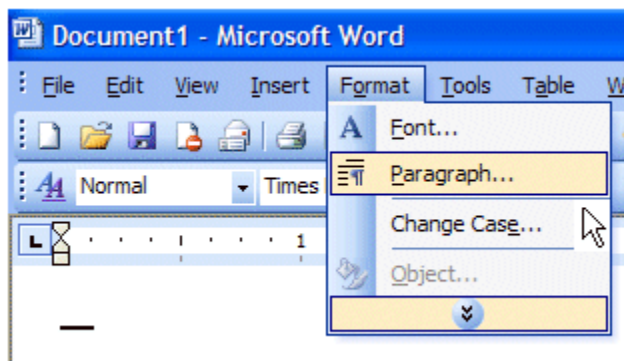


2. From the Page Format dialog box, set each margin at 1" inch by entering the number or using the up or down arrows beside each margin setting. Then click **OK**, as shown below.

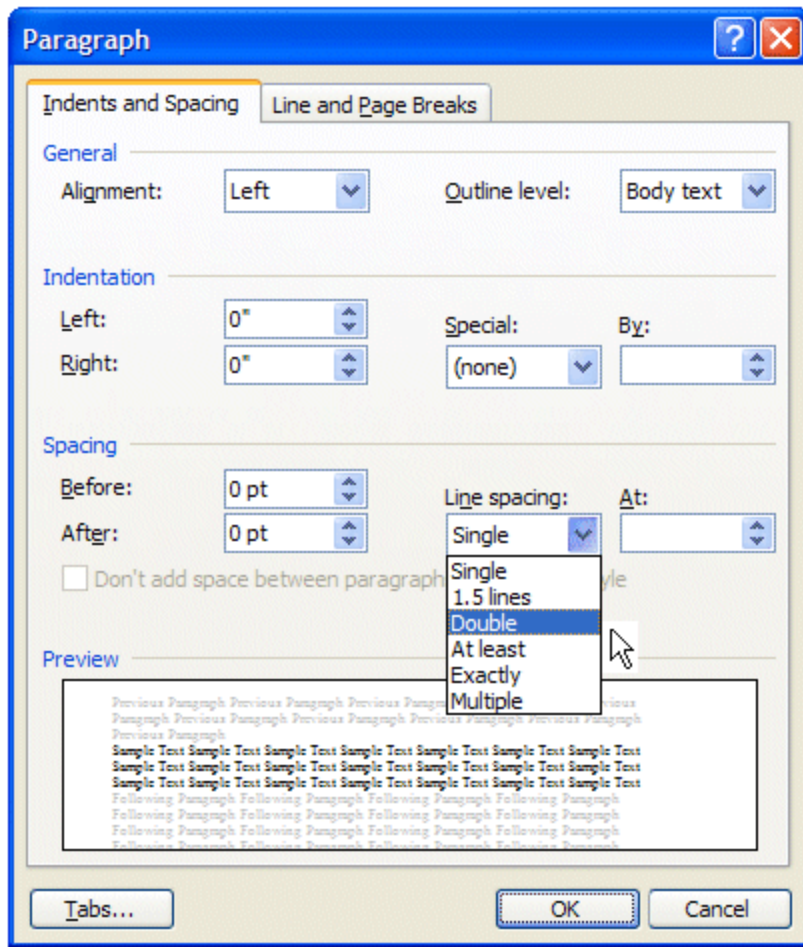


2. Set the line spacing to double spaced.

1. From the Menu Bar, select **Format** and **Paragraph**:

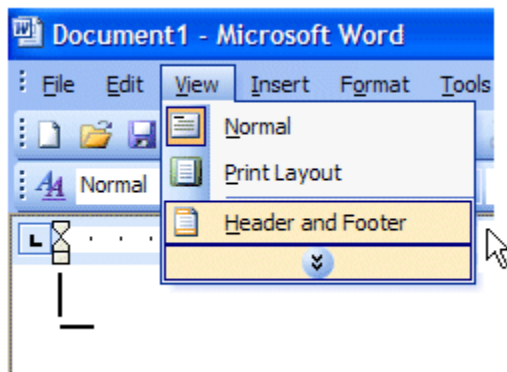


2. Make sure to select the **Indents and Spacing** tab, as shown below.
3. Under **Line Spacing**, select "Double."
4. Click **OK**.

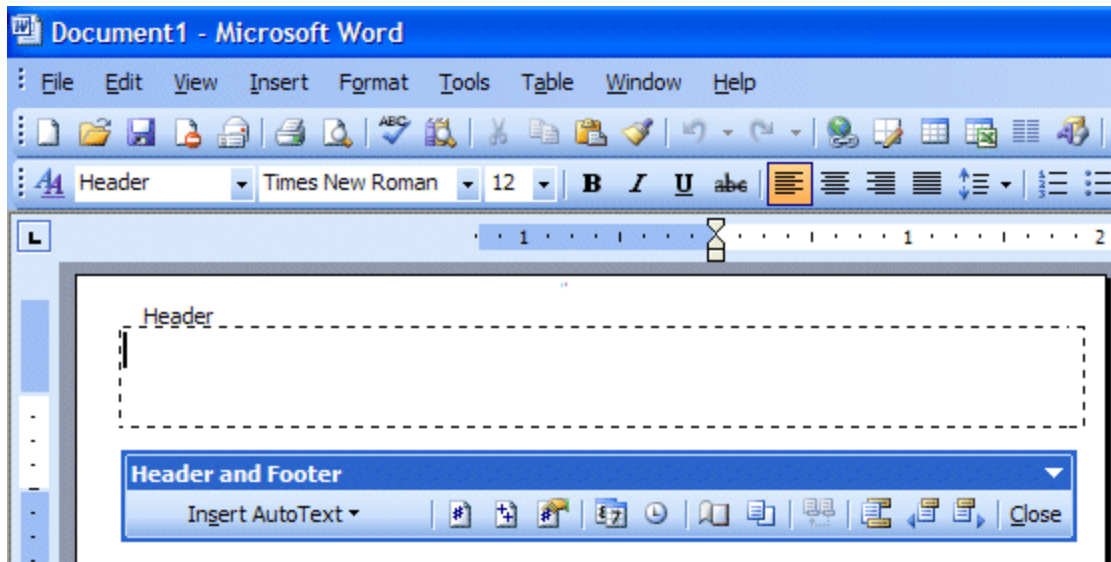


3. Create a header with your last name and automatic page numbering.

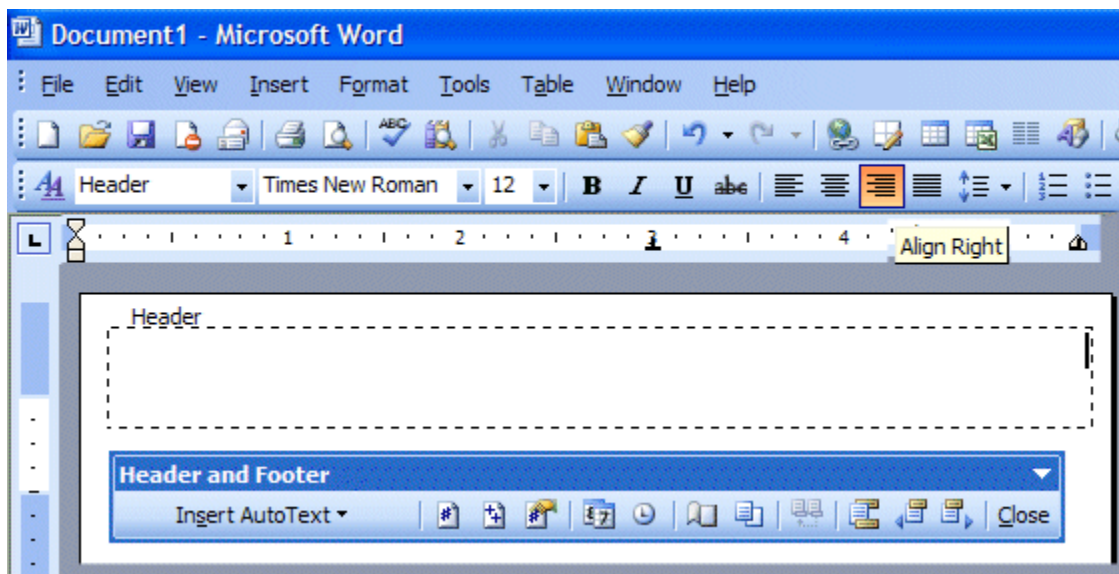
1. MLA format requires a header in the upper right-hand corner of each page set at 1/2" from the top of the page with the author's last name and a page number. To create the header and set automatic page numbering select **View** and then **Header and Footer** from the Menu Bar:



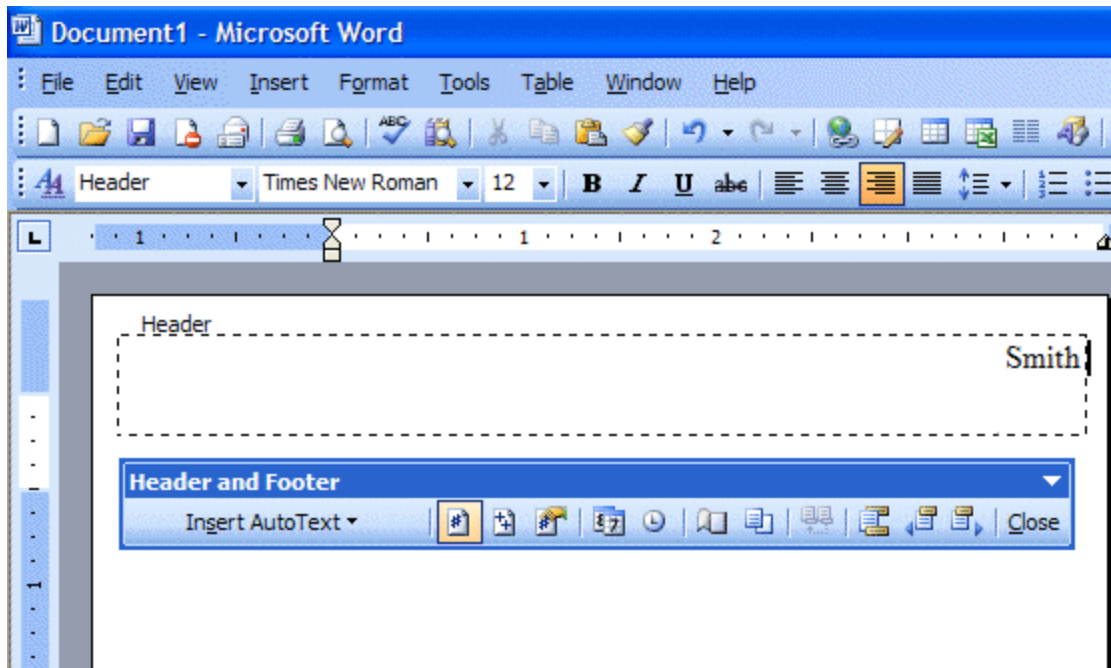
2. The header will appear at the top of your screen, ready for you to enter text and automatic page numbering:



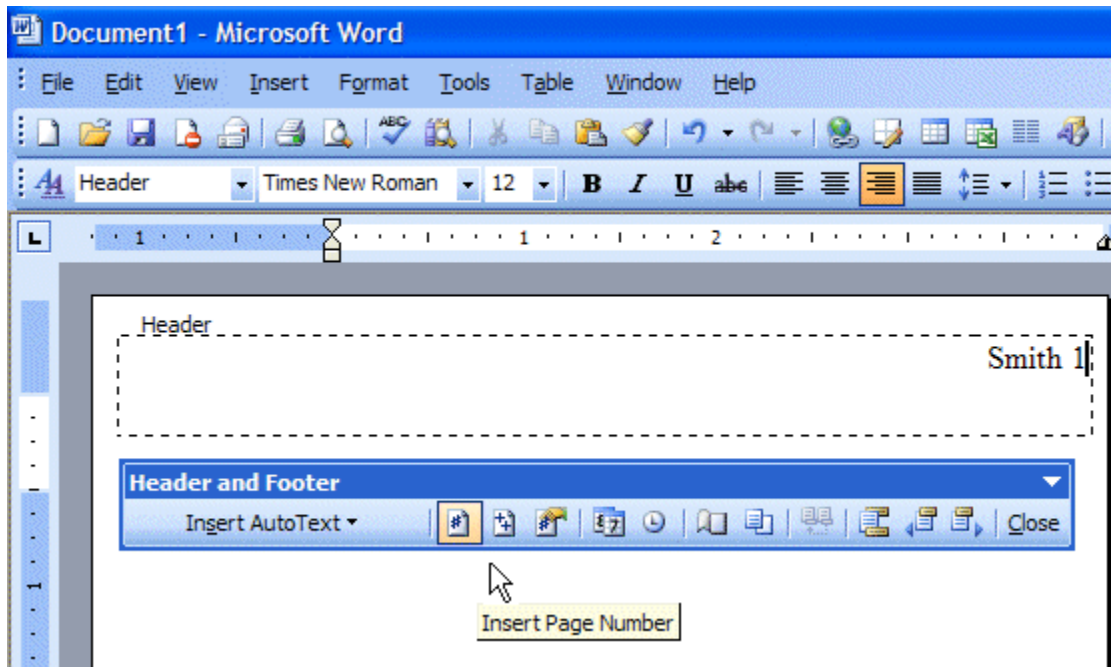
3. Notice that the cursor is set on the left margin. Click the **Align Right** icon from formatting toolbar to align the text on the right margin. Notice that the cursor is shown at the right margin in the header section below:



4. Type your last name in the header section. Then press the spacebar once to leave a single blank space after your last name, as shown below:



5. Click the pound sign (#) in the Header/Footer bar to insert the page number automatically in the header section on each page:

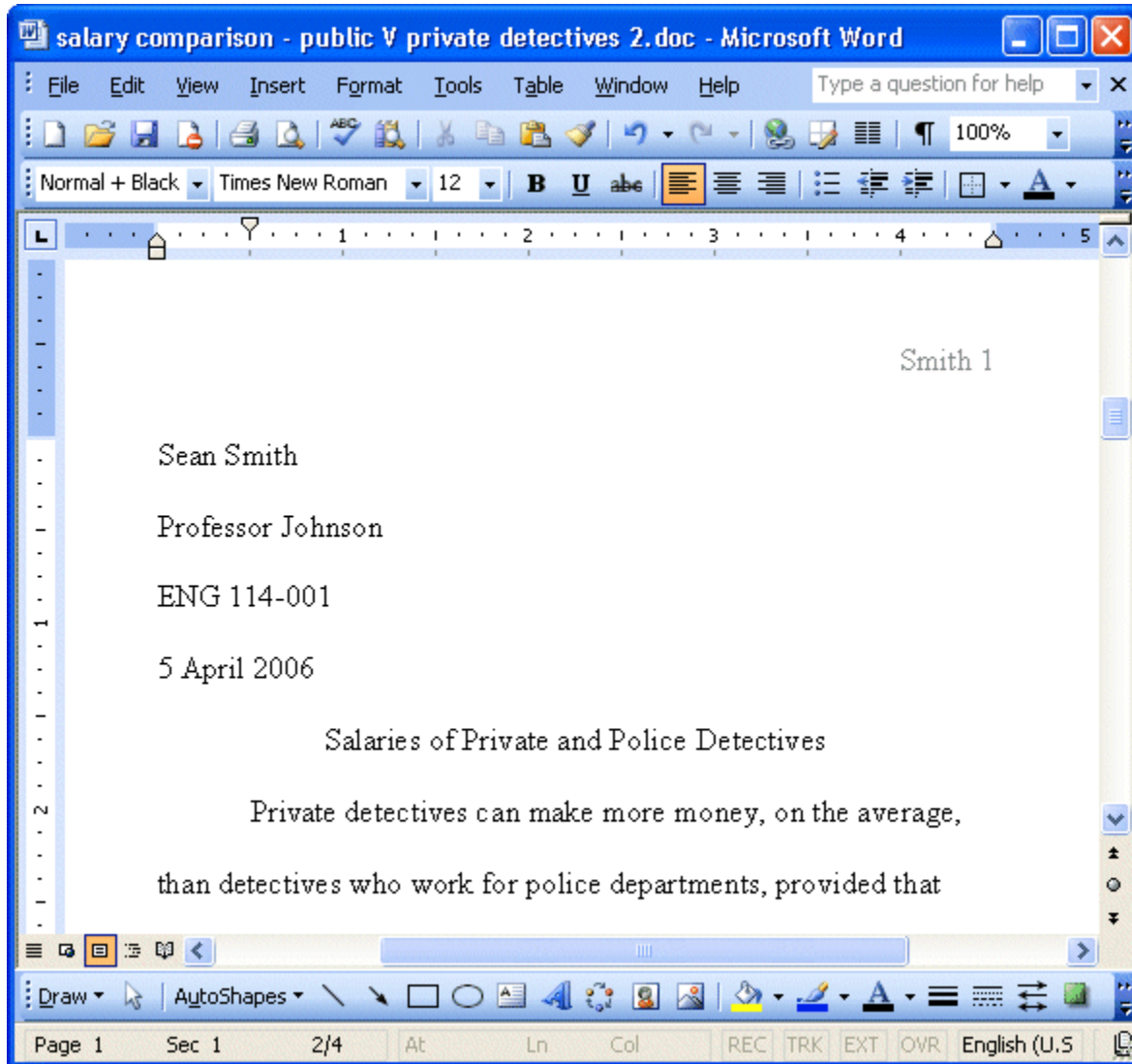


6. Click **Close** in the Header/Footer bar to close the header and return to the document.

4. Enter the first page information.

1. Type your name and then press the **Enter** key once.
2. Type your professor's name, and then **Enter**.
3. Type the course identification, and then **Enter**.
4. Type the date. Press the **Enter** key once.
5. Click on the **Align Center** icon on the formatting toolbar.

6. Type the title of your paper, capitalizing the first word and all major words and proper nouns. Do *not* use italics, boldfaced type, underlining, or all caps to format your title. Do *not* type a period at the end of the title. Press the **Enter** key once.
7. Click on the **Align Left** icon so that you will begin typing on the first line.
8. Depress the **Tab** key to indent 1/2 inch to begin your first paragraph and begin typing your document. Be sure to press the Enter key once only when you have completed a paragraph:

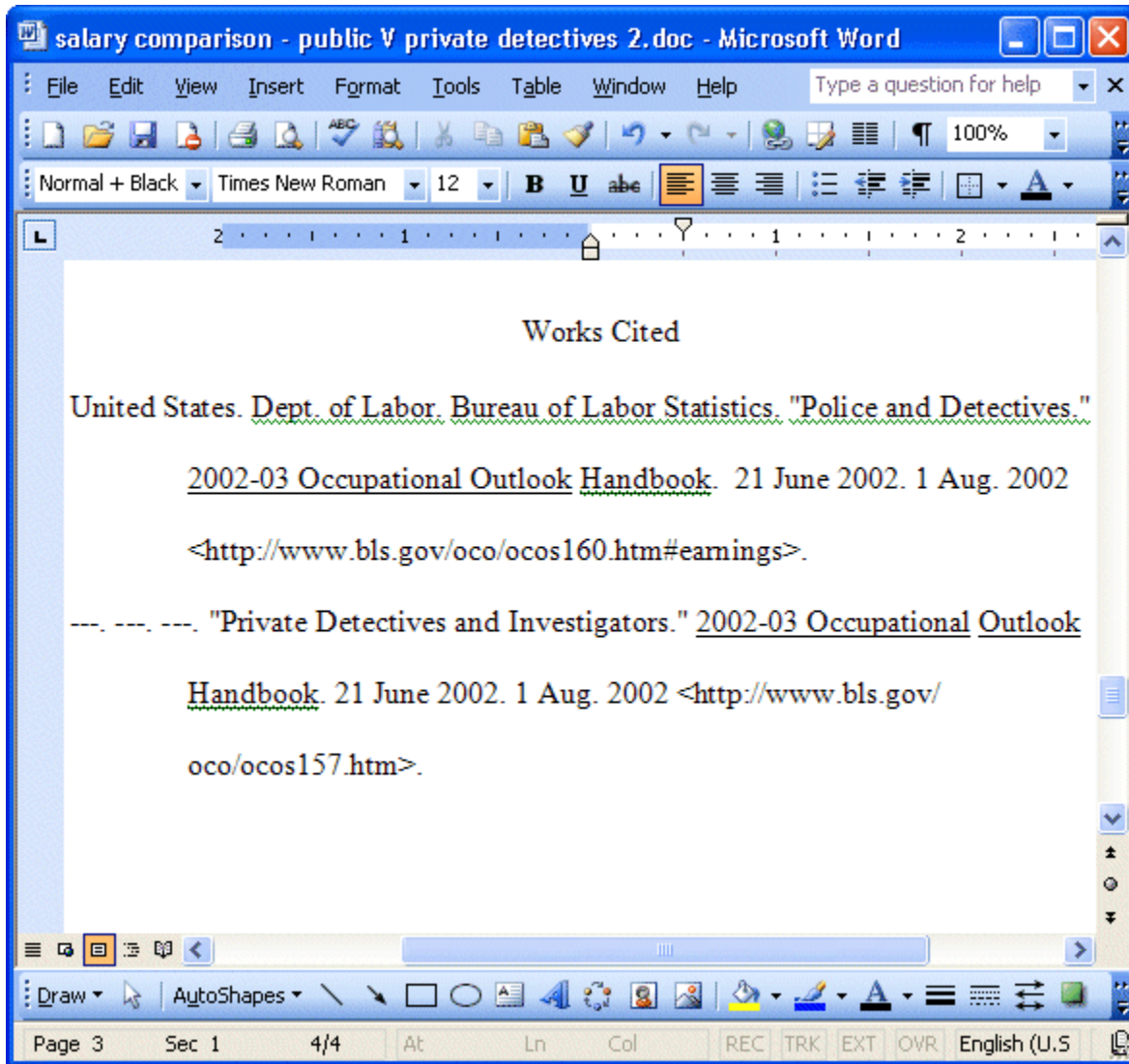


5. Type the works cited page.

Immediately after typing the final line of your paper, press the **CTRL** key and the **ENTER** key at the same time to begin a new page. Your header with your last name and automatic page numbering should appear at the top left of your paper if you are viewing your document in the "print layout" view option (from "View" on your menu bar).

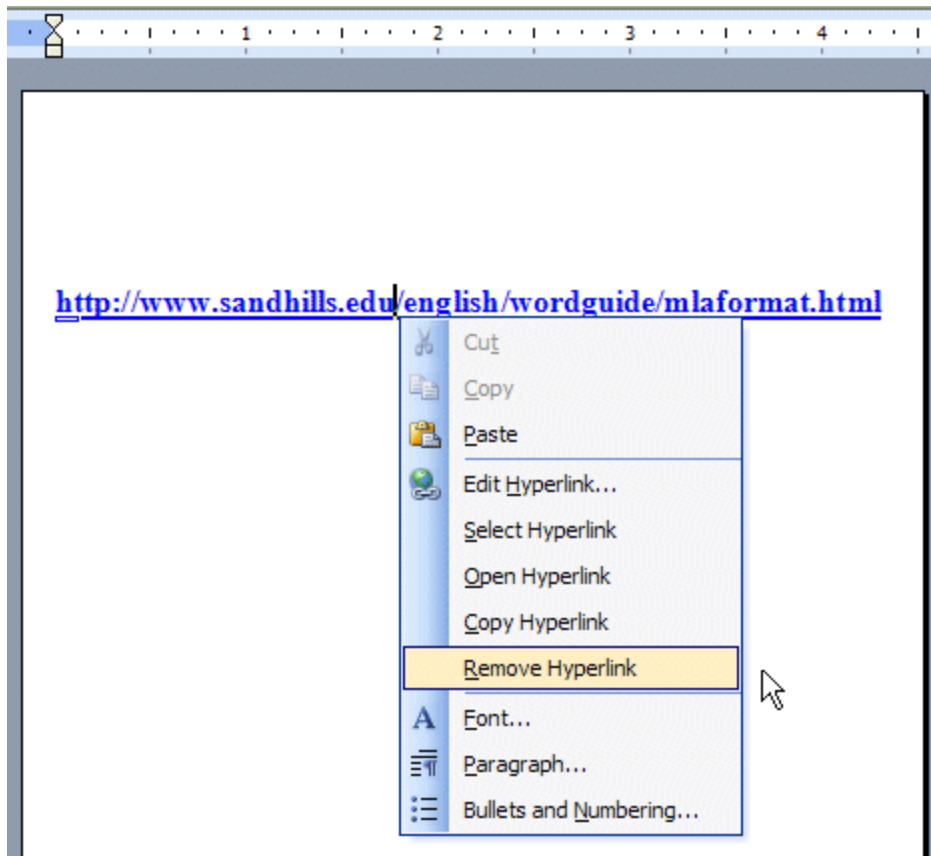
1. Click the **Align Center** icon so that your title will be centered. Before doing so, be sure to click "Format" and then "Paragraph" on the menu bar and check your paragraph format to make sure that the first line of the paragraph is not indented. If it is, change the first line indent to "none" and click "OK" in the Paragraph dialog box.

2. Type Works Cited (do *not* underline, boldface, italicize, or enclose the title in quotation marks).
3. Press the **Enter** key once to begin a new line (your line spacing is already set at double).
4. Click the **Align Left** icon or, from the menu bar, select **Format** and **Paragraph**, select the **Indents and Spacing** tab, and change **Alignment** to **left**.
5. Select **Format** from the menu bar and **Paragraph**. In the **Indents and Spacing** section, click **Special** and then click **Hanging**.
6. Type your first works cited entry in the MLA format.

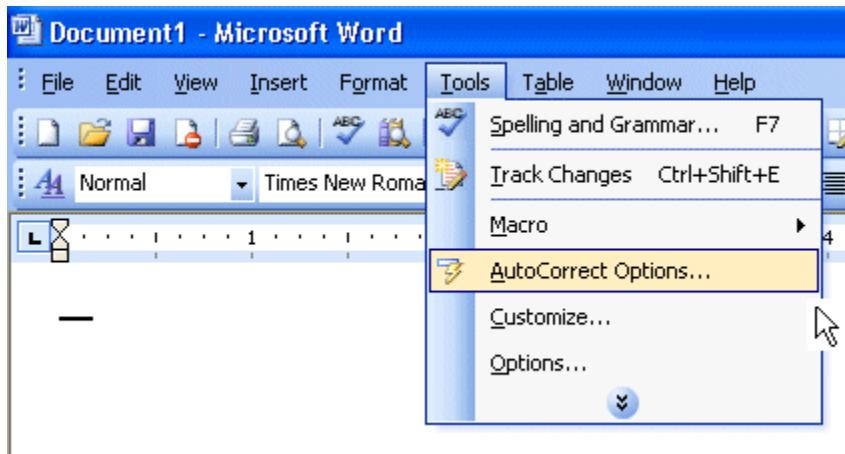


6. Remove the hypertext from the Internet address.

1. Please note that the Internet address is not underlined in the above example. However, if your MS Word AutoCorrect option is in the default setting, when you type an Internet address or paste an Internet address into your document and then press the spacebar, the address will become a hypertext link. This is useful if you are writing a document and want to send the file to someone as an email attachment. Then the person can open the document and read it on the computer screen and click the link to connect to the Internet address. When you insert an Internet address into a document in the MLA format, it should not be underlined and highlighted as hypertext is. You can click your right mouse button and then click "remove hyperlink," but the hypertext will appear again for the next listing.



2. To make sure that no hypertext links appear, click "Tools" and then "AutoCorrect Options" on the menu bar:



3. When the "AutoCorrect" dialog box appears, select the "AutoFormat As You Type" tab at the top of the dialog box and remove the check mark beside "Internet and network paths with hyperlinks." Then click "OK" at the bottom of the dialog box:

