

Model MLA Paper: A Visual Formatting Guide

This is a **header**. In MLA, you don't need a title page, but it is recommended to have a 4-line header with your name, teacher, class, and date.

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Dr. S.

English 4900

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Create an original **title** for your project and place it in the center of the page.

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The Unity of Story in Tolkien's Works

Story in the form of myth, legend, and song serves to unify all elements of Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Even the events of the stories hinge on a previous one, connecting each situation with all situations. The use of myth, legend, and song within the stories to connect them and hint at a continuing world is evident in the written pages.

These titles are in *italics* because they are books. **Long works** like books, magazines, and newspapers are always in *italics*. **Shorter works** like short stories, songs, and poems are denoted by quotation marks ("Title"), without italics.

Double space the whole paper. This is standard for all style manuals, unless you are instructed otherwise.

The Hobbit is the first story having to do with the Ring, thus bringing its adventurous tale into the unifying mix of Tolkien's works. Many key characters are introduced, such as Bilbo Baggins, Gollum, and Gandalf. In this work, song is used to connect Bilbo to Gollum when they play a game of riddles and discover that they know many of the same ones (*The Hobbit* 76-77). In this way, Tolkien introduces the saga of the Ring, unifying this book with *The Lord of the Rings*. Song is also used to introduce the spiders in Mirkwood related to Ungoliat, from *The Silmarillion*, and later to Shelob, from *The Lord of the Rings*, when Bilbo sings to escape them (158-59). The myths of the ancient past are ushered in with the dwarves, who sing a dirge to explain the history of their feud with the Elves in the *Silmarillion*. Thus song and music are a unifying element in Tolkien's works.

The Lord of the Rings starts

In-text citations usually include the author (last name) and location of the quote or information that's being used.
Example: (Tolkien 76-77).

In this case, the author's name, Tolkien, was mentioned earlier in the paragraph, so it does not need to be included in the first in-text citation. Since more than one Tolkien work was mentioned, we included the title (*The Hobbit* 76-77).

When citing the same work again (158-159), only the page numbers are needed. The only reason to include *The Hobbit* again is if a different work is referenced between the citations.

Set a **1 inch** margin around the entire paper.

Include your **last name** followed by the **page number** in the upper right hand corner. It should be a **½ inch** from the top.

Pro Tip: Use your software's "insert page number" feature rather than typing it into the body of the essay.

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in *The Hobbit* but quickly turns into a story previously written. This book contains the myth of Beren and Luthien from the past through Frodo and the entire Fellowship of the Ring. Middle-earth thus far unite in this story along into its next age.

Pro Tip: If you tend to write short sentences (and paragraphs) and struggle to make them longer, try **combining clauses**. This paragraph is long because there are complex sentences, or sentences with more than one clause.

For example, the topic sentence here contains a semicolon, which is a great way to combine two clauses with similar thoughts into one sentence.

You should aim for **6-10 sentences** per paragraph. This paragraph is ideal at 7 sentences.

However, the tale does not seem to halt with the end of the book; rather, it continues beyond the written pages. Sam says it best when he realizes Frodo is holding light from the legend of Eärendil's silmaril: "Why, to think of it, we're in the same tale still! It's going on. Don't the great tales never end?" (*Two Towers* 697). This scene underscores the unifying element of story throughout all three works in a powerful way. Frodo's reply is that the great stories do not end as tales, but go on, people entering and leaving as they fulfill their role. The story in this book stops after Aragorn becomes king, Frodo and Sam clean up the Shire, and men begin to rule the known world. Yet by Frodo and Sam's definition, the tale does not end; it is unified with all the other tales that are connected to this one. This is precisely the point of using story to unify these works.

Indent each new paragraph by a **½ inch** from the left margin.

These three works are all part of each other. Each song, myth, and legend told by a character unifies that scene with all the similar scenes before it in Middle-earth. In this way, Tolkien has used story as a vehicle to unify his works and express the beat of his heart to create a world in which legend does not end with the turn of a page, but continues on in an interconnected legacy lasting for all of time.

This comma appears at the end of an introductory phrase. This type of **comma** is **commonly missed**. To make sure you include it, look for sentences that begin with prepositions (like "in" here) or gerunds (like "being" or "having"). The comma will go right before the main subject of the sentence, in this case Tolkien.

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Title your bibliography in MLA as
"Works Cited."

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Works Cited

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

--. *The Two Towers*. Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

Drout, Michael D.C., and Hilary Wynne. "Tom Shippey's J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century and a Look Back at Tolkien Criticism since 1982." *Envoi*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2001, pp. 101-167. *ResearchGate*, www.researchgate.net/profile/Hilary_Wynne2/publication/282942606_Tom_Shippey's_'JRR_Tolkien_Author_of_the_Century'_and_aLook_Back_at_Tolkien_Criticism_since_1982/links/56234dac08aea35f2682f284.pdf.

This is a Works Cited entry. It is set to have a **hanging indent** in case the citation goes longer than one line.

MLA Formatting: 7th or 8th edition?

If you use a web citation tool like EasyBib, you may see an option to choose MLA 7 or MLA 8.

MLA 8 is the latest edition, and MLA 7, the previous edition, is still used by many teachers. MLA 7 has slightly different rules, so make sure to ask your teacher which edition to use.