The Proof Angel Guide to

Fixing your Format in Word

NB: This is for older versions of Word, with no ribbons on 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 in 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.

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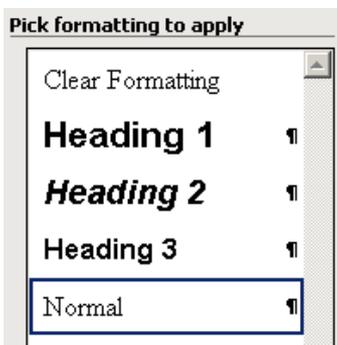
Setting basic styles how you want them can save a lot of time. Using them ensures consistent format.

The picture on the left shows the default styles in a new document. Heading 2 and 3 are the first two levels of subheading. Headings go into the table of contents when you use insert to create it.

The *Formatting* tool bar shows the style of a paragraph. Go into *View*, *Toolbars* and make sure you have ticked it on the list.

On the left of this bar are three boxes, showing:

- The style name
- The font name
- The font size

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.

Write down how your structure works, and add 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.

The table below takes a simple example of a chapter outline on the left. On the right, there is a note of the style used:

Example text	*Style*
1: Flower arranging	Heading 1
Whatever you have to say in the introduction…	Normal
Select your flowers	Heading 2
From the garden	Heading 3
You can find all sorts of stuff in your garden…	Normal
From the florist	Heading 3
You might need to buy a few really nice bits and bobs…	Normal
Select your vase	Heading 2
Good grief, I know nothing about this bit…	Normal
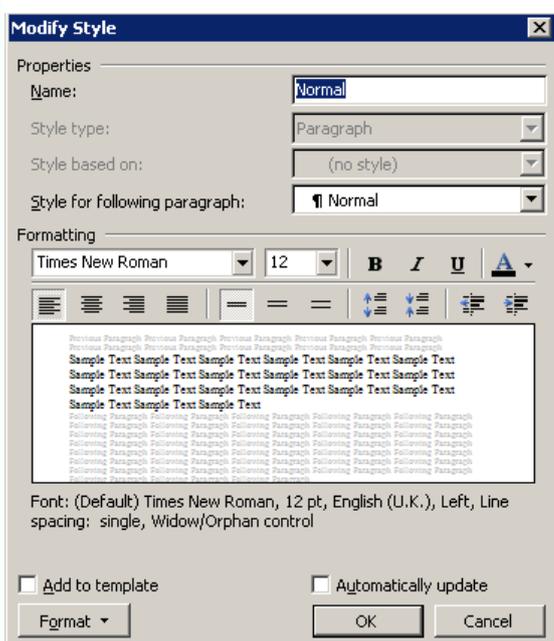
Set your styles

Once you have your heading structure, you need to sort out the styles. First, open the *Styles and Formatting* box by going to *Format*, *Styles and Formatting*. Start with *Normal* and work through the styles you need. When you hover over a style name on the list, you get access to a drop down menu. Select *Modify* to get the box shown on the left.

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 will 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 is easier to use the **Paragraph** format box, see below.

Think carefully about whether to tick the box to update the style automatically. This updates the style when you make a change directly to a paragraph in that style. Sometimes you will change your styles without noticing you've done it, changing any other paragraph using that style.

There is a box to tick if you want the settings available for templates.

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

On the Indents and Spacing tab, set:

- Text alignment if you haven't already done so.

- Spacing has two elements:

  - Line spacing: usually double.
  - Before/after, setting the spaces round paragraphs. NEVER use **Auto** here, 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. Click on **New**
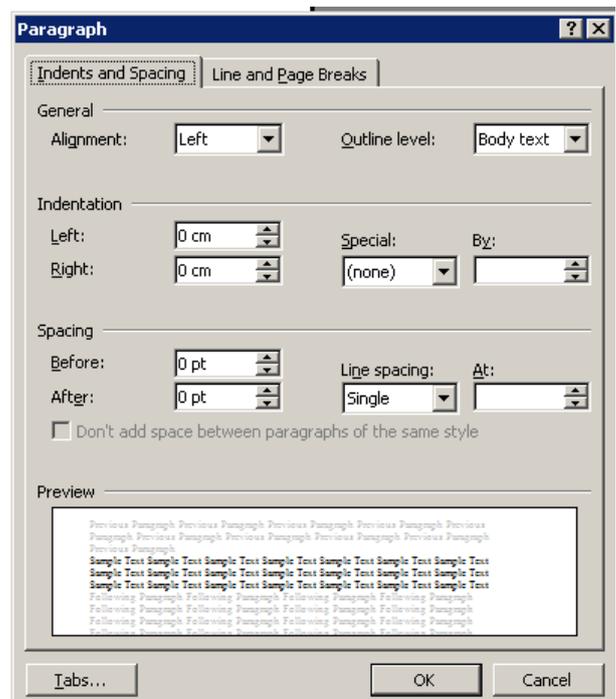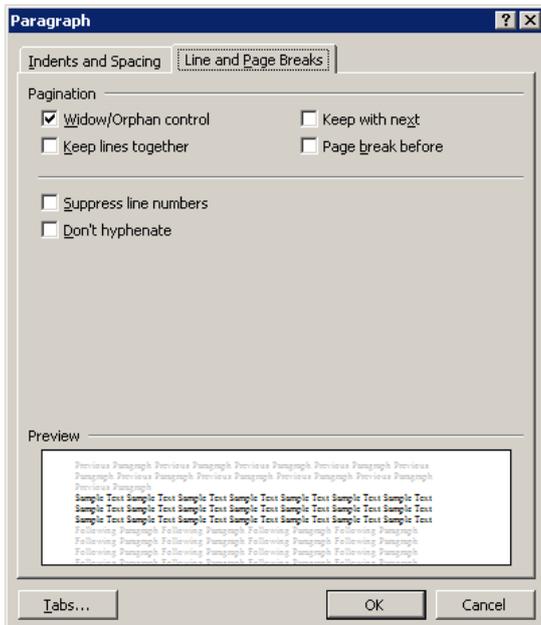
Style, which is towards the top of the **Styles and Formatting** box. Use your normal style as a base for any modifications to avoid re-inventing the wheel. A logical name helps you to find it again.

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 and look at the right hand side of the top section for the self-explanatory:

- **Keep with next**, which you should tick for all heading styles.
- **Page break before**, which is useful for headings you want on a new page.

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.
- If you modify the basic styles it can be easier to keep track of them.
- Use a style you have already sorted out as a base to save work.

See the formatting code

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

- o spaces (dots)
- o tabs (arrows)
- o manual line breaks (bent arrows)
- o hard returns (pilcrows ¶)
- o page breaks (a row of tiny dots)
- o 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.

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, but you should use the second if you have footnotes.

1. If you have no automatic footnotes:

- Highlight the whole automatically numbered section. Click *Copy*, and then click on the *paragraph numbering icon* to remove the numbering. Next put the numbers back in by going to the *Edit* menu and clicking on:
  - o *Paste Special*
  - o *Unformatted text*
- The list is still numbered, if you hit return half way down:
  - o The new line doesn't get a number.
  - o 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 all the *Heading 1*s.

If you don't want to use *Find and Replace*, go to each heading, highlight it, and choose *Heading 1* on the style name list.

To use Find and Replace:

- On the *Find* tab, go to the *Format* drop down menu. Here you can specify the format you 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.

- On the replace tab, go to format, style, Heading 1.

- Click replace all.

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. Find what styles you are using by going to the *Format* menu, click *Styles and Formatting*. This opens a box on the right of the screen. At the bottom there is a box called *Show*. I find the most useful options are *All styles* and *Formatting in use*. If you only look at the formats in use, and they are all ones you have adjusted, you have finished applying styles.

You can work through, highlighting chunks of text and converting them to the right style. A chunk might be the whole area between headings for conversion to *Normal*. You might need to stop a chunk when you get to the beginning of something like a list. Select the style for the chunk (eg *Normal*) from the list of styles on the formatting toolbar.

You can convert similar items at the same time. Select *Formatting in use* on the *Styles and Formatting* box. 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 appropriate style, it will convert all the places selected.

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 *Insert*, *Break*, select *Page break* and *OK*.

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
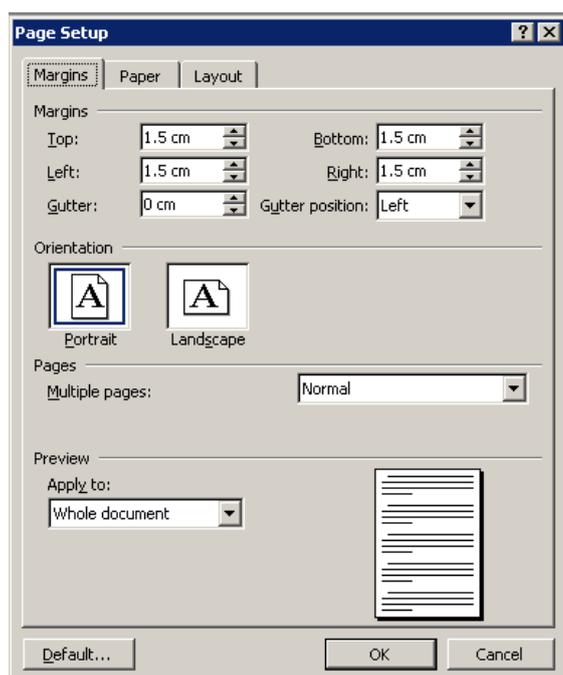
Margins

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

To set the margins, go to *File*, *Page Setup*, 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**.