

**FREEBIE:**  
**TIMELESS GRAMMAR AND FORMATTING POINTERS**

(To print out and save. May duplicate some info in your critique letter if you ordered one.)

Ready to become a formatting pro? Then be sure to pay close attention to the following children's book manuscript conventions. Believe us: Your agent and editor will appreciate that you did! (These rules are for conventional book submissions; self-published books have completely different formatting. We will toss in some hints for self-published books here and there.)

\* A manuscript should be typed on 8.5-inch by 11-inch regular 20 lb. printer paper using black ink only.

\* Use 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font (unless the publisher's submission guidelines indicate otherwise).

\* Double space.

\* Publishers want to see full pages of text. Turn off the function that takes the entire bottom paragraph of a page to the following page.

\* The first line of story text on the first page—and of every new chapter or scene break—goes flush left, not indented.

Every new paragraph thereafter gets indented five spaces. Do not use your space bar to make the five spaces. Publishers also prefer that you not use the Document Ruler in Word, instead letting the Word program indent the document those five spaces internally so the entire document is consistent. Here's how:

1. Go to Format in Word's top menu
2. Go to Paragraph. Choose Indents and Spacing.
3. In the Spacing section fill in 10 pt
4. Then under Line Spacing, choose Exactly from the dropdown menu

\* Your text area page margins should be formatted in Word in one of two ways. Either:

1. Go to File in the Word menu
2. Choose Page Setup
3. Under Settings, choose Microsoft Word
4. Click on Margins
5. Left: 1.0, Right 1.0, Top .5, Bottom .5, Header .5, Footer .5, Gutter 0.

Then before hitting OK, go to #6 below.

Alternatively, you can get the same results by

1. Going to Format in Word's top menu
2. Choosing Document
3. At top, choose Margins
4. Left: 1.0, Right 1.0, Top .5, Bottom .5, Header .5, Footer .5, Gutter 0.

Then before hitting OK, see below.

\* Make sure your first page does not have an automatic numeral 1 on it by following either method in #5 to format the page's text area, then

1. Go to Format in Word's top menu
2. Choose Document
3. At top, choose Layout
4. Check Different First Page

Now your first page will have no pagination numeral, but your second page will start with numeral 2 once you set up your automatic, consecutive headers. (See next entry.)

\* Make sure your pagination is continuous by creating automatic page headers starting at the top of page 2. Do not use your footers for any content whatsoever.

1. Go to View in Word's top menu
2. Choose Header and Footer. You will end up in the space above your text area, with the text area sort of clouded out below. (Don't worry, you can always get back to your text area by hitting the X next to Close.)
3. Once you are in your header space, your header should look like this—choose Times New Roman for both the text and the numeral—with the following content filled in and your page numeral flush right by tabbing after your last name till you reach the right margin and then clicking on the # icon in your Formatting Palette:

BOOK TITLE/Your last name only

8

For example:

THE HARE THAT ATE ROOM 35/Rojany Buccieri

8

Notice the title is in caps, the slash closed up, followed by your last name starting with an upper case and then all lowercase, finally the page numeral flush right.

To access your Formatting Palette—the shortcut chart for all the formatting you might want to do in one place and the same one you use for your text area—go to View—>Toolbox—>check Formatting Palette. In the Formatting Palette you choose the arrow pointing to the Header and Footer section, which will drop down a bunch of icon choices. Hit the pound sign (the # icon) in blue at the far left.

\* Now make sure you have a line space after your header, inside your header space, so that there is extra room after the header so it does not sit right on top of your story text. Now close the header space. You're on your text area again and ready for the next step.

Headers are important because they allow you and others to keep track of your pages. If the editor loses a page on her desk and finds it later, she'll know where and to whom it belongs because the header identifies your book's title and you as the creator. Also, if you are having a conversation with her, you can reference the page number in the header to make sure you are both on the same page.

\* Make sure to include your word count on your first page with all your contact info like this:

Lisa Rojany Buccieri  
1234 Sycamore Lane  
Los Angeles, CA 90265  
000.000.0000  
EditorialServices@gmail.com

000 words

\* On the cover page, your title should be capped and in the same size font, no italicizing or bolding or underlining or fun fonts. The title gets centered in middle of page 1 (with Chapter 1 on the line below it if you are writing a chapter book),

then text starting two lines after that. You do not need to reprint your name underneath the title, though you may if you wish, identifying the format again:

## THE HARE THAT ATE ROOM 35

### A Picture Book

by Lisa Rojany Buccieri

\* Do not justify your text. This is only done in finished books and self-published books, not manuscripts. Word defaults to ragged right text, which is what you want and is just what it sounds like: each line breaks at a complete word when the maximum line space has been reached. In your Formatting Palette, choose the arrow for Alignment and Spacing. Then to the right of Horizontal: click on the first box at the far left.

\* Disable word breaks in your document. Let the page designer at the publishing house decide when breaking a word makes sense for the payout of the sentence.

\* Do a universal fix to make smart quotation marks and apostrophes in your document. Smart quotes look like this: “ ” (they are curvy, not straight up and down). This makes your manuscript appear more like a “real” book. (And if you are self-publishing, smart quotes are a must.)

\* With dialogue in a self-published picture book, make sure to hang quotes. That means that the opening quotation mark at left does *not* fall vertically in the same line with the next line of text. Correct:

“Please don’t make me go to bed. Please don’t make me go to bed.”  
Going to be was really hard for Genevieve.  
Staying in bed was even harder.

As opposed to incorrect formatting:

“Please don’t make me go to bed. Please don’t make me go to bed.”