

First and last name  
Street address  
City, state, and zip  
Phone number  
Email address  
Word count

(blank line)

(blank line)

Title (no quotes; all caps)

(blank line)

(blank line)

This is the way a professional manuscript should look. Editors and publishers can be very particular about these issues. The look of the manuscript is often their first screening tool as incorrect formatting is thought to be the mark of an amateur.

To this end, margins should be set at **one inch**. You do this by going into Page Layout and clicking on "Margins." Font and typeface are also immediate points of focus. Right now I'm typing using Times New Roman 12 cpi, which is a *serif* typeface. Serif typefaces are easier to read because they pull the eye from one letter to the next. Some editors prefer `Courier New` or Garamond. I prefer Times New Roman because I believe the other two fonts draw attention to themselves. Never use a *sans serif* typeface such as `Arial` or `Calibri`. Both of these are harder on the eye and subconsciously distract the reader.

The heading block at the upper left is very important. Sometimes editors want to call or email you. Sometimes they mail you checks. Almost everyone likes to know in advance how long your story is so that they can plan space in whatever journal or magazine they are using your work for. Heading blocks should be left-justified and single-spaced. Avoid using Word Style Suites. You will need to turn off the extra spacing by clicking on the Paragraph feature on the Toolbar. I'm pretty convinced Bill Gates is still messing with his English teachers who tend to be very particular about the way documents are formatted. Anyway, go into Paragraph and change all the little boxes to zero. Click on the little box that says "Don't add space after

paragraphs of the same style." Change the spacing to single spacing. Then, when prompted, click to add these changes to the default normal template. I found I had to repeat this action a number of times before Word believed me.

Between the last line of the heading block and the title should be two blank lines. The title should be in all caps. No quotation marks or italics. No underline.

After the title should be two more blank lines.

Paragraphs should be tab indented, left-justified, and double-spaced. You have to go back into the Paragraph feature on the Toolbar now to change the spacing to double-space. I reset this for each document because I often need single-spacing for other kinds of documents and so keep my default at single-spacing. Pages should be paginated in the lower right starting with page two. Some editors like a header with your last name or the name of your story/essay/poem alongside the page number. Simply format header or click on Insert and "Page Number." To turn off page one pagination, click the box that says "Different First Page."

That's it! That's all you have to do. Keep in mind that this is the *standard* for professional manuscripts. Sometimes editors and publishers want something different, so be sure to check prior to submitting. Oh, and poetry is single-spaced.