

help for writers

B4 the Editor

a fix your manuscript formatting series

1. Use the Show/Hide tool (¶) on the Home menu in Word! 😊
2. Basic Layout:
 - a. 8.5" x 11"
 - b. 1" margins
 - c. 12 pt Times New Roman Font (preferred)
 - d. Double spaced
 - e. Left aligned
3. Indents:
 - a. Either use the Ruler or
 - b. Use Style Tool/Macros (MS Word)
 - i. Right click the style
 - ii. Modify
 1. Update/change settings for the style
 - c. Do Not use spaces/space bar to indent paragraphs
 - d. Do Not use TAB to indent
 - i. Word has a setting in Options that converts a tab to an indent, but this sometimes doesn't work
 - ii. Using the Ruler to create paragraph indents or a updating Styles is better
4. Only 1 space after the end of a sentence, not 2
5. Hard Returns (ENTER) vs Soft Returns (Shift + ENTER):
 - a. Only use hard returns at the end of a paragraph to start a new one (ENTER)
 - b. Do not insert manual line breaks at the end of each line (hard return/¶) on any word processing software
 - i. the software returns to the next line automatically
 - c. Do not use soft returns at all unless it's *absolutely* necessary to start the next word on the next line. (Shift+ENTER)
6. Page Breaks
 - a. In MS Word use Insert > Breaks > Next Page
 - b. If in onther software: use regular page break menu option as next best thing
 - c. Do no use the Space Bar or Enter key repeatedly to get to the next page

7. Utilize the Find/Replace tool for fixing some formatting errors
 - a. CTRL + F

8. When makes notes in your WIP or get your manuscript back from your editor, utilize the fantastic Track Changes tool in MS Word
 - a. Review > Track Changes

Building a New Manuscript Template in Word

1. Save New Document as “New Manuscript Template”
 - a. This will be what you start typing all your documents into in the future
 - i. When you start a new document, immediately resave the New Manuscript Template as a new doc with the working title of whatever story you are starting

2. MS Word automatically sets your page to 8.5” x 11”

3. MS Word automatically sets your margins to 1”
 - a. You’ll only need to adjust for your manuscript if you’ve previously changed the settings in MS Word to something different.

4. Instead of messing with the Ruler settings, use Styles (Macros)
 - a. Side NOTE:
 - i. Tabs are problematic, but MS Word has a built-in option to turn Tab into Indent (Options > Proofing > Autocorrect Options > AutoFormat As You Type > Check box for Indents...
 1. Don’t use Tabs, though! 😊
 - ii. BETTER & Recommended: **Set up your styles!**

5. STYLES:
 - a. Normal
 - i. Times New Roman 12pt
 - ii. Paragraph > Left
 1. Special Indent > .5”
 2. Double Spacing
 3. 0 point spacing between paragraphs
 - b. 1st Paragraph
 - i. Create based on Normal Style
 - ii. Times New Roman
 - iii. 12pt
 - iv. Only difference: Remove Special Indent
 - c. Chapter Head
 - i. Times New Roman
 - ii. Maybe Bold
 - iii. Slightly bigger 16 or 18 at most
 - iv. Centered (Remove Special indent)
 - v. Adjust space before & After

- d. Separator/Scene Break/Centered Text
 - i. Based off Normal
 - ii. Centered
 - iii. Remove Special indent
 - e. Italics (character)
 - i. When modifying, you'll change the style to "character" instead of "paragraph"
 - ii. Click the "I" button next to the font style
 - f. Bold (character)
 - i. When modifying, you'll change the style to "character" instead of "paragraph"
 - ii. Click the "B" button next to the font style
6. Make a Page Break so that the first page can be the Cover Page
- a. Layout > Breaks > Next Page
 - b. Avoid using Enter, Tab, or basic Insert > Page Break
7. Add a Header
- a. Insert > Page Number (use top right opt.)
 - b. Move to the top of the second page of your doc
 - c. Un-select "Link to Previous"
 - d. Delete Text from Page 1 Header
 - e. At page #, type: "Author Last Name/Shortened Book Title/Pg#"
 - f. Go to the Menu > Page Number > Format Page Numbers... > Click circle next to Start Page # at > 1 > OK
 - i. Now page 2 will show as Page 1
 - ii. It should be this way because the first page is the cover page and should not have a page number on it.
8. Cover Page should only have
- a. Agent contact info (if you have an agent) (*Upper Left Corner*)
 - b. Book title (*Centered/Centered*)
 - c. By Author Name (*Centered/Centered*)
 - d. Approx. word count (*Centered/Centered*)
 - e. Real name and contact info (*Bottom Right Corner*)