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Sample Format for a Manuscript

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone numbers
E-mail address

Words

TITLE

Your Name

This is a basic format for preparing manuscripts for reading or submission. There are many variations of manuscript formats. This one will work for most types of prose—fiction or nonfiction. In all cases, read and follow the specific guidelines of the agent/editor/publisher. For added tips on preparation, see *Formatting & Submitting Your Manuscript* and *Writer's Market*, both published by Writer's Digest Books.

Set margins at one inch, and align left (do not justify). Select a plain font such as Times Roman, 12 point. Single space contact information at the top left of the first page. Type your word count at the top right. The title and your name are centered, in caps, one-third of the way down the page. The text begins four lines down from your name and is double spaced throughout. Indent paragraphs. Avoid colors and fancy graphics. Minimize use of italics, bolds, underlines, and exclamation marks.

Do not put a page number on the first page.

On subsequent pages, put your last name and the slug (a short form of your title) in the left header, and the page number in the right header.

If you are submitting a hard copy, print on one side of plain white paper. Use a paperclip, butterfly clamp or book box to secure the pages. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) large enough to hold your manuscript, or note that this is a disposable copy and send a self-addressed, stamped post card to be used for notification. Be sure to write the name and address of the publisher in the return area of the envelope or card, and include sufficient postage. Keep a copy of your manuscript and a record of your submissions.

In all cases, check and follow the agent/publisher guidelines about submissions. Some prefer print, most prefer electronic; some like attachments; some don't. You will find guidelines in the market guides, but check online to see if names or instructions have changed since the guide was printed.

At the end of your manuscript, drop two lines and write END in center or at the left margin.

END