

Novel Manuscript Format for Genesis contest

The following instructions for changing the formatting of your electronic document is for Microsoft Word. I'm not familiar with Word Perfect, unfortunately, so you're on your own with that. However, most publishing houses use Microsoft Word.

Genesis synopsis format: The optional one-page synopsis should have the same format as the manuscript EXCEPT that it should be single-spaced instead of double-spaced. Include synopsis in the same file as the manuscript, not in a different file.

Margins: Text should have 1 inch to 1-1/2 inch margins on all sides of all pages. Header (see below) can be 1/2 inch or 1 inch from the top of the page, but the text itself should be at least 1 inch to 1-1/2 inches from the top of the page.

To set margins:

Click on "File" at the top, then "Page Setup." A window will pop up.

Click on the "Margins" tab at the top of the window.

Under "Margins" is "Top," "Bottom," "Left," and "Right." In the boxes next to each, change the setting to 1. *Optional:* the "Top" margin can be 1.5 instead of 1.

Click "OK."

Font: 12 point Courier, Courier New, or Times New Roman.

Double-spacing (or 25 lines per page): The manuscript should be double-spaced or set to 25 lines per page. Do not manually put carriage returns between lines like a typewriter--this can cause formatting problems if text is revised or margins changed. Do not put an extra carriage return between paragraphs.

Highlight the entire manuscript (Edit/Select All or Control-A).

Click "Format" at the top, then "Paragraph." A window will pop up.

Click on the "Indents and Spacing" tab at the top (usually the first tab that shows up in the window)

In the middle of the window on the right side is "Line spacing:" and under that is a drop-down box.

If double-spacing the manuscript, click on "Double."

If formatting to 25 lines per page, click on "Exactly." The field to the right of "Line spacing:" is "At:" with a drop-box. Click in the box and type "25."

Click "OK."

Left side justification (ragged right edges): Make sure justification is on the left and not centered or justified.

Click "Format" at the top, then "Paragraph." A window will pop up.

Click on the "Indents and Spacing" tab at the top (usually the first tab that shows up in the window)

At the top of the window on the left side is "Alignment:" and to the right of that is a drop-down box.

Select "Left."

Click "OK."

Indentation: Use the tab to indent the first line of the paragraph 0.5", *not* 0.3" (which is standard in some word processing programs).

Hyphenation: Turn off.

Select the entire document (control A).
Click "Format" at the top, then "Paragraph." A window will pop up.
Click the "Line and Page Breaks" tab at the top of the window.
Select the "Don't hyphenate" check box.
Click "OK."

Widows/Orphans control OFF: A "widow" is the last line of a paragraph printed by itself at the top of a page. An "orphan" is the first line of a paragraph printed by itself at the bottom of a page.

When Widows/Orphan Control is ON, then Microsoft Word will eliminate widows and orphans in order to keep paragraphs together. So you won't have that single line from a paragraph at the top of a page (widow) or that first line of a paragraph at the bottom of a page (orphan).

However, this varies the number of lines per page. This can decrease the amount of text you will have in your pages. Also, this can be misleading to someone reading the manuscript in hard copy because a page with one or two less lines looks like a section break or the end of a chapter when it is not.

It's usually better to turn the Widows/Orphan Control OFF. Then each page will have the same number of lines.

However, you have to make sure the entire document is selected (Edit/Select All) before you change Widow/Orphan Control for it to affect the entire document. Kind of like fonts--you need to select the entire document to change the font.

In your manuscript, go to Edit (at the top) and click Select All (or press Control A)
Click on "Format" (at the top), and click on "Paragraph." A window will pop up.
Click on "Line and Page Breaks" tab near the top of the window.
Make sure "Widow/Orphan Control," "Keep with next," and "Keep Lines Together" boxes are UNCHECKED.
Click OK. The bottom margin should be 1 inch after that, or close enough.

Header (no footer): Most headers are only one line, since a book title, category/genre, entire manuscript word count, and the page number can usually fit all on one line.

There are several ways to format a header, but the most common is:
Left side: TITLE OF THE MANUSCRIPT IN CAPS/category or genre/word count
Right side: page # or just the #

Set the header margin:
Click on "File" at the top, then "Page Setup." A window will pop up.
Click on the "Layout" tab at the top of the window.
Under "Headers and Footers" near the middle of the window is "Header" and "Footer."
In the boxes next to "Header," change the setting to 0.5 if your top margin is 1, or change the setting to 1 if your top margin is 1.5.
Click "OK."

To insert the header:
Click "View" at the top, then click "Header and Footer." The header box will appear.

Type in the header.

If the header text isn't left justified, highlight the header text.

Click on "Format" at the top, then "Paragraph."

Select the "Indents and Spacing" tab near the top.

Under "Alignment" (near the top) set the box for "left."

Click "OK."

To insert page numbers, click on "Insert" at the top, then "Page Numbers." A box will pop up.

Under "Alignment" make sure it says "right."

Make sure the box that says "Show number on first page" is checked.

Click "OK."

To exit the Header/Footer view, click "close."

Typically, fiction manuscripts do not have footers.

Numbering: Number pages consecutively. You should start numbering your manuscript from the FIRST page of text (prologue or chapter one). This is different from traditional formatting taught in high school and college, where they instruct writers to not number page one and start numbering on page two. Since manuscripts are not bound, if several fall from a table, there is no way to know the manuscript's title if there is no information about the manuscript title on that first page of the prologue or chapter one. Therefore, your very first page (prologue or chapter one) should have your header (manuscript title, category (optional), page 1).

Chapters: Indicate new chapters by typing Chapter One, Chapter Two, etc. You can also have them in ALL CAPS: CHAPTER ONE, CHAPTER TWO, etc.

Start each new chapter on a new page--insert a page break after the last sentence of the previous chapter. Do not continue a chapter on the same page as where the last chapter ended.

To insert a page break in Microsoft Word, click the page so that the cursor is after the last sentence of the previous chapter. Then go to "Insert" at the top, and click on "Break." A box will pop up. Click the button next to "Page Break" and click "OK."

On the new page, drop about one-third (6 to 8 double-spaced lines) or halfway (10 to 12 double-spaced lines) down the page before typing Chapter One, Chapter Two, etc. This is the only time you will need to add extra blank lines.

Extras at the beginnings of chapters: Sometimes the book has a date/time notation at the beginning of the chapter, or a scripture verse. Add it after (or before) the chapter number, formatted as you'd want it to look in the printed book. Try not to use strange fonts the editor might not have on their computer.

--For example, if you have a date/time notation, place it on the first line after the chapter number and before you start your chapter:

Chapter One

Lagniappe, Louisiana, 1847

The voodoo priestess lit the candle and prepared for the ritual. She knew it wouldn't be long before her old enemy was dead.

--If you have scripture, place it wherever you feel it should go:

*Do not practice fortune-telling or witchcraft.
Leviticus 19:26b*

Chapter One

The voodoo priestess lit the candle and prepared for the ritual. She knew it wouldn't be long before her old enemy was dead.

--If your chapter has a title, include it:

Chapter One—The Long Night

The voodoo priestess lit the candle and prepared for the ritual. She knew it wouldn't be long before her old enemy was dead.

Spaces after a period: The latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style instructs writers to put only one space after the period instead of two, and most CBA publishers refer to the CMS for their in-house standards.

If you have two spaces in your manuscript, they are easy to replace. Click on "Edit" at the top, then "Replace" (or simply type Control-H). For "Find what:" put two spaces. For "Replace with:" put one space. Hit "Replace All."

Italics, bold, underlining, ALL CAPS: Italics for words being emphasized is the standard according to the Chicago Manual of Style, but underlining is still acceptable if you are consistent.

Do not use both italics and underlining--just use one or the other. Most editors and agents frown on using boldface or ALL CAPS when a word is being emphasized.

Scene breaks: Use one pound sign (#) or three pound signs (###) centered on a line to indicate a scene or section break. Do not insert extra blank lines (paragraph breaks or carriage returns) above or below the pound signs. Another option is to have a blank line instead of a line with pound signs, but the pound

signs more clearly indicate the scene break.

There are sample manuscript pages in .pdf format at the link below that show header, page numbers, prologue, chapter, and a scene break:

[SampleManuscript.pdf](#)

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