

Word Processing Guidelines

Suggested Practices for Papers, Projects, and Assignments



Before You Get Started

You should know that there is a significant difference between

Typing: creating text by striking keys to create words, sentences, and documents
(This process is now referred to as “keying in” data or information.)

Word processing: manipulating, or working with the text, using a computer application

Typing Tips to Make Word Processing Easier

The most obvious advantage of word processing is the ability to add, delete, change, move, or correct text. Almost everyone who uses a computer begins “word processing” as they are keying in text--correcting simple errors (spelling, etc.). Some quick tips that you may find helpful in as you begin our work:

Type First; Fix and Format Later

You really must have some text to manipulate, before you begin word processing, so start every assignment or project by just keying in what you want to say.

You may think it's easier to fix things as you go, but unless you have considerable word processing skills, and the ability to imagine what the finished project should look like, start with recording what you want to say.

Use the Enter Key *Only* When You Want to Start a New Paragraph, Not at the End of Every Line.

Word processors automatically “wrap” text onto the next line for you.

Paper are double-spaced (unless otherwise instructed), but do that *later* when you format your work. Do *not* press the Enter key twice at the end of each line to double-space.

Use the Space Bar Correctly.

Use only one space between words.

Use one space after all punctuation marks. (Your Keyboarding or English teachers may give different directions. Use the directions they give you.)

Use the Tab key to indent for paragraphs.

Save Your Work Frequently!

If you can set your word processor to save automatically, set it to save every 5 or 7 minutes (or more frequently if you need). It's terrible to lose your work because you forgot to save it. You never know when a computer can freeze or crash and your work will be gone.

Use a Flash Drive, Floppy Disk, or Other Storage to Make a Backup Copy of Your Assignment When You Work at Home.

If anything bad happens to your computer, you will always have something to work from to reconstruct an assignment or project. Update this backup copy every time you finish working on your paper.

When You Have Finished the First Draft of Your Work:

Save your work.

Use the **Spell Check** function.

Set the margins of the paper and set the line spacing.

Standard margins are one inch on all sides.

If your teacher requests different margins, set them as instructed.

You can usually set this under the File Menu in Page Setup on the Margins tab (or Format → Document).

Look for a **Font** or **Format** Menu, where you can change your work from single spacing, to **double spacing** (usually what your teacher will request).

Use Appropriate Fonts

Change the font and font size after you have set the margins and the line spacing.

Choose one font for the body of your assignment/paper and stick with it throughout the whole paper.

General guidelines about fonts, style, and size

☞ **Times New Roman** is considered to be the most readable font (or so say the people who study such things), but it's a small, narrow font.

▶ A similar font that is sometimes easier to read is **Bookman Old Style**, if that is available. Notice that this line in Bookman is much larger and rounder than Times New Roman.

☞ **Courier** makes assignments look like they were done on a typewriter, not on a computer. Also notice the odd spacing in Courier.

☞ Script Fonts, such as *Amazon BT*, *Blackadder JTC*, *Brush Script*, *Edwardian Script*, should be used for special situations such as invitations, and they should always be a

much larger size than regular fonts. The fonts listed are all the same size as Times New Roman, but notice how much smaller they look.

☞ **Συμβολ (Symbol)** is used for mathematical and/or scientific equations; otherwise your writing looks like it is in code.

☞ **Webdings, Wingdings, or any dingbats** are also “symbol” or special character fonts that have special or limited uses in your work.

▶ Some Webdings/Wingdings would be:



Use the Spell Check Function and Save Your Work!

You will probably continue to edit (or change) your written words as you format your work. Every time you change something, you there is a chance that might make a spelling or typing error. Use the spell checker and save frequently.

Suggested fonts for the body text your assignments:

Arial	Franklin Gothic	New Zurica
Baskerville	Book	Nimrod
Book Antiqua	Footlight	Perpetua
Californian	Garamond	Poor Richard
Century	Georgia	Tahoma
Schoolbook	Goudy Old Style	Trebuchet
Century Gothic		Tribune

Suggested font sizes for the body of your assignments:

☞ Fonts should be 10, 11, or 12 point for the body of your work (ex: in Arial/10)
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☞ Fonts should be 10, 11, or 12 point for the body of your work (ex: in Times New Roman/10)
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Use the Spell Check Function and Save Your Work!

Using underlining, bold type, and *italics*

Underlining is very seldom used in word processing. It’s a throwback to typing. Use underlining only for math equations or scientific formulas. It should not be used in word processing.

Italics should be used for titles or names of the following:

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Musical Pieces</i>	<i>Sculpture</i>
<i>Albums</i>	<i>Magazines</i>	<i>Ships</i>
<i>Books</i>	<i>Newspapers</i>	<i>Software Programs</i>
<i>Films</i>	<i>Paintings</i>	<i>Spacecraft</i>
<i>Journals</i>	<i>Pamphlets</i>	<i>Trains</i>
<i>Long Poems</i>	<i>Plays</i>	

Italics should also be used for foreign words or phrases, *n'est-ce pas?*

Knowing how to use *italics* will help you produce documents that illustrate the *crème de la crème* of style.

Italics may also be used for *emphasis* within a body of text.

Bold type is best for sub titles or subheadings, but using all CAPS IS DIFFICULT TO READ IN MORE THAN ONE LINE.

Use the Spell Check Function and Save Your Work!

Special Fonts for Titles in Your Work

Certain fonts can add flavor or character to your work, but remember to use them sparingly. These are often called “headline” fonts. Some examples of these headline fonts are:

Arial Black

Bauhaus

Berlin Sans

Britannic Bold

Broadway

Cooper Black

COPPERPLATE

Elephant

Impact

Informal

Photina Casual

Revie

Rockwell Bold

Wide Latin

Text Alignment

Left alignment with ragged right edges is the most commonly used. It should always be used for the body of your paper.

Center alignment is used for emphasis, announcements, invitations, and short sections of text.

It is not often used with a larger body of left or justified text.

Right alignment creates a special effect. Remember that right alignment means the text is tight against the right margin.

Justified text will cover the width of a page, but it will also change spacing in order to do that. It often cuts down on the number of words that will fit on a line and sometimes makes large bodies of text look “darker” or crowded.

Use the Spell Check Function One Last Time and Save Your Work!

Print Your Work in BLACK Ink

The text of your assignment or project should always be printed in black ink. Clip art or graphics can be in color if you are allowed to use them in your work, but the words should always be in black ink.

Check Your Word Processing Application for a Word Counter

If your assignment has a minimum or maximum word count, your word processing application may do an automatic count for you. Use this now, rather than while you are working. You should always say what needs to be said to meet the requirement(s) of the assignment. This is just a check for you, depending on whether your teacher uses a word count as a guideline or a requirement.

Ask Someone to Proofread Your Work Before You Hand It In.

Give the (almost finished) assignment to someone else and ask that person to read it and look for errors. It is easier for someone else to see mistakes because the author often sees what he or she wanted to write. You can probably find some errors that I couldn't see in this paper (and my proofreader may have missed!)

