Hanging Indents: How-to Guide for Word and Google Docs

What is a hanging indent?

This document will show you how to set up a hanging indent in Microsoft Word and Google Docs. A hanging indent is when the first line of a paragraph is flush with the margin of a paper, while subsequent lines are indented, and it’s the way that bibliographies, works cited pages, or lists of references should be formatted using the APA and MLA formats.

Example:


Microsoft Word

These directions are for Microsoft Office 2013, so the layout may look slightly different from the version of Word you are using. In the “view” tab, make sure the “ruler” box is checked.

![Figure 1: View tab in MS Word 2013 with ruler box marked](image)

Select the text that you want to have a hanging indent. Make sure you have only your references highlighted, or you may mess up the formatting of the rest of your paper. In the top ruler bar, you will see two little triangles. With your cursor, drag the bottom triangle about a half-inch to the right. Make sure you are only dragging the bottom triangle, not both. Your references page should now have a hanging indent.
Google Docs

Ruler lines show up by default in Google Docs. Again, select the text that you want to have a hanging indent. The indent symbol in Google Docs looks similar to the one in Microsoft Word. In Google, it’s an inverted triangle with a rectangle over it. Drag the inverted triangle to where you want the hanging indent to be. When you have it in place, drag the blue rectangle back to the start of the margin. See the screenshot below for the proper ruler configuration.

Figure 3: Screenshot of a document opened in Google Docs, with an arrow pointing toward the hanging indent marker in the ruler bar