How To Format Your Kindle Book

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How To Format Your Kindle Book

When is the best time to start formatting your Kindle eBook? Ideally, before you begin to write. You are most likely using MS Word but the formatting you see on your screen will not translate exactly to Kindle display. If you skip proper MS Word set up, you will guarantee yourself a frustrating time involving much back-tracking, fixing and confusion.

Forget the "normal" way you may be used to working – formatting-as-you-go, when writing. For a Kindle-intended manuscript, set your format options up ahead of time and observe the tips in this guide.

Step 1. *Before* You Write

Performing the actions in this section should take you less than five minutes, and it can eliminate hours of frustrated hassling with Kindle .mobi formatting later.

1. Click the **File** tab and select **Options** from the drop-down menu.

In the "Word Options" pop-up window that opens, select the **Proofing** hyperlink.

Select the **Autocorrect** button to the right, which appears after you've pressed "Proofing".

When the "Autocorrect: English (U.S.)" popup opens up, ***uncheck all the check marks*** within it.

Click **OK**.

Click **OK** again in the "Word Options" pop up. This will return you to your blank manuscript page.

2. Now set up your **Indents**.

 It is absolutely vital you set them up this way, and not by using your Tab key or anything else. You are setting indents for the ***first line of every paragraph***.

Click on your **Page Layout** tab, go to the **Paragraph** section and click on the little downward arrow button in the bottom, right-hand corner of that section

Clicking on the little downward arrow will open up the Special drop-down menu: Select "First line".

Set your indent to the standard publishing-industry 0.5" indent (or whatever custom indent you want to create).

Click **OK** to close the "Paragraph" popup.

3. Next, set up your **Spacing**.

This is for the ***spacing between paragraphs***, so you don't have to manually insert these.

Press your **Page Layout** menu tab again if you need to, and glance over until you find the Spacing section. Reset the **After** option to the standard publishing industry 10 point spacing (or your preferred setting).

What To Do With Images

Images don't have to give you a nervous breakdown – as long as you observe the basic rules.

1. Place your cursor at the point you want to insert an image. Do not leave extra spaces.

To add images to your manuscript, press the **Insert** menu tab and click on **Picture**. Then select the .jpg filename you want from the correct folder and press the "Insert" button.

2. All images should be *center-aligned*.

3. If you have used indents, remove the indent on that paragraph alone (the "paragraph" being your image).

4. Your cover photo should have a minimum size of 600 pixels wide and 1,000 pixels deep. Stick to that ratio.

What *Not* To Do...

It helps prevent costly errors if you know the following Kindle formatting prohibitions in advance.

1. Do not copy-paste images into your manuscript. Stick to the Insert menu.

2. Do not include your Cover photo in your manuscript. It needs to be uploaded separately.

3. Do not use headers, **footers** or **page numbers.** If you want to type a chapter heading, click on your **Home** menu tab. Then simply highlight your chapter heading and apply your pre-set "Heading 1" from the Styles menu.

4. Do not use three periods at the end of a line. Instead, use a proper ellipsis CTRL+ALT+period …

5. Do not insert **extra spaces**, **tab indents** or **paragraph returns**. Use the **Styles** menu.

6. **Do not** use CTRL+C or the "Enter" key to create a page break at the end of each chapter!
Instead, press the **Insert** menu tab: Then select **Page Break**. Your end of chapter will then automatically be inserted.

Clean Up Your Manuscript Before Uploading

Once your manuscript is finished and the final draft saved…

 Spell-check

Proof for readability

Now it's time to eliminate hidden formatting – and prevent those glitches on upload you hear people complaining about.

Clean Out Your Formatting

Before you can correct hidden formatting, you need to see it.

The easy way to see your formatting instantly is to press **CTRL+SHIFT+8**. You will instantly see formatting marks. (Repeating CTRL+SHIFT+8 switches them off again.)

Extra spaces that could mess up your Kindle formatting show up as dots

The symbol called a **pilcrow** signifies a paragraph return.

Remember, you only want a single paragraph return at the end of each paragraph: Any extra spacing between paragraphs has to be set with your Style before writing – not inserted manually with the Enter key.

One final thing to always keep in mind…

Finished Kindle text on a Kindle device is fluid, constantly adjusting itself from individual reading device to individual reading device. You will never, ever get your formatting to look exactly the same for every single Kindle device version, so keep your formatting as simple as possible to allow for variations.

(Remember also that Kindle readers can choose to adjust their own font sizes!)

Adding Front Pages

But what about those "extra" pages that always precede the body of the book? If you haven't already included them, insert them into your MS Word file before the main body of your text, separating each one with a Page Break.

A Title Page – Centered.   Title of book, followed by Author name.

Copyright Page – Centered.

<div align="center">
Copyright © 2013 [Your Name]
All Rights Reserved
</div>

Dedication – Also centered.

★ *Formatting*: use your Home tab, and select **Center**. After each page, click your **Insert** tab; then click **Page Break**

The following pages should not be centered. Instead, use justified left, ragged margin (the same as your Text body).

Legal Disclaimers – If needed

 Foreword or Preface

Table of Contents (TOC)

Prologue – Think of this as an introduction, including any explanations that are necessary on what's about to follow; and background, if relevant.

Remember, your finished Cover Page will be uploaded separately.

To Create a Table of Contents:

Creating a Kindle-correct TOC is easy, if you follow these simple steps. (Remember, you shouldn't attempt to do this until *after* you have completed your manuscript.)

1. On your new page, type "Table of Contents" at the left margin. Press **Enter**.

2. Select what you just typed.

 3. Go to your **References** tab and select **Table of Contents**. From the drop-down menu, click on "Insert Table of Contents".

4. Uncheck **Show page numbers**. Set **Show levels:** to 1. Press **OK**.

You've created your Table Of Contents – but there's one more vital step you have to take!

Set a Bookmark:

1. Select the words "Table of Contents again

2. Go to your **Insert** tab. Select **Bookmark**.

3. A popup will open. In the **Bookmark name** box, type "TOC".

4. Click the **Add** button.

This will create a code so that your Kindle book will start with the Table of contents.

Saving Your File

For your very last Save before proceeding to previewing and upload, save your file as a **Web page, filtered.**

If you get a dialogue box asking about "removing office tags", check the box as a "Yes".

And finally we arrive at the most important step...

If you have used images in your book you will have to zip the word doc and the images together.

Compressing Your File

The very last step you have to take: Creating a compressed file. This couldn't be easier.

1. Find your HTML file.

2. Right-click on it, and select "Send to"

3. Choose Compressed File.

And you're ready to preview your book in the kindle previewer which you can download here.

In my experience from talking to writers they find it easy to write their book but find formatting the book for kindle to be over-whelming. A poorly formatted eBook can reflect negatively on the author spoiling their reputation and affecting their book sales. I would love to help you format your eBook or answer your questions.

Just email me at susanne@asksusanne.com.

Here's to your book success.