



The Ultimate Manuscript Formatting Checklist For Writers

By A.K. Leigh

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Part 1: Before Submitting

Before Submitting

Before submitting your manuscript to any publisher, please double check their specific formatting and submission instructions (often available on their websites).

The following advice is the **GENERALLY** accepted format for manuscripts. However, some publishing houses have their own guidelines that must be followed.

By following submission guidelines, you increase your chance of acceptance!

Part 2:
**How to Format Your Manuscript
Like a Professional
(because you are!)**

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- 1. Ensure your manuscript is double-spaced throughout.**
- 2. Use 12pt font.**
- 3. Use Times New Roman font. Courier New is increasingly used, but stick to Times New Roman if the submission guidelines don't specify a font.**
- 4. Use a 1 inch (2.5cm) margin all around the top, bottom, left, and right of the page.**
- 5. Start each chapter on a new page.**
- 6. Bold, centre align, and 14pt or 16pt the chapter heading.**

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- 7. Left align the entire text (do not justify. The right edge should remain uneven).**
- 8. Do not indent the first paragraph/sentence that starts a chapter. Keep it left aligned.**
- 9. Subsequent paragraphs should start on a new line and be indented about 1/2 an inch (1.25cm).**
- 10. There should be no spaces between paragraphs.**

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11. Show a scene break by leaving two blank spaces or by using *.**

12. Keep the paper white. Don't try to get fancy by changing the background. It will only annoy editors and agents and will make you stand out for all the wrong reasons.

13. Dialogue should start on a new line for each person who speaks.

14. Start each person's dialogue with a 1/2 inch (2.5cm) indent.

15. On the last page, when you have finished the manuscript, leave three blank spaces then type "The End".

Part 3
Getting Ready to
Submit

Getting Ready to Submit

This is the exciting, and scary, part! You have your finger hovering over the “send” button—but stop! Before you do, follow these quick steps:

- 1. Double check that you have followed everything in this checklist.**
- 2. Make a list of the publishers and agents you would like to target with your manuscript.**
- 3. Read over each publisher’s submission guidelines and change anything you need to match their requirements.**

Once they match, you are ready to send your sparkling, polished, well-formatted manuscript off.

Good luck!

A.K. Leigh xo

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