



Allegory Editing

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Manuscript Formatting Guide

Allegory Editing applies publishing industry standards to format submission-ready manuscripts. We suggest the following guidelines for all genres of fiction, as well as memoir and most narrative nonfiction.

Keep in mind that the formatting guidelines are different for nonfiction book proposals as well as for self-publishing platforms. (Contact us if you would like help with either of these.) Always check agent and editor websites for any specific requirements before submitting your work.

If you have any questions about your material, feel free to email us about your project.

If you will be working with one of Allegory's editors, we suggest that you format your material according to these guidelines prior to submitting your work to us. While we will, of course, point out any formatting issues we see, the cleaner your manuscript is when we review it, the more we can spend our energy helping you improve your storytelling craft.

Cover page

- All manuscripts start with a cover page. (See next page for a sample.)
- TITLE in all caps 1/3 of the way down.
- Word count, upper right corner, can be done in a header. Round to 1 decimal. (86,735 words = 86.7K)
- Author contact information, lower right. If the writer has an agent, use agent information instead.
- Do not include a page number or header other than word count on the cover page.
- At the end of the cover page, insert a section break and start page numbering on the following page.

TITLE

A novel

by

Author Name

Author name

Address

City, State Zip

Phone number

Email

If you have a website, list it here.

Agented authors, put agent contact info here instead.

Header

- Header on all pages (as shown here) except the cover page: Your Name/TITLE (note capitalization) left justified; page number right justified.
- Start your page numbering with page one.
- The first page begins with either the first chapter or the introduction or prologue if applicable.

Manuscript body

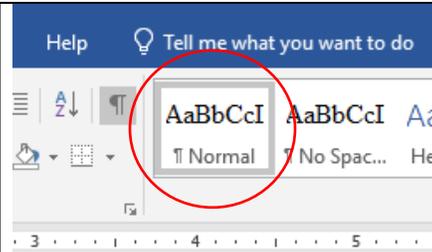
- One inch margin on all sides.
- Font: Times New Roman, 12-pt throughout, including header and cover page.
- Double space throughout.
- Left justified text.
- Each chapter begins six double spaces (twelve single-spaced lines) down from top of page.
- CHAPTER TITLE or CHAPTER NUMBER in all caps, centered.
- Text of first paragraph begins two double spaces (four single-spaced lines) down from the chapter title.
- No indent for the first line of a chapter or the first line of a new section.
- All other paragraphs, indent the first line (.5), no extra lines of space between paragraphs. Set this up as an auto-indent, do not use the tab. (See below for directions.)
- Ends of paragraphs should not contain extra spaces. Instead, use the enter key to start a new paragraph.
- Do not use asterisks or hashtags to represent section breaks. Enter two double spaces (four single-spaced lines) and start the first line of the new section with no indent.
- End each chapter with a page break to assure that the next paragraph will always start on a new page. (*Ctrl+Enter* for PCs, *Command+Enter/Return* for Macs)
- One space after each period, not two. (This may be different from what you learned in typing class. The standard has changed over time.)

Modify Word's styles function to assure correct formatting

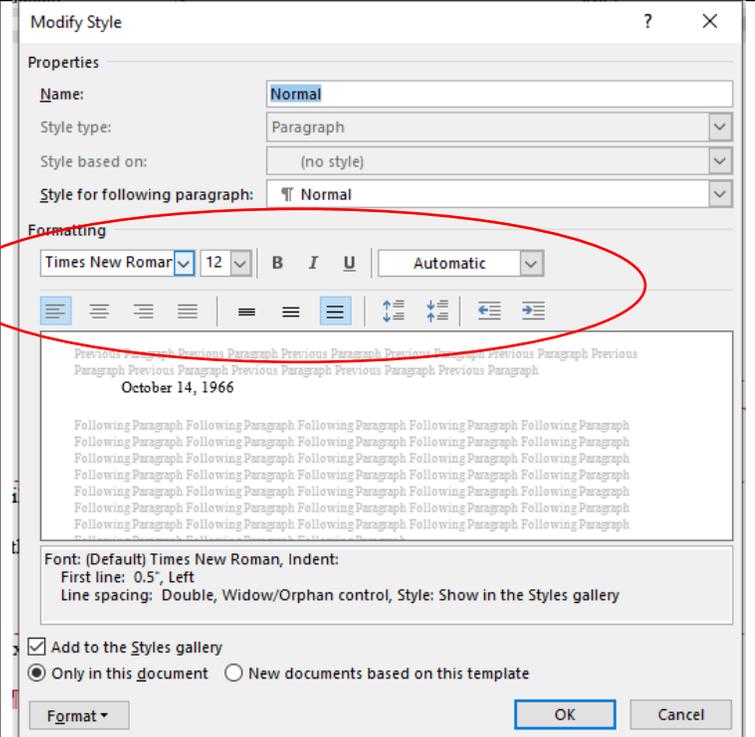
Using Word Styles can make your life as a writer easier. For example, paragraphs should be formatted to indent .5 from the left margin rather than relying on the tab function. If you have already used tabs or spaces to indent paragraphs, adjust your formatting to format new paragraphs automatically in the rest of your document by adjusting the *Normal Style* for this document. (Instructions for adjusting the *Normal Style* in Word are below.)

Once the style is changed, paragraphs will format correctly as they are created or changed. (You will need to do some cleanup to remove any extra spaces, tab stops, and tab characters that were put in before you adjusted the style.)

Right click on *Normal Style* in the ribbon at the top.

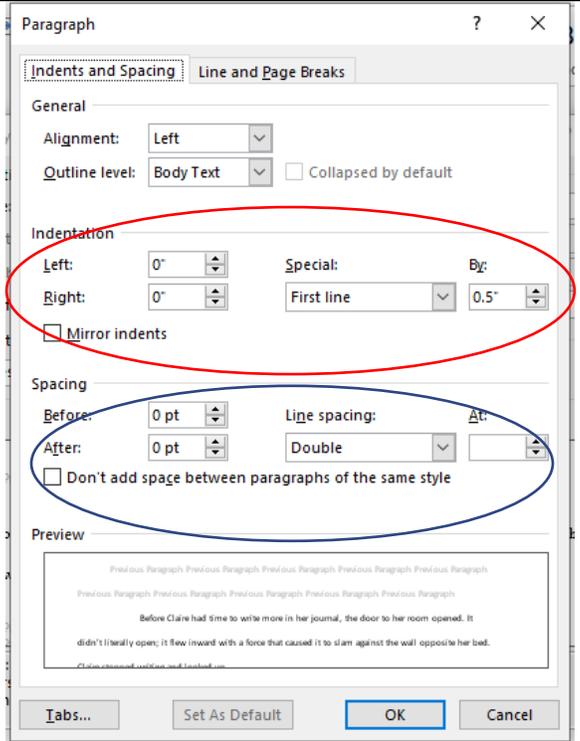


Choose *Modify* to bring up this box and modify the font, justification, and line spacing to what is shown here.

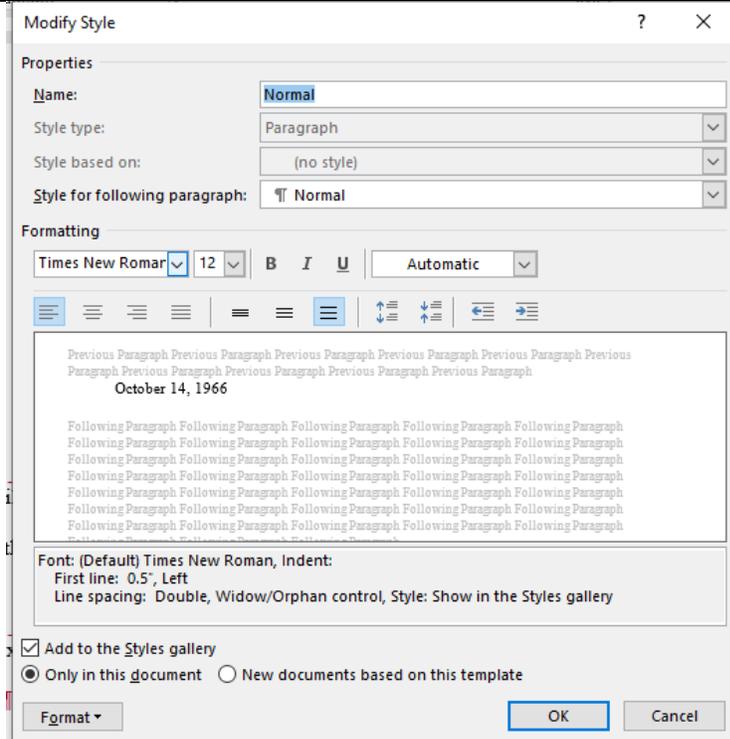


Choose *Format* and *Paragraph* to specify *First Line* at .5 as shown here in the red circle

Also, make sure that settings are correct as shown in the boxes within the blue circle here.



Click *OK* to return to this box, and click *OK*.



Additional tips

- As noted above, industry standard is one space after each period—not two. If you have used two spaces, never fear! You can correct this by using the *Find, Replace* function. (In the *Find* box, enter **space space** and in the *Replace* box, put **space**. Your computer will recognize a space inserted into the find box just as it would a word or letter.)
- To identify an errant extra space at the end of a paragraph or sentence, turn on the grammar check function. This can be found under the *Tools* tab. The extra spaces will be underlined in blue. You can also use the *Show Formatting Marks* function to identify formatting problems such as extra spaces, tabs, etc. Click on *File, Options, Display, Show Formatting Marks*. This can be especially helpful for spotting the extra spaces at the beginning of paragraphs which can be created when you move paragraphs around. (It is usually too distracting to work with this option on, so when you have corrected the spaces, paragraph endings and tabs, you can turn this option off.)
- “Curly” quotes rather than “straight” quotes are standard.

If you have any questions about any of these steps, please reach out to us here at Allegory by emailing info@allegoryediting.com or using the [contact](#) form on our website. We are here to help.