

# MLA Format Essay

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

Ellory 1

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HST 214: Cartography and Culture

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**This is the MLA heading.** Include your full name, professor's name, course, and date. Double-space each line. Keep everything aligned to the left margin. MLA format does not require a separate title page.

## When Old Maps Mislead: How Forgotten Borders Shape Modern Decisions

**Center your title one line below the heading. Use title case.** Keep it plain text without bold, italics, or quotation marks.

**Indent the first line of each paragraph by 0.5 inch.** Keep the text double-spaced and left-aligned. Do not add extra spacing between paragraphs.

Old maps carry more influence over present-day planning than most officials admit. A century-old border drawn for a vanished political purpose can still affect zoning lines, resource claims, and even how a modern town explains its identity. In many regions, planners unknowingly rely on outdated survey paths because the older documents feel authoritative, even when new measurements exist. A recent study on boundary persistence notes that historical lines often “survive through habit rather than accuracy” (Jensen 42). This persistence shapes debates over land use, especially in rural areas where archived maps remain the default reference.

**Use Times New Roman, 12-point font.** Keep the entire essay double-spaced. Maintain one-inch margins on all sides.

Forgotten borders also guide public memory. Communities sometimes defend territory based on lines that no longer match the land. A historian examining early railroad maps observed that “residents trusted inherited drawings more than living geography” (Ortiz 77). This loyalty influences environmental policy, local elections, and school district boundaries. Decisions that appear modern often rest on assumptions formed decades earlier. Understanding these hidden influences helps communities update their choices with clearer information while still acknowledging the past that shaped them.

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

### Works Cited

Jensen, Mara. *Boundaries That Refuse to Fade: A Study of Historical Land Lines*. Calder Press, 2021.

Ortiz, Renán. *Rails, Rivers, and the Making of Regional Identity*. Harbor Line Publishing, 2019.

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

**MLA format requires a clean layout: one-inch margins, double spacing, a consistent font, and clear paragraph indentation.** These rules help create a readable and professional page.