

Manuscript Format Template: Quick Guide and Checklist

Your Word template already has standard manuscript format set: US Letter (or A4), 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman, double spacing, half-inch indents, left aligned, and an automatic header. Keep this guide; don't add it to your manuscript.

Using the template

1. **Title page:** replace each [bracketed] field. Keep the word count rounded (for example, About 82,000 words).
2. **Header:** double-click the header on page 2 and change "Surname / TITLE" to your surname and one or two title words. Page numbers update on their own, and the title page stays blank.
3. **Write:** paste or type your text over the sample. Apply styles from the Styles list (Word: Home tab; Google Docs: the "Normal text" menu). In Google Docs, keep the document in Pages format, not Pageless.
4. **New chapter:** type the chapter title and apply Heading 1. It starts a new page, about a third of the way down, by itself. Keep each chapter title to one line.

Which style to use

Style	Use it for
Normal	Every paragraph, including the first of a chapter: double-spaced, half-inch first-line indent
Heading 1	Chapter titles: new page, a third of the way down. Keep each title to one line.
Chapter Subtitle	A chapter name under the chapter number, if you use one
Scene Break	A centered # between scenes
Heading 2 / Heading 3	Non-fiction subheads (bold / italic)
Block Quote	Quotations of several lines, indented on both sides
Figure Note	Where an image or table goes, for example [Figure 3.1 about here]
End Mark	A centered END after the last line (optional)

Before you send: checklist

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| ☐ I've read this agent's or publisher's guidelines, and theirs win. | ☐ Italics for emphasis, no underlining; one space after periods. |
| ☐ Title page details and word count are filled in and correct. | ☐ The sample text and any unused styles' examples are deleted. |
| ☐ The header shows my surname and title words, from page 2 on. | ☐ Track changes is off and all comments are removed. |
| ☐ Every chapter starts with Heading 1, not with blank lines. | ☐ Saved as .docx (or PDF only if asked), with a clear name such as Surname_Title.docx. |
| ☐ No tabs or spaces used for indents; no blank lines between paragraphs. | ☐ Pasted pages in an email: blank line between paragraphs, no indents. |
| ☐ Scene breaks are a centered #, not just a blank line. | ☐ I've sent only what was asked for: pages, chapters or synopsis. |

Some publishers want something different. A few ask for Courier ("classic" format), each chapter in its own file, or no Word styles at all. Follow their rules; the template is a starting point.