

Write Your Novel – Week 1

How to present your manuscript

A note from Curtis Brown Literary Agents on their submissions page:

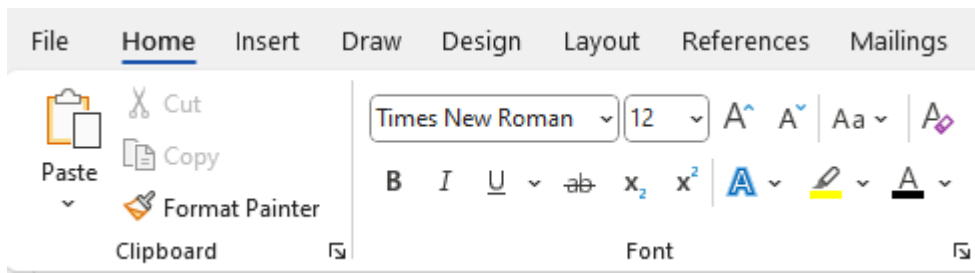
“The right way to present your work is to use an unfussy font - not too big, not too small (Times New Roman 12 point will do just fine), 1.5 or double spacing, and make sure you set the work out correctly, the way you'd see it on the page of a published book - ie, paragraphs indented (rather than with spaces between them), dialogue properly formatted etc.

This may sound petty, but if you've got a truckload of reading to do (which is the case for all literary agents), it makes a massive difference when the work looks clean, professional and readable.

Also, number your pages and put your name on them.”

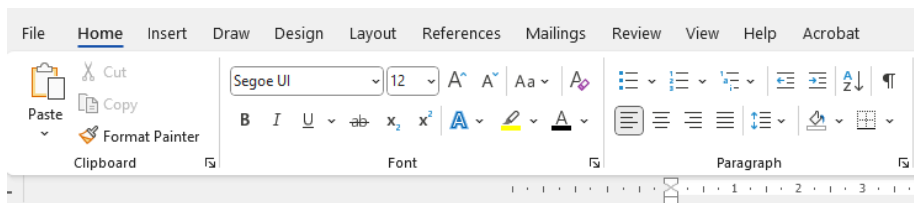
Formatting the document in Word

Choose a font such as Times New Roman, set at 12pt, in the Home tab.



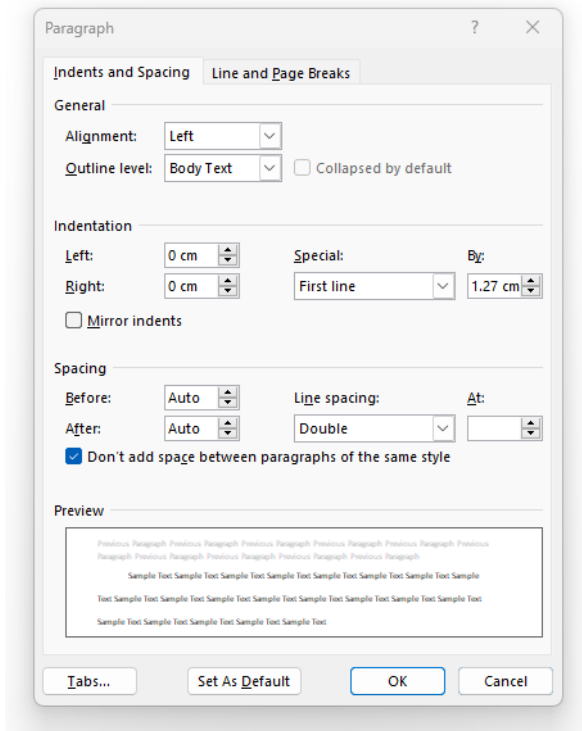
Make the document double or 1.5 spaced and indent the paragraphs (1.27cm is industry standard).

Go to Paragraph and click on bottom right arrow:



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Input the settings as below:



The first line of each chapter should not be indented but each subsequent paragraph should, as per this example of the first page of *Great Expectations*:

CHAPTER I

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

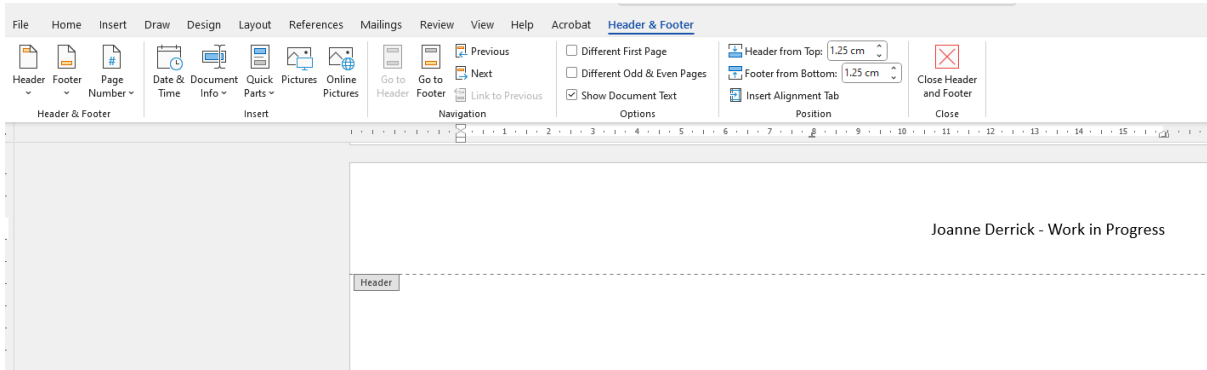
I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister – Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine – who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle – I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river,² within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish,

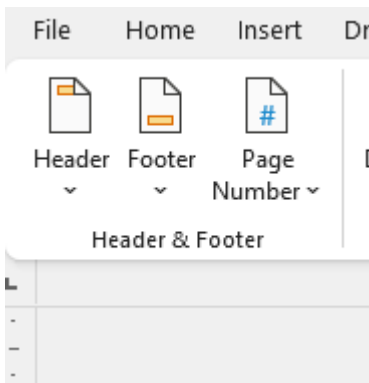
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To add a header, double-click in the space at the very top of the document.

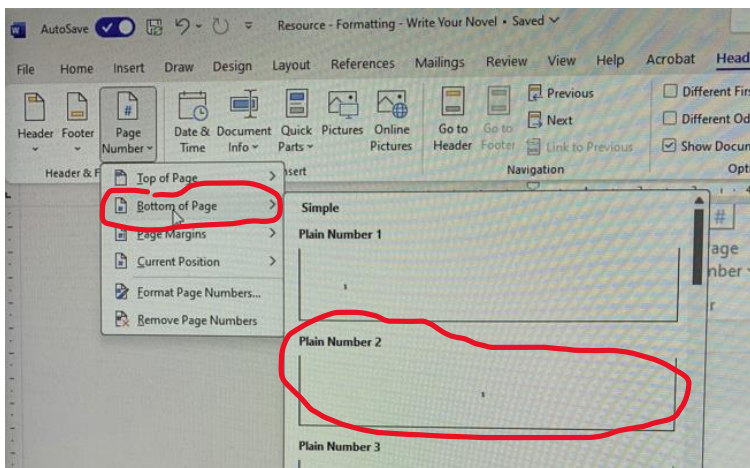
You can add your name and novel title. Right alignment is best. Then double-click on the main document to return to your text.



To add a page number at the bottom of your document, double-click in the footer space in your document.



Then click on page number and select 'Bottom of Page' and 'Plain Number 2':



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Example of page format from my current work in progress:

Joanne Derrick - Darren Dean (Working Title)

fill their stockings with plastic parachute men, spinning tops, yo-yos, and sweets, as well as a clementine and a couple of walnuts, while mum could be heard laughing outside the bedroom door and Dad would whisper 'Ho, Ho, Ho' as headed back out onto the landing. On Christmas morning he would make them wait until they'd had at least one excited mouthful of rice crispies and a sip of orange juice before letting them loose on the pile of presents mum had spent all night wrapping. He'd grin as the boys gasped at the sight of toys they'd coveted through the year and shouted out 'that's ace, thank you!'

When Vinnie came home from the pub that Christmas Day in ninety-five, Gramps was back at his house even though Mum and Darren had tried to get him to stay. Fifteen-year-old Darren and his newly widowed Mum were watching Taggart. Baby Elodie, born just a week after Dad's funeral, was tucked up in her cot in the boxroom nursery. Mum had comfort-eaten an entire tin of Roses except for the coconut toffee and orange creams. Darren sat across from her with one earphone of his Walkman listening to Oasis and half following the murder on TV. He had sat brushing his hair forward, looking moody and intermittently getting up to get a Coke with a cool Gallagher swagger. Mum asked if he was all right. As they both sat bloated with fizzy drinks and chocolate, Vinnie crashed into the hallway and stood in the door of the living room, ~~swaying~~ and reeking of alcohol.

'What have you done to yourself, Vincent?' said Mum turning her head from the sofa that faced the telly.

'What?' he mumbled as he lunged forward and righted himself holding onto the door frame.

'You stink,' Darren said, daring not to flick a light on for fear of the fumes causing the house to ignite.