How to Format a Book-Length Manuscript in Word 2010
Report # 119

If you have not yet begun writing your book, open a new file. (Ctrl+O) and follow the directions below. If your manuscript is already written, but you want to reformat it correctly, first you must select the entire manuscript by pressing Ctrl+A. This will highlight the entire manuscript, and as you make the changes listed below, they will appear throughout the entire manuscript. If the manuscript stops being completely highlighted at any point in performing the steps below, hit Ctrl+A again, and be sure the manuscript stays highlighted while you perform each of the following functions:

Set Paragraph Indent

A full menu appears at the top of the computer screen. Right before the blank part (where you will type) begins, look for a tiny block on the left that looks like this: **L**. To the right of that symbol you will see two small triangles pointing at each other on a ruler that marks off inches. These arrows set left margins and an indent. Put your cursor on the top triangle and slide it over halfway to the 1 on the ruler. There is even a little line to show the halfway mark. Once that indent is set, every time you hit Enter on your keyboard, a new paragraph will begin with the first line already indented. Once this indent is set on the ruler, you never need to hit the Tab key or space bar to create an indent.

Set Spacing between Paragraphs

Next you want to set the spacing between paragraphs. Most computers add extra space between paragraphs, but manuscripts should have extra space between paragraphs only to show a scene shift, so we must set the document up in a way that it won't add space between paragraphs. To do so, click on Page Layout at the top of the page. There you will see, in about the middle of the page, a box labeled Paragraph (at the bottom of the section). On the Spacing section, you will see Before and After. Set both those figures at 0 pt. by clicking on the arrows as needed to reach 0 pt.

Choose the Font

Next you must choose your font. To do so, click on Home at the top of the page. Note the box labeled Font. If you plan to submit a manuscript to a publisher or agent, click the tiny arrow in the box and scroll down to Courier New. If you plan to self-publish, you may prefer to work with Times New Roman. Whatever font you select, be sure the font is selected for twelve point type. To set the font size, click on the tiny arrow beside the numeral beside the font options, and set the font for 12.

Choose Flush Left, Ragged Right Type

Still in the Home tab, look to the right of the Font box, and you'll see Paragraph. There you will be sure the first box on the bottom left above the word Paragraph is highlighted. It shows all the lines flush on the left and ragged on the right. This is the format you want for your

manuscript. Later, if you want to center a title, you can highlight the line you want to center, come back to this Home tab, and click on the next series of lines, the one that shows the lines centered. Be sure to use this option only for one line, for example a title or heading.

Set the Line Spacing to Double Spaced

In the same Paragraph box, you next want to set the line spacing to double spaced. To do so, click on the fifth option on the line above the word Paragraph. It has a few lines with arrows at the top and bottom. Click on that icon, and when a box opens up with options, scroll down until 2.0 is highlighted, and then click on 2.0.

Set the Top, Bottom, Left, and Right Margins

Good news! You probably will not have to set the sides, top, and bottom margins; usually the default setting is fine. If you find that the automatic margins are less than one inch on all sides, though, you can set the margins easily by clicking on the Page Layout tab, clicking on Margins, and selecting Normal by clicking on it.

Creating a Default Setting

Once you have set up a page the way you would like it, you can make that setting your default setting, so that every time you open a new file, it will already have the formatting, font, and margins you need. To make your setup your default setting, first click the Page Layout tab.
Next click the small arrow in the bottom-right corner of the Page Setup group. The Page Setup dialog box will appear. At the bottom left is the option of Set as Default. Click that box, and you have created a default format for every new document you open.
You can always change the format if you need to, so don't be afraid of making the correct standard manuscript format your default setting.

Creating a Header

Every book-length manuscript should have a header that gives the title of the manuscript, the name of the author, and the page number on every page except the title page. You do not want to make the header a default setting, so after you have created your default settings, it is time to create a header for your book manuscript.
Click on the Insert tab.
Click on Page Number, in about the middle of the page.
Click on Top of Page.
A header will open with a page number on it. Put your cursor before the number and type the title of your manuscript (if it is a long title, choose one to three major words, such as *Heart Lonely Hunter*). Type a virgule (slash) after the title. Type your last name and another virgule, all before the page number. (Example: Write In Style/Christmas/2) Next click the box that says Different First Page. Press Ctrl+S to save the settings. In this way the header will not appear on the title page of the manuscript, but will appear on all other pages.
While the header is still showing, click on the line of text to highlight it, and then open the Home tab. Next, over the word Paragraph, click on the third setting, which shows the lines

ragged on the left and flush on the right. This action moves the writing in the header to the right side of the page, where it belongs. Save the file.

To return to the body of the file, click on the body, and you will exit the Header setting.

Saving a File with the New Settings

If you are working with a manuscript and had to highlight the manuscript before making the above settings, you will want to save the file regularly, preferably after each change you make in the format, and definitely when you complete all the steps in reformatting it.

More Help

If these instructions are not clear or you need a visual of the tab, box, or icon I mention, open a Word file and click on the tiny question mark in a blue circle at the top right of the page, right under the X for closing the file. When you click on the question mark, a Word Help box opens, and you can type your question. I prefer using the top box, and clicking on Search, rather than using the Bing option. The instructions that come up in answer to your questions usually include pictures of the icons and boxes mentioned above, which should make the instructions easier to follow.