**Essay and Writing Format**

It is very important that you get used to doing your work in a specific format. The following is based on MLA format and will be used throughout the school year for each and every composition done for class. Not following this style will result in anywhere from *five to ten percent* being deducted from your grade on the composition.

**Handwritten Essays**

* Final drafts must be in blue or black ink.
* Print or cursive is acceptable. Use whichever you are most comfortable with and can use most neatly.
* Single space the entire work
* Use one side of the paper only.
* Use three-hole binder paper. Do *not* use spiral notebook paper unless it is pre-perforated so that both edges are smooth.
* Make sure there is an acceptable margin around the essay. I will not measure it, but approximately ½ inch is best.
* Put your name (first and last) in the margin, on the next line put the class period, on the third line put the date the assignment is due.
* If you have a title for the essay, center the title of the essay on the first line. DO NOT UNDERLINE THE TITLE.
* Skip a space and begin writing. Indent each paragraph and do *not* skip spaces between paragraphs.
* If the essay goes to a second page, put your last name and the page number in the top right hand corner.
* If you make a mistake on the final draft, do *not* scribble it out, try to erase it or use white out. Simply put a *single* line through the error and write the correct word next to it (or above it if you find it later). Even if you have to cross out a complete sentence, this is the way to correct.
* NEVER write “The End” at the end of the paper. I will probably be able to figure out you are done when I don’t see any more words.

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Follow all of the rules for handwritten compositions except:

* Double-space everything including the heading with your name, etc. All word processors these days will allow you to do this automatically.
* Heading: variation for this class. Single space. All other formatting remains the same.
* Margins per MLA – one inch on all sides
* Black ink ONLY. The font must be Times New Roman in 12 pt. The words you are now reading are in 12 point Times New Roman. This includes the title.
* Your last name and page number still goes in the top right hand corner. It must be ½ inch from the top. The controls that allow you to do this automatically can be found in your word processor’s header functions.
* SPELL CHECK, SPELL CHECK, SPELL CHECK, SPELL CHECK!!!!
* All computer word processors have a spell check capability and therefore there is absolutely no excuse for misspelled words in a typed composition.