Manuscript Format to Industry Standards

These are general Industry Standard Guidelines. While these standards might vary slightly within the industry as each individual might have a preference, this is the preferred format for your freelance editor.

Please follow these guidelines:

- Save the document as *Lastname_TITLE_type of edit*. Feel free to abbreviate the edit. Developmental→Dev | Editorial Assessment→EA | Copy Edit + Proofread →CP (Example: Rowling_Chamber of Secrets_EA)

- For the font, use twelve point Times New Roman in black type only.

- Set the margins for you document at 1 inch on all four sides.

- Align to the left hand side only; the right hand side should remain jagged.

- Lines should be double spaced with no extra spaces between paragraphs.

- Single space between sentences after each period. Do a quick find and replace all double spaces with single spaces to fix this error. Each period should be followed by ONE, not two, spaces. Do it again (just hit the "Replace all" button again) in case you had any rogue triple spaces lurking around.

- Indent new paragraphs and each new section of dialogue, <u>with the exception</u> of the opening paragraph of each chapter or scene break. Don't do this by hitting the tab key. Instead, set a first line indentation to .05" through Home-->Paragraph-->Special.

- Create a header aligned to the top right side. Do NOT make this part of the body of the page. Insert a key word from the title with the page number and your last name in all caps. The page number will atomically show as 2 or 3, so in your section settings, change the page number to start at 1 for the first page. For more information on how to do that, click **here**. E.g., SMITH / TITLE / PAGE (Please note: if your title is longer than three words, abbreviate your title by using 1-3 keywords from the title. HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS → CHAMBER OF SECRETS)
- Begin every chapter on a new page. Press the [Enter] key on your keyboard until you are 1/3 of the way down the page, or about 4-6 times. Center the chapter title and put it in all bold letters, even if it's only Chapter One (or Chapter 1).
- If you have a chapter subtitle (such as the chapter name, naming the point of view character, ect), put that below the chapter number. If it is a time gap, but it two lines above the chapter header.
- After the chapter number line (or subtitle line, if you have it), press the [Enter] key one time so there is a space before the text of the chapter. (Optional: You can choose to keep chapter title left or right alignment if you feel that is better for your formatting. Make sure all title matter is aligned the same.)
- At each chapter break within a chapter, center a hash sign (#) or three asterisks (* * *). Write 'The End' at the end of the novel. This will reassure agents and editors that pages aren't accidentally missing.
- Use italics for italicized words. Never underline in novel manuscripts. Never (or, if you must, very rarely) use ALL CAPS in the manuscript for dialogue, shouted text, ect. Unless it is in a text message or email type of correspondence contained within the manuscript.
- For more advanced instructions, follow skip to page thirteen. While you don't have to change this for your editor, they will love you if you do and correct it for you if you don't.

Optional Formatting in the Manuscript. See examples in the images on the next few pages. (Please note: following this style is strongly encouraged and will *really* help the editor.)

- If you have a long quote, such an excerpt or a letter, indent one inch on both the left and the right side for long quotes. These can be single or double-spaced. Either way, they need an extra line break both above and below, to set them apart from the rest of the body. They can also be italicized. Personally, I'd italicize only if the text were a "letter" from one character to another. Do not put these in different fonts.
- For signs or short handwritten notes: Include an extra line break before and after, but center.
- For text, instant, or direct messages: Indent one half inch on both sides. Center messages if you only show one at a time, but if you show a dialogue, I like to right-justify the POV character and left-justify anyone else. How you designate the characters' identities is up to you.

The first page of the manuscript will be the **title page**, which should be single spaced with no headers. Your title page should include:

- In one of the top corners your contact details formatted in the same font and size as the manuscript font.
- In the opposite top corner, your word count to the nearest 1,000.
- Halfway down the page, the TITLE in all-caps. Do not bold, italicize, or underline it.
- Put a space between the TITLE and author.

- Two lines below the TITLE, write the name as you'd like it to appear on your cover.
- At the bottom of the page, the category in Title Case. (Category is adult, young adult, middle grade, chapter book, picture book, ect)
- Below that line, the genre in Title Case. (Paranormal, High Fantasy, Space Opera Science Fiction, ect)

Add the front matter, such as dedication, table of contents, copyright page, ect after the title page, and start your first chapter after that (as seen in the example below). Epigrams, song lyrics, or poetry set apart before the first chapter. For authors seeking traditional publication, agents want to read your words so don't add a dedication or other matter before your first chapter when querying. That will come later.

If you have an agent or publisher, you will give the agent's or publisher's details in the upper left hand corner and put the author's details in the lower right hand corner.

Remember to keep a copy of your manuscript for yourself.

If you've followed all of these bullet points, then congratulations! You now have a manuscript formatted to the industry standard! Check out the images below for an example of what a correctly-formatted manuscript looks like, including specifics of each of the instructions above. Read the pages for additional instructions.

Author's Legal Name
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Phone Number
Email address
Website

word count: 68,711

TITLE OF THE NOVEL

by

Pseudonym or Author Name

Category

Genre

If you have a dedication,
You should put it in italics
and center it here
But this is only for Indie authors

"If you have a quote or something that will go at the front of the book, put it here. But this is also only for Indie authors."
-Said No One Ever, *This is the Book if Needed*

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter Subtitle (optional)

Do not indent the first paragraph. You can manually move the indent slider over for each initial paragraph of a chapter or section, or you can create its own paragraph style a zero-inch indent. I call my paragraph style Body No Indent.

Each of the following paragraphs should have an indent of half an inch. This is an example of what your chapters should look like. The writing itself should be aligned only to the left hand side of the page, which means the right hand side looks jagged or uneven. Use black 12-point font in Time New Roman as this is found on every computer and accepted by most professionals.

Use double spacing with no extra space in between paragraphs unless you are signaling a scene break within the chapter, which you can do by centering a hash sign or three asterisks on that line and then starting again on the next line. Whichever one you choose, be consist throughout the novel. Because this is how you signal the transition in a scene or time. Don't use if for every paragraph in a novel; instead, indent each new paragraph except those paragraphs starting a chapter or those starting a new scene after a line break.

A new chapter always begins on a new page about one-third of the way down, which is about five-to-seven hard returns. After you center your chapter heading (Chapter One in the case of this example), leave a blank line before starting.

#

There are a few other little items to remember when formatting your manuscript; one is to use single spaces after periods. Another is to use italics for *italicized words*.

For the headers in your manuscript simply have a keyword from the title in the top right header with the page number and your last name, as shown in the header above.

For text, instant, or direct messages: Indent one half inch on both sides. Center messages if you only show one at a time, but if you show a dialogue, I find it helpful to right-justify the POV character and left-justify anyone else. How you designate the characters' identities is up to you.

Friend: Hey.

                                                                                    Me: Hi.

Here's a long message that
we'll add line breaks to so
it looks more like a text.

                                                    Yeah. I think my phone only
                                                    allows like 32 characters per
                                                    line or whatever. But 6ish words
                                                    is about right, too. Really you
                                                    can add line breaks wherever,
                                                                            like poetry.

                                                    I created a new message here
                                                    by hitting "enter" like usual.
                                                    Enter *line breaks* by holding
                                                    shift while you press "return."

You're adding a line break, not
a new paragraph.

If you're typesetting an actual
book and not submitting a MS,
then I still recommend right-
justifying single-line texts,
like the "Hi" above, but…

For signs or short handwritten notes: Include an extra line break before and after, but

center. It helps set the text apart for the reader.

FOR SALE: apples
Come 'n get 'em!

For long quotes, song lyrics, excerpts, or letters, or emails: Indent one inch on both the

left and the right side for long quotes. These are single spaced with an extra line break both

above and below, to set them apart from the rest of the body. They can also be italicized, which

can be good for a song lyric or a quote. Just remember that italics are hard to read when the text

is long.

Dear Reader,

This is a letter or lengthy handwritten note (longer than a few words). Indent 1/2
inch on both sides (I prefer 1 inch). Short handwritten notes can be formatted like
signs, below.

Remember you don't put these in different fonts. You let the typesetter or
designer choose the typeface, or make the decision after it has gone through an
editor because different font types distract from what is being written here.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

To finish up, you can leave one double-spaced blank line down at the end of the manuscript before writing THE END in all caps. You want agents and editors to know they've reached the end, though this might also be a personal preference depending on whom you submit it to.

Remember, this is just an example of what your page should look like. Please check formatting guidelines for more information.

THE END

This is the Spaceship name
Part of Spaceship
Date: Unknown
Time: Unknown

Chapter Title

Do not indent the first paragraph. No matter how short.

Each of the following paragraphs should have an indent of half an inch. This is an example of what your chapters should look like. The writing itself should be aligned only to the left hand side of the page, which means the right hand side looks jagged or uneven. Use black 12-point font in Time New Roman as this is found on every computer and accepted by most professionals.

Use double spacing with no extra space in between paragraphs unless you are signaling a scene break within the chapter, which you can do by centering a hash sign or three asterisks on that line and then starting again on the next line. Whichever one you choose, be consist

throughout the novel. Because this is how you signal the transition in a scene or time. Don't use if for every paragraph in a novel; instead, indent each new paragraph except those paragraphs starting a chapter or those starting a new scene after a line break.

A new chapter always begins on a new page about one-third of the way down, which is about five-to-seven hard returns. After you center your chapter heading (Chapter One in the case of this example), leave a blank line before starting.

* * *

There are a few other little items to remember when formatting your manuscript; one is to use single spaces after periods. Another is to use italics for *italicized words*.

For the headers in your manuscript simply have a keyword from the title in the top right header with the page number and your last name, as shown in the header above.

Four Years Later . . .

Chapter Title

Do not indent the first paragraph. No matter how short.

Each of the following paragraphs should have an indent of half an inch. This is an example of what your chapters should look like. The writing itself should be aligned only to the left hand side of the page, which means the right hand side looks jagged or uneven. Use black 12-point font in Time New Roman as this is found on every computer and accepted by most professionals.

Use double spacing with no extra space in between paragraphs unless you are signaling a scene break within the chapter, which you can do by centering a hash sign or three asterisks on that line and then starting again on the next line. Whichever one you choose, be consist throughout the novel. Because this is how you signal the transition in a scene or time. Don't use if for every paragraph in a novel; instead, indent each new paragraph except those paragraphs starting a chapter or those starting a new scene after a line break.

HARD-CORE MANUSCRIPT FORMATTING

OR, MAKING YOUR TYPESETTER LOVE YOU

BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR PUNCTUATION

Publishers have their own in-house style guides, but most American Publishers (if not all) will use the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and only deviate their own style guide with slight variances or where there are gray areas.

ELLIPSES (…)

The Chicago Manual of Style's preferred option: three periods with five spaces (d . . . b)

Why is this important? The problem with CMOS's favorite is that those internal spaces need to be non-breaking spaces, otherwise if the ellipsis falls at the end of the line, it might look like this .

. .

. . . which is really horrible typography.

Our Advice: It's best to get in the habit of just putting the space between your ellipses as you are writing.

How do you do it? Search for each of these and replaced with the proper (d . . . b).

- ☐ three periods without spaces (d…b)
- ☐ Word's auto-formatting: an ellipsis special character (d…b)
- ☐ Three periods with a space before and after (d … b)

EM-DASHES

Your editor will keep track of the an em-dash and an en-dash and when to use which one, but knowing the basics of when to use which will help you as a writer.

The Chicago Manual of Style's preferred option: either two hyphens or one em-dash, no spaces.

How do you do it? Search for each of these and replaced with the proper (d—b)

- ☐ One hyphen (d–b)
- ☐ two hyphens without spaces (d––b)
- ☐ an em-dash surrounded by spaces (d — b)
- ☐ an en-dash surrounded by spaces (d – b)

CHANGING INCH MARKS ″ TO SMART QUOTES ""

The Chicago Manual of Style's preferred option: the smart quote (or curly quote) is used.

How do you do it? If you already have all the quotation marks typed, you can simply do a find/replace all automatically by typing (") into both the find and replace boxes and selecting "Use wild cards" before hitting "replace all." Some might format awkwardly, but your copy editor/proofreader will catch any of those issues.

Repeat the process for foot marks ' and prime ' to turn them into apostrophes ' or single quotes ' and '

If you cannot fix the quotation marks automatically, then you'll have to do several Find/Replace searches. But first you need to search for all soft returns / line breaks / carriage returns (see below) in your document and replace them with paragraph breaks.

Once you are sure all of your paragraph breaks are consistent, follow the F/R searches below to manually fix all of your quotation marks:

Find: [space]["] Replace: [space][left curly quote "]

Find: [paragraph break*]["] Replace: [paragraph break][right curly quote "]

Find: ["][paragraph break] Replace: [left curly quote "][paragraph break]

Find: ["][space] Replace: [right curly quote"][space]

Repeat for double prime ″ and foot marks ' and prime '