

MLA Format Essay

Add a **running header** with your last name and page number. Align it to the right margin on every page. Use the same font and size as the rest of the essay

Turner 1

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History 3120

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This is the **MLA heading**. Include your full name, professor's name, course number, and date. Each line should be double-spaced. Align everything to the left margin. No title page is required.

Center your **essay title** one line below the date. Use title case. Keep it plain text—no bold, underline, or quotation marks.

Memory as Evidence: How Personal Recollection Shapes Historical Truth

Indent the first line of every paragraph by **half an inch**. Keep the text **double-spaced and left-aligned**. Do not add extra space between paragraphs.

Personal memory builds the foundation of how people interpret the past. Historians often rely on recollections to fill gaps that written archives cannot explain. Yet, as Jan Assmann argues, memory is not fixed, it is shaped by cultural context and collective imagination (Assmann 27). What someone remembers about a public event may shift over time as the community reshapes its shared narrative.

Maurice Halbwachs described this process as collective memory, the point where personal recollection merges with social identity (Halbwachs 54). When witnesses tell their stories, they do more than report facts. They reproduce emotions, biases, and social meanings. This blend of truth and interpretation makes memory both powerful and unreliable. Still, oral accounts remain essential. They bring color, motive, and human experience into historical study (Portelli 47).

Use **Times New Roman, 12-point** font. Double-space all text, including between the heading, title, and paragraphs. Keep one-inch margins on all sides.

The historian's task, then, is not to dismiss memory but to study how it functions. Jay Winter calls memory «a second archive, » one that reveals how societies choose to remember or forget (Winter 112). By comparing lived experience with documentary evidence, historians can better understand not only what happened but how people made sense of it afterward. In that way, personal recollection becomes both source and subject, a record of events and of the human need to define them.

Use **in-text citations** to credit sources. Write the author's last name and page number in parentheses without a comma.

Works Cited

1. Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
2. Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser, University of Chicago Press, 1992.
3. Portelli, Alessandro. "What Makes Oral History Different." *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, SUNY Press, 1991, pp. 45–58.
4. Terdiman, Richard. *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*. Cornell University Press, 1993.
5. Winter, Jay. *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*. Yale University Press, 2006.

Italicize titles of long works like books or films. Use **quotation marks** for shorter works such as essays, stories, or poems.

Follow MLA format rules: one-inch margins, double spacing, clear font, and consistent indentation. The goal is a clean, readable layout.

