

The Proof Angel Guide to

Fixing your Format in Word

NB: This is for newer Word, with ribbons at the top of the screen.

Why format matters

Many of us make the screen look how we want the finished product to be. If you always use the same pc and printer, that is fine.

If you share your document electronically, standard formatting is safer because:

- On another screen or printer, even on the same network, page breaks can appear in unexpected places.
- PDF or e-book software may not see your formatting the way your eye does. Spacing paragraphs by hitting enter several times or using tabs may make unexpected spaces or blank pages.
- People might look to see how you formatted the document. Neatness gives a better impression.
- If you are using an editor, fixing your own formatting saves you money, and makes it easier to see the important changes proposed.

This takes a lot of space to explain, but you will soon get the hang of it.

Preparation

Remember to back up your file before making major changes, just in case something goes wrong. It is easier to find the file if you need to restore it if you use:

- A separate folder called something like backups or archive.
- A slightly different name, for example by adding today's date on the end of the file name.



The Proof Angel is the trading name of Sarah Perkins, freelance editor and proofreader.

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Usually it is best to:

- Have the whole project in one large document. Things like checking for consistency will be easier. If the file is too large to email, you can always use a service like Dropbox or <https://www.wetransfer.com/>.
- Leave design elements like fancy fonts until after the editing stage. It is easier to finalise the structure of headings before deciding on how to distinguish them for the reader. This is particularly true for books.
- Check that you know any specific formatting guidelines you need to follow, for example for submitting to an agent or journal.
- If you don't have guidelines, a good format at this stage is:
 - 12 point Times Roman font for the main text,
 - 1" (2.54 cm) or 1.25" (3.2 cm) margins,
 - text aligned against the left margin,
 - double spacing.

If you will work with a hard copy, page numbers are useful. Automatic numbers on the right of each page are visible, but not distracting.

If you want to add the book's title, put it in the top right corner.

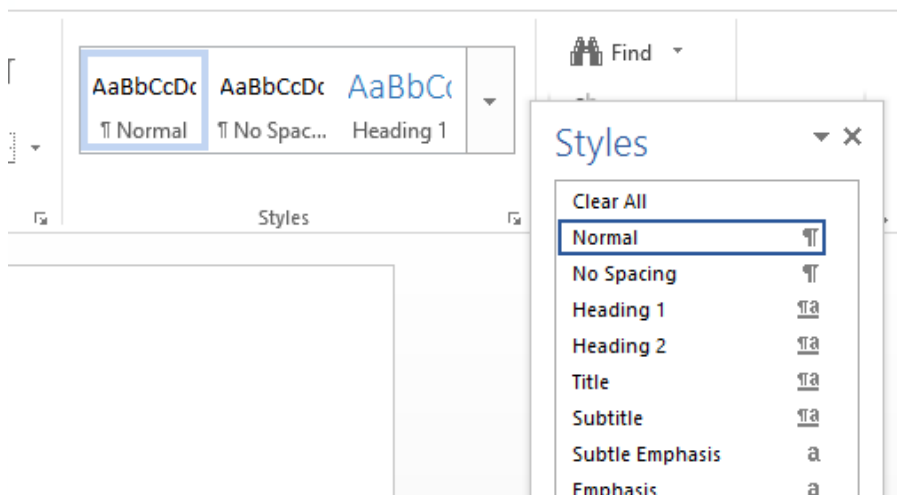
Leave page numbers on the contents until after the editing and design stages. Both processes will change page numbers.

Don't make these format changes with track changes turned on.

How formats work in Word

Word groups the parts of format in a style. When you make changes like making the font larger, Word sets up a new style. This is often why parts you think should be the same aren't. The styles seem the same, so it is difficult to see what to do.

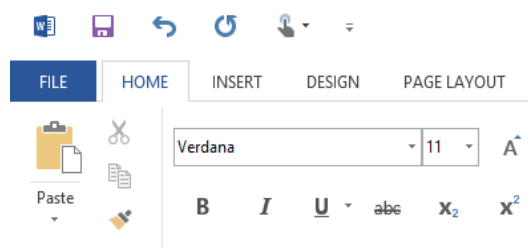
Setting basic styles how you want them can save a lot of time. Using them ensures consistent format.



You can see styles in a section on the right of the **Home** ribbon. The arrow at the bottom right of the styles box gives you the **Styles** list, shown here.

Heading 1 is for your main headings (chapter headings etc), while Heading 2 and 3 are the first two levels of subheading. These headings go into the table of contents if you use *References* to create it.

The style of the current paragraph is highlighted, *Normal* in this example. You can see details of the font on the left of the *Home* ribbon. In this example, *Normal* is on Verdana 11.



Decide on your styles

Your headings should have a structure of sections and subsections. Each main section (for example a chapter) has a Heading 1. If that section splits into subsections, they begin with a Heading 2. These might split again using Heading 3, and so on.

Heading 1
Normal
Heading 2
Heading 3
Normal
Heading 3
Normal
Heading 2
Normal

Chapter 1: Flower arranging

Whatever needs to be said in the introduction goes in here.

Select your flowers

From the garden

You can find all sorts of stuff in your garden...

From the florist

You might need to buy a few really nice bits & bobs...

Select your vase

This is really important because...

The picture on the left shows how a structure might look. Write yours down, including how you have shown these levels to your notes. You have probably used font size, bold or italics to do this.

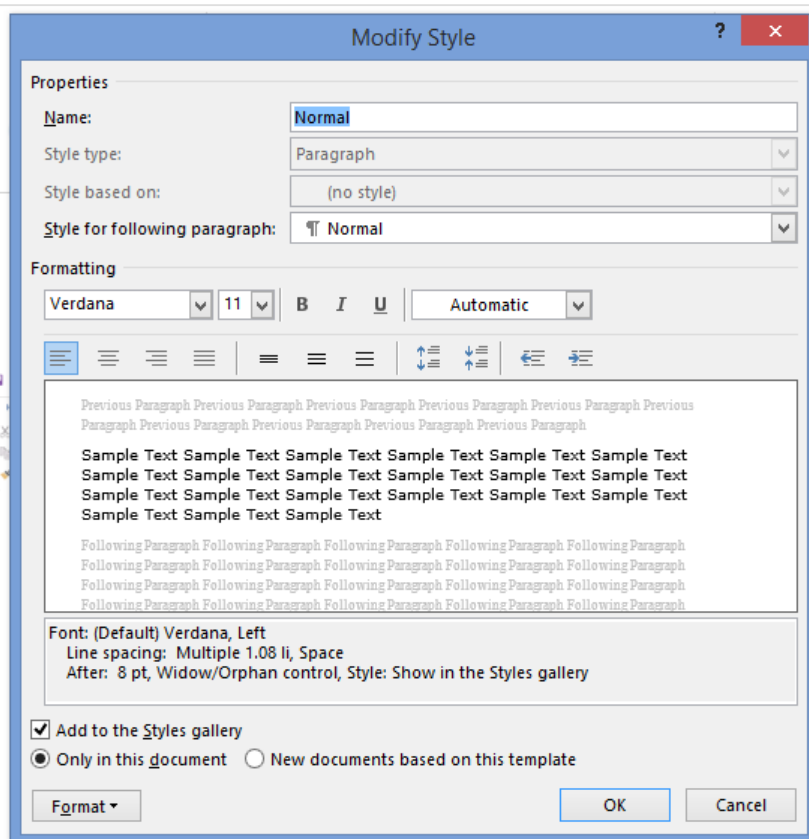
You might need some other styles, such as lists, but you can always set these up later.

Set your styles

Once you have your heading structure, you need to sort out the styles. Right clicking on a style name gets a menu including *Modify...* You can also get it by clicking on the arrow to the right of the style's name in the *Styles* list. Clicking *Modify...* gets the box shown in the next picture.

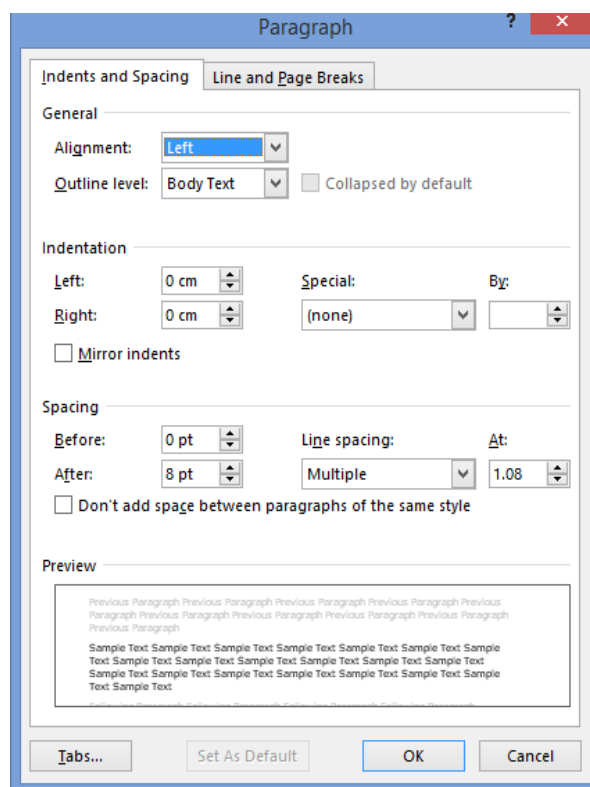
Here you will see boxes or icons to select:

- Font name and size: usually 12 point Times Roman.
- Alignment: usually left or justified.



The changes you make show in the sample window.

The **Modify Style** box can set the style for the following paragraph automatically. For the body text, you could set the **Normal** style so the next paragraph is **Normal** as well. Headings might have a subheading or text next, so ignore the automated option here.



You can set line spacing, paragraph spacing, and indentation here, but I find it easier to use the paragraph format box, see below.

Tick the box if you want these settings available for templates.

Before you leave this box, click on the **Format** box at the bottom and select **Paragraph**. This has two tabs.

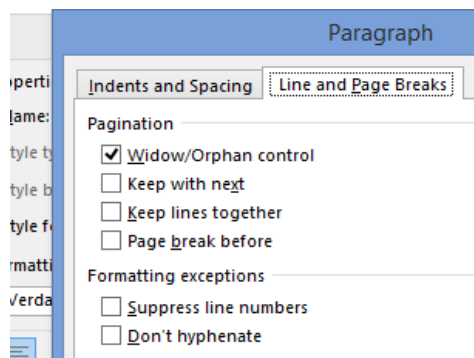
On the **Indents and Spacing** tab, set:

- Text alignment if you haven't already done so (usually left).
- Spacing has two elements:
 - Line spacing: usually double.
 - Before/after, setting the spaces round paragraphs.

NEVER use **Auto**, as it is unpredictable. A useful standard is 0 point before, 6 point after.

- Paragraph indentation:
 - Set special to **First Line**.
 - Note: Kindle automatically indents paragraphs if no indentation is set. If you don't want indented paragraphs in your Kindle book, set a small indent of 0.01" (0.02cm). Type the number in as it is so small.
 - In fiction, it is usual to indent each paragraph, but the first paragraph of each chapter is not indented. Once you have set your **Normal** style, set a first paragraph style (see below).

For an eBook, **it is very important to use these settings to organise your layout** rather than using tabs and inserting extra lines. They cause unexpected gaps and blank pages to appear in eBooks.



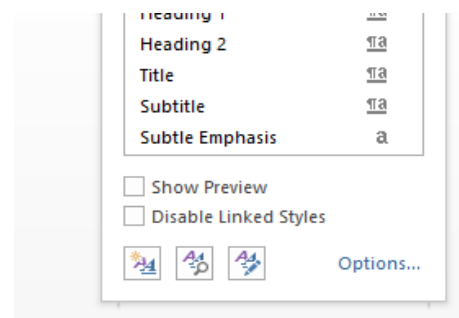
For headings, there are 2 other boxes to consider before you click on **OK**. Go onto the **Line and Page Breaks** tab of the **Paragraph** window.

In the top section are the self-explanatory:

- **Keep with next**: tick for heading styles.
- **Page break before**: tick for headings you want on a new page.

At the foot of the **Styles** list are 3 buttons:

- On the left is the button to create a new style, which is similar to the modify style box. Use your **Normal** style as a base for any modifications to avoid re-inventing the wheel. A logical name helps you to find it again.
- The middle button is the style inspector. If you use draft view with styles you don't need this.
- The last button gets to the manage styles box. This sets what the style list shows, and if styles can be used in other documents.



Finally, on the right it says **Options**. This gets you to the **Style Pane Options**, which sets the information shown in the style screen. It can be useful to set **Select styles to show** to **In current document**, so you can see what you are doing.

When you have set up all the styles you think you need, you are ready to carry on to the next stage. Remember you can always set up more styles later if you need them.

See the formatting code

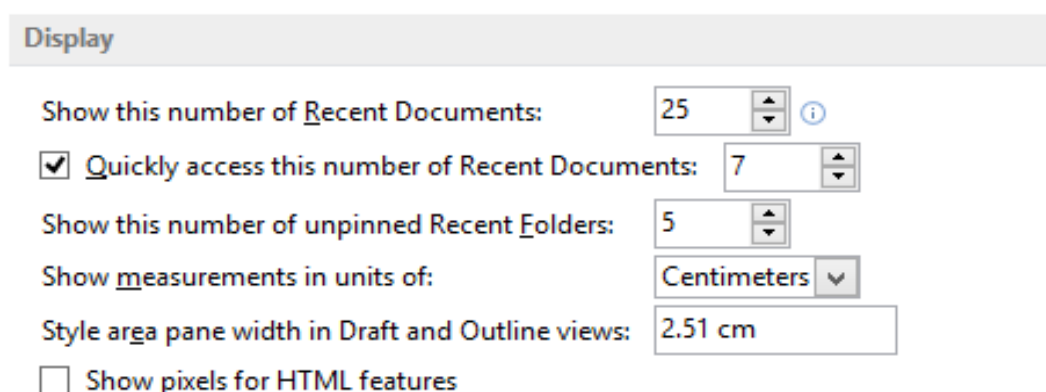
To see the document as Word sees it, find the **Show/Hide** button, with the symbol ¶ (a pilcrow) on the **Home** tab. This toggle button lets you see things that don't appear on the printed page, such as:

- spaces (dots)
- tabs (arrows)
- manual line breaks (bent arrows)
- hard returns (palcrows ¶)
- page breaks (a row of tiny dots)
- non-breaking spaces (circles)

The ¶ mark tells Word how to display the characters shown before it. Delete or fail to copy that ¶ and you lose the formatting of the section.

See the styles in your document

The easiest way to see your styles is in **Draft view with styles**. Set this up by going into the **File/Options** menu, click **Advanced** and scroll to **Display**. Set the width of the Style Area viewing pane to something like 2.5 cm and click **OK**.



The screenshot shows the 'Display' section of the Microsoft Word Options dialog box. It contains several settings:

- Show this number of **R**ecent Documents: 25
- Q**uickly access this number of Recent Documents: 7
- Show this number of unpinned Recent **F**olders: 5
- Show **m**easurements in units of: Centimeters
- Style **a**rea pane width in Draft and Outline views: 2.51 cm
- Show pixels for HTML features

Now go into **Draft** view. A column on the left shows the style of each paragraph, as shown in the **Decide on your styles** section above.

The plan

You are now ready to start sorting out your document. The stages are:

- Convert automatic paragraph numbers to typed numbers.
- Apply the standard styles you have set up.
- Put page breaks where needed.
- Take out extra characters.

Convert automatic paragraph numbers

There are 2 ways of dealing with these sections.

1. If you have no automatic footnotes:

- Highlight the automatically numbered section. On the **Home** ribbon, click **Copy**, then click on the **paragraph numbering icon**, **Paste Special**, and **Unformatted text**.
- The list is still numbered, but if you hit return half way down:
 - The new line doesn't get a number.
 - The subsequent numbers don't change.
- Change the tab after the number to a space by:

Find: ^t (shift and 6, followed by lower case t)

Replace: Hit the space bar once

Click **Replace all**.

2. If you have automatic footnotes, you'll want to keep them, so:

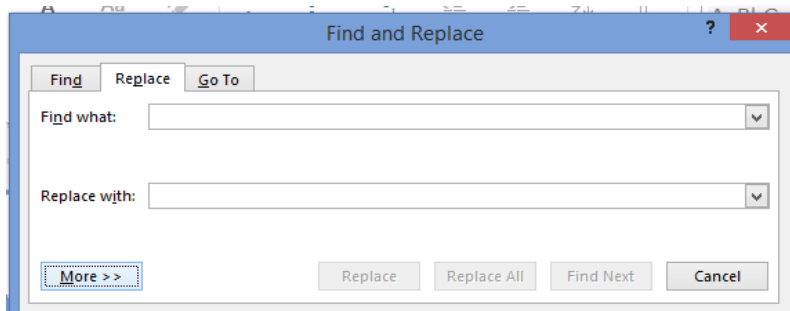
- Highlight the section of text.
- Open a **Microsoft Visual Basic** screen (Alt and F11 together).
- Under the **View** tab in this window (top), choose **Immediate Window** to open a little window at the bottom of the screen.
- Type the following (with the capital letters) or paste it in:

```
Selection.Range.ListFormat.ConvertNumbersToText
```
- Hit **Enter** and close the Visual Basic screen (the **x** top right).
- Deal with the tabs as explained under the previous option.

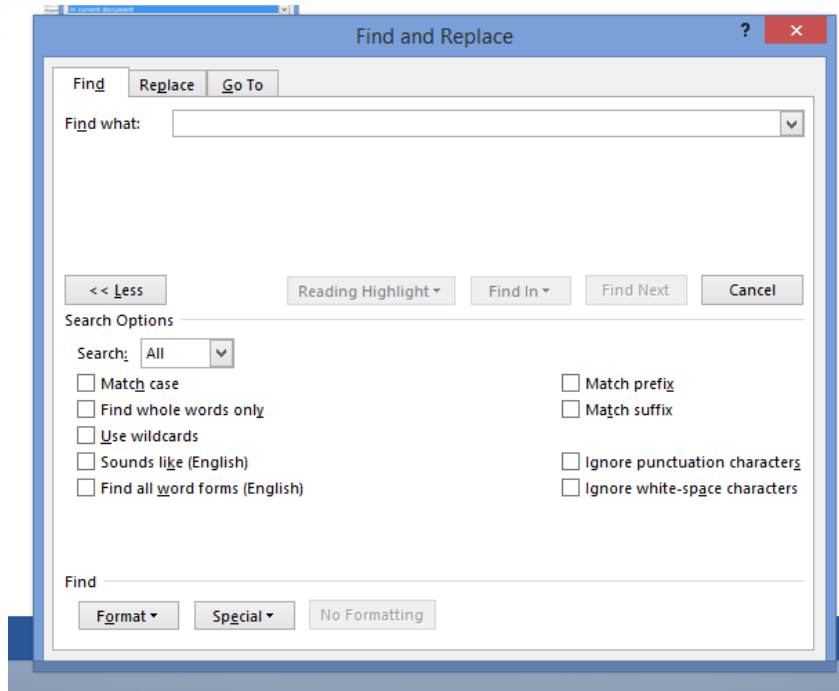
Mark your headings

Some people start by setting the whole document to **Normal** style. That assumes you will be able to find all your headings and subheadings easily afterwards. With it all in **Normal** style, subheadings can be hard to spot.

Start by formatting the **Heading 1s**. If you don't use **Find and Replace**, go to each heading, highlight it, and choose **Heading 1** on the **Style** list.



If **Find and Replace**, looks like the picture on the left, click on **More>>>** so it looks like the next picture.



Go to the **Format** drop down menu. Here you can specify the format you have used for your chapter heading, for example **Font: Bold**. You will see your selection under the find box. If you make a mistake, click on **No formatting** and start again. Be careful if you have used different font sizes, for example in different levels of headings. Make sure the **Find** box is empty, or it will look for

that text in the specified format.

Then on the **Replace** tab, go to **Format, Style, Heading 1**. Click **Replace all**, and repeat for each level of headings. Remember to click on **No formatting** when you have finished.

Dealing with the rest of the text

You might be lucky and find that you have already finished. Make sure the **Styles** list shows **In current document** as explained above. If the list only shows styles you have adjusted, you have finished applying styles.

If not, you can work through, highlighting chunks of text and converting their style. A chunk might be the whole area between headings for conversion to **Normal** by clicking on the style list. You might need to stop when you get to the beginning of something like a list. You can convert similar items at the same time. Be careful to click on the drop down menu next to the style, not the style itself, click on **Select all x instances**. If you now click on the style you want, all these places will be the same.

Remember if you don't want the first paragraph of each chapter to be indented, you have to apply an adapted style. Get to these quickly by using **Find** to get to style **Heading 1**.

Other page breaks

Remember that an eBook producer can't control the size of a page. That depends on the settings the reader uses for the font and the size of their screen. If there are any other places you need to have a new page, the easiest way to insert a page break is to click on **Insert, Page break**.

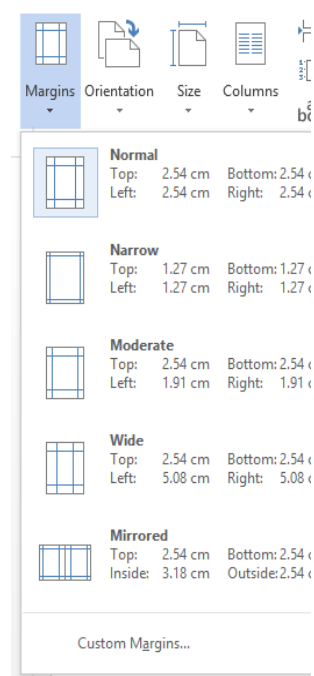
Take out unnecessary formatting and extra characters

Open up **Find and Replace** and work through this list. Repeat each search until there are no more replacements.

| Problem | Find | Replace |
|---|--|----------------|
| Remove double spaces between sentences | two spaces (tap the space bar twice) | one space |
| Remove tabs (small arrows) | ^t (shift and 6, followed by lower case t) | leave it empty |
| Remove extra spaces at the beginning of lines | ^p followed by a space (space bar) | ^p |
| Remove spaces at the end of lines | space followed by ^p | ^p |
| Remove extra lines | ^p^p | ^p |
| Remove soft line breaks | ^l (that's L for line) | leave empty |

Margins

I suspect most Word users know this, but just in case...



Page layout, Margins, and **Normal** (2.54 cm or an inch) will be fine for most things, but if you want to be more specific, go into **Custom Margins** and enter your settings. Make sure you select **Apply to:** Whole document.

For a summary of these notes, see **The Proof Angel Quick Guide to Fixing Your Format in Word.**