

Manuscript FORMAT Guidelines

**for
poetry
short stories
essays
children's books
novels
nonfiction books
and plays**

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SAMPLE—First page of a poem—FORMAT

Use 12 pt. Times New Roman, CG Times, Arial, or another easy-to-read font. Do NOT use Courier.

Do NOT
number
first page.

1-inch
margins
all around.

Start
title 3
single-
line
spaces
from
e-mail
address.

Start text
of poem
one
single-line
space
after title.

Left
margin
justified or
center
entire
poem and
title.

Do NOT
justify
right
margin.

(continued)
should be
in 10 pt.
italics,
right-flush

Use only
1 space at
the end of
each
sentence.

Your Full Name
Your Street Address
Your City, State Zip Code
Your Telephone Number
Your E-mail Address

TITLE OF POEM (all caps, bold, left justified)

Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

(continued)

Use “m” dash instead of hyphen, hyphen.

SAMPLE—2nd and subsequent pages of a poem—FORMAT

Use 12 pt. Times Roman, CG Times, Arial, or another easy-to-read font. Do NOT use Courier.

(Last Name, Title of Poem, page #, new stanza or stanza continued) should be in 10 pt. italics and right justified.

New stanza or continued stanza is two single-line spaces after header.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified or center entire poem.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Do NOT staple or fold pages.

(Last Name, Title of Poem, page #, new stanza or stanza continued)

New Stanza or Stanza Continued Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

New Stanza Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text

SAMPLE—First page of a short story, essay, or children’s book—FORMAT

Use 12 pt. Times New Roman, CG Times, Arial, or another easy-to-read font. Do NOT use Courier.

Do NOT number first page.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use 1 Left Tab (½ inch) for paragraph indent. Do NOT use space bar.

Use only 1 space at the end of each sentence.

Use “m” dash instead of hyphen, hyphen.

Your Full Name
Your Street Address
Your City, State Zip Code
Your Telephone Number
Your E-mail Address

Word Count:

↑
6 single-line spaces
↓

TITLE (all caps, bold, centered)

by (centered)

Your Name or Pen Name
(upper and lower case)

Double-spaced Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text.

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text.

SAMPLE—Second page of a short story, essay, or children’s book—FORMAT

Use same font as page 1. Do NOT use Courier.

Header should be 1 inch from top of page and ½ inch from text.

Use 10 pt. italics font.

**Use header function in your word processor to insert.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use 1 Left Tab (½ inch) for paragraph indent. Do NOT use space bar.

Your Last Name/Title of Story/page 2

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
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Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text.

** DO NOT manually insert headers on each page. It is difficult to remove headers from each page when repaginating unless you have used the header function in your word processor.

SAMPLE—Last page of a short story, essay, or children’s book—FORMAT

Use same font as previous pages. Do NOT use Courier.

Header should be 1 inch from top of page and ½ inch from text.

Use 10 pt. italics font.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use 1 Left Tab (½ inch) for paragraph indent. Do NOT use space bar.

Double-spaced text on all pages.

Do NOT staple or fold pages.

Your Last Name/Title of Story/page 3

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

THE END
(all caps, centered)

SAMPLE—Subsequent pages of synopsis for novel—FORMAT

Use same font as page 1. Do NOT use Courier.

Header should be 1 inch from top of page and ½ inch from text.

Use 10 pt. italics font.

**Use header function in your word processor to insert page numbers.

1 inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use 1 Left Tab (½ inch) for paragraph indent. Do NOT use space bar.

Your Last Name/Title of Book—Synopsis/page 2

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

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Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text.

** DO NOT manually insert headers on each page. It is difficult to remove headers from each page when repaginating unless you have used the header function in your word processor.

SAMPLE—First page of an adult or young-adult novel, cover, or title sheet—FORMAT
Use 12 pt. Times New Roman, CG Times, Arial, or another easy-to-read font. Do NOT use Courier.

Do NOT
number
title page.

Word
Count is
right-
justified.

1-inch
margins
all around.

Left
margin
justified.

Your Full Name
Your Street Address
Your City, State Zip Code
Your Telephone Number
Your E-mail Address

Word Count: or Approx. words

↑
11 single-line spaces
↓

TITLE (all caps, bold, centered)

by (centered)

Your Name or Pen Name
(upper and lower case)
(centered)

SAMPLE—First page of an adult or young-adult novel—FORMAT

Use same font as page 1. Do NOT use Courier.

Header should be 1 inch from top of page.

Use 10 pt. italics font for header.

**Use header function in your word processor to insert page numbers.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use 1 Left Tab (½ inch) for paragraph indent. Do NOT use space bar.

Use only 1 space at the end of each sentence.

Your Last Name/Title of Book/page 1

CHAPTER 1 (caps, bold, centered)
(about six single or three double spaces from top of page)

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
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Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,
Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

** DO NOT manually insert headers on each page. It is difficult to remove headers from each page when repaginating unless you have used the header function in your word processor.

SAMPLE—First page of a nonfiction book—FORMAT

Use same font as page 1. Do NOT use Courier.

Header should be 1 inch from top of page.

Use 10 pt. italics font for header.

**Use header function in your word processor to insert page numbers.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use 1 Left Tab (½ inch) for paragraph indent. Do NOT use space bar.

Use only 1 space at the end of each sentence.

Your Last Name/Title of Book/Table of Contents/page 1

↑
6 single-line spaces
↓

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
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Chapter Two	12
Chapter Three	20
Chapter Four	29
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Chapter Six	50
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** DO NOT manually insert headers on each page. It is difficult to remove headers from each page when repaginating unless you have used the header function in your word processor.

SAMPLE—Subsequent pages of a nonfiction book—FORMAT

Use same font as sample pages. Do NOT use Courier.

Header should be 1 inch from top of page and ½ inch from text.

Use 10 pt. italics font for header.

**Use header function in your word processor to insert page numbers.

1-inch margins all around.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Your Last Name/Title of Book/page 2

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

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Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text,

Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text, Text.

Include no more than 15 pages (including chapter outline and query letter) in your query packet to agents.

SAMPLE—First page of a screenplay / stage play—FORMAT

Use 12 pt. Courier or Courier New font ONLY.

Do NOT
number title
page.

1 inch top,
right,
bottom
margins;
1½ inch left
for all
pages.

Screenplays
and stage
plays are
printed on
white 3-hole-
punch paper
and fastened
with brass
fasteners
available at
any office
supply store.

TITLE OF PLAY / SCREENPLAY (all caps, bold, centered)

by (centered)

Your Name
(upper and lower case)
(centered)

© year

your street address
city, state, zip code
telephone number
e-mail address

SAMPLE—Second page of a screenplay / stage play—FORMAT

Use 12 point Courier or Courier New font ONLY.

Page numbers should be ½ inch from top of page and ½ inch from text in top right corner.

**Use page numbering function in your word processor to insert.

Character names start 4 inches from left edge of paper.

Dialogue is indented right and left to be centered on page and 3½ inches wide.

Parentheticals one tab left of character name.

Left margin justified.

Do NOT justify right margin.

Use only 1 space at the end of each sentence.

Use "m" dash instead of hyphen, hyphen.

1

FADE IN:

EXT. YOUR SETTING IN ALL CAPS - NIGHT

Description of setting. Introduce each CHARACTER in all caps at first mention only, thereafter initial cap. SOUND EFFECTS in description area in all caps.

Double space between action elements or descriptions where needed.

NAME 1

Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,
dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

Use (V.O.) after name if dialogue starts as a voice-over.

Further description of action. Try not to break dialogue or action descriptions across pages.

INT. YOUR CHANGE OF SCENE - DAY

New CHARACTER NAME introduced as they appear.

NAME 2

Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,
dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

NAME 1

(Laughing)

Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,
dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

Descriptive text that interrupts above character's dialogue.

NAME 1 (cont.)

Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,
dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

Descriptive text followed by an CHARACTER introduced as an off-screen voice.

NAME 3 (O.S.)

Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,
dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

Ideal page length for a feature film or stage play script is 110 to 115 pages, about 2 hours. Television movies should run about 105 pages.