

Creating a Book Manuscript in Microsoft Word: 18 Simple Steps

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STEP 1. PAGE SIZE

Go to the top in Word, select Format, then Document, then Paper Setup at the bottom. Choose the proper paper size for your book. You can always customize it. 8.5 by 11 inches is generally for office documents, rarely for books (unless you are making education material). US Trade standard is 6 inch wide by 9-inch high; this is common for paperback books. You can go smaller or taller, it just depends on the aesthetics, genre, page length of your book, and what you want your audience to have.

STEP 2. PAGE COLOR

While working on your manuscript, you may or may not want to make the digital page color on Word a cream color. Me personally, I can do either one. If I know my book will be printed on cream pages, I like to work with a cream background, so it puts me more in the feel of it. To do this, go to the Design tab at top, select Page Color, and make the background color “cream.” I personally use the color wheel, which starts at dead-center white, then move it slightly towards yellow until I get the cream hue I want.

Note: before you upload your manuscript PDF to whichever book printer company you choose, you must revert the manuscript page back to standard white then saving it as a PDF. After uploading the PDF to your company online, you can choose cream or white page for the book printing specifications.

STEP 3. MARGINS

Let's get our margins. After page size is determined, go back to the Document box. Go to the section Pages, Multiple Pages, then select Mirror margins from the drop down. This will give you left and right sides, just like a book. As far as choosing your exact margins, AI (Google Gemini or ChatGPT) is the best consultant here. Tell it your paper size is, your estimated page length, your font type, size, and line spacing, and it will recommend optimal margin numbers. Typically, top and bottom margins should be somewhere in the 0.5” to 1” range; inside and gutter should add up to somewhere between 0.7” to 1.2” range, so the text does not go into the spine; and the outside margin should be 0.4” to .6”, so the reader can place their thumb there. In the Apply to, select Whole document.

STEP 4. FONT

There are two types: serif fonts (scripted, such as EB Garamond, Times New Roman, Georgia, etc.) and non-serif fonts (straight, such as Arial, Calibri, Franklin Gothic Book, etc.). If you wish to download and install more fonts to your Word, you can easily do so by visiting the Google Fonts website. If you bought the one-time Word package, it has limited fonts, so this is a good step. If you subscribe to Office 365, it continually updates and there are more fonts, so you might not need to do this. If you can't find a font on Word, you can most likely find it on Google Fonts (even if not an exact match, AI can suggest comparable alternatives). On Google Fonts, select all the font families you want, and it will go to your cart. From there, select download all fonts. It will create a .zip folder. Put that on your desktop.

- Windows: Open the folder, highlight all of the font files (typically .ttf or .otf), right-touch the group, and select Install to add them to your system library simultaneously. Microsoft Word will generally detect these new fonts immediately, though you may need to restart the application to see them in your font menu.
- Mac: Press Command + Space to open Spotlight, type "Font Book" to launch the application, then simply drag and drop your selected font files from Finder into the Font Book window to validate and install them.

STEP 5. FONT COLOR

Body text should be printed in 100% K (pure black). Any perceived harshness from the rich color can be managed through typeface weight (going with Regular instead of Medium weight), line spacing, or the selection of cream-toned paper stock, rather than by “dulling” or “graying” the text color blackness. If you print your book and the black is too black for you, you can go ahead and reduce the blackness and re-print. Consult with AI on RGB levels for a more grayish black, but RGB 40-40-40 is decent. Ultimately, you have to go with the color and shading you desire for the final product.

Go to the Home tab, select the Font Color icon (the A with a horizontal bar beneath it), and select Black, Text 1.

Note for digital reading: If you are producing a PDF intended to be read exclusively on screens, the 95% charcoal (or similar dark grey) is an excellent choice for a premium digital reading experience.

If your document is read on devices with Dark Mode capabilities, most modern reading apps will automatically override the color settings anyway, switching the text to a light grey and the background to black.

STEP 6. LINE SPACING

The amount of spacing between lines of body texts depends on font choice, page size, margins, etc. You can tinker with it to get the right size fit. It's like the Goldilocks story; you don't want it too small, nor too large. Typically, a good size spacing is exactly 15 point, or Multiple 1.2 or 1.3. Consult with AI for recommendations.

STEP 7. SPACING IN A LIST

When you have bullet lists, you should add spacing between entries, but a full, single space looks amateur. Rather, highlight all text, right-touch, select Paragraph, go to Spacing, go to "After" and enter 4 or 6 point. You might want to add a "Before" input as well, but personally I stick with just the After.

STEP 8. SECTION HEADINGS

Headings are a feature in the Home tab, found in the styles pane. Headings are pre-determined settings that allow you to select text, select the heading type, and it will automatically create it according to the input you designed it with. Such can be used for Chapter titles, or section headers, depending on the document you are making. Once you design the heading, you can just quickly go through your document, highlighting portions you want, and selecting the Heading number.

Use Heading 1 for A-level headings, Heading 2 for B-level headings, and so on. Using the style panes is crucial because when you go to make the Table of Contents, it will draw from all the Headings.

To format it, right-touch the Heading 1 box, select Modify, and it will open up the Modify Style box. Fill that in accordingly to your needs. At the bottom, deselect "Automatically Update" as that could cause issues; for example, if you decide to make an exceptional change to a single subheading, it will apply it to all subheadings. Check the box "Add to Quick Style list" so it saves and is remembered for that document.

When designing a header, it is recommended to go with Small Caps. At the bottom of the Modify Style pane, go to Format, select Font, and you can choose Small caps or All caps, whatever you wish. Also in this Font box, go to Advance at the top, Character Spacing, go to Spacing and select the dropdown, then select Expanded. I usually input with .7 pt. This will space out the letters, providing an intentional look and slight breathing room.

STEP 9. HEADERS AND FOOTERS

Headings (for chapter and section titles) are different than your header (the page's top portion). After all your chapters are written, it's best to add section breaks between chapters in order to create headers. In the header of the left page will be Name of the Book, and on the right page will be Chapter Number and Name. You will also add a "Bottom Border" to both sides, giving it a sophisticated look.

Before you begin, select the View tab up top, and select Multiple Pages view. Much better than only looking at one page view when dealing with section breaks, headers, and footers.

Now, place section breaks between each chapter: go to the end of the first section, press to insert your cursor there, then select the Layout tab, then Breaks, then insert a Next Page section break. Repeat this for every section end you have.

To edit headers or footers, put your cursor on the Header or Footer section, right-touch, select Edit.

For headers, add your left- and right-sided header section names. You should also be sure to put a Bottom Border for the header (you can adjust the line spacing options to the exact amount you want, between header name and Bottom Border).

For Footer, right-touch, select edit, then be sure to deselect "Link to Previous" for the first few pages of each section, as that will mess things up if it's selected. Select "Different Odd & Even Pages," since for the first page of a chapter you generally do not want to have a header, but rather just the title of the chapter surrounded by beautiful, empty space.

You also may need to adjust "Header from Top" and "Footer from Bottom" sizes to fit your desires.

STEP 10. OLD-STYLE FOR NUMBERS

Depending on font and desire, one can make numbers (whether in-text and the footer page numbers) in Old-style, which has a bit more character. Highlight the text (command + A), right-touch, select Font, go to Number forms, then select Old-style from the dropdown.

For page numbers, you can select all page numbers at once by right-touching the page number at the bottom, selecting Edit Footer, then Ctrl + A. Page numbers should be set in a slightly smaller point size than the body text to ensure they remain subtle and supplementary rather than a distraction.

STEP 11. FOOTNOTES

I enjoy using footnotes in my writing. Select the References tab at top, then select Insert Footnote (an ab symbol with a superscript 1). Footnotes should be one to two sizes smaller than the body text font size. Line spacing should also be slightly less. Footnotes should be spaced at 6 pt between each one. You can manage all footnotes at once by going to the View tab at top, and select Draft view. Then, at top select References, then Show Notes. This will show all your notes on the bottom half of your screen. You can adjust the footnote number size to your wishes, as well as the indentation.

STEP 12. INDENTATION

It is best to use a 0.20–0.25 inch indentation for paragraphs for most fonts types, font sizes, page sizes, and margins.

STEP 13. THE TABLE OF CONTENTS (TOC)

After you've finished writing the manuscript, you can create the TOC using the Headers established for all the chapters and sections. Go to the top tab References, select the icon/dropdown arrow for Table of Contents. Select Custom Table of Contents and choose your design. Then select OK. It will generate the table. As you inevitable refine and revise, you will likely need to change the page numbers listed in the TOC; just right-touch, select Update Field, then "update page numbers only."

STEP 14. THE TITLE PAGE

The title page should start on the third page. When someone opens your book, that first page (front and back) will typically be blank except the name of your book on the very first page, in All or Small Caps. For the copyright page, there is no “perfect” formula but you should have all the essential bits of information there. You can (and should) use AI to help format that. At the very end of your book should be the colophon (a brief statement about typography, paper quality, printing details, and design credits).

Note that a Dedication, Foreword, and any Preface to a new edition goes directly after the TOC, but before the first chapter/section. A foreword is written by someone other than the author to introduce or endorse the book. A preface is written by the author to explain the work's purpose, scope, or development history.

STEP 15. COPYRIGHT PAGE

This is an example of what I use:

ELIA KAZAN BOOKS

College Short Stories, Volume One

Third Edition • Revised and Updated

Copyright © 2023–2026 by Elia Kazan

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The copyright notice belongs on the fourth page, after/directly behind the Title page, centered, and in smaller font than your body text. For a book, I try to use the same font throughout for the sake of consistency and cohesion. Thus, the Title page and the copyright page will use the same font as the body text, just different font sizes of course.

STEP 16. ISBN AND BARCODES

An International Standard Book Number (ISBN) acts as a numerical fingerprint for your book, allowing retailers, libraries, and distributors to efficiently track, order, and categorize your title within the global book trade. It is a unique 13-digit identifier required for books and book-like products. Prior to January 1, 2007, they were 10 digits long, but the system transitioned to 13 digits to increase capacity and align with international barcode standards.

In the United States, you must purchase your ISBNs exclusively through Bowker at www.myidentifiers.com. Bowker is a private company designated by the International ISBN Agency as the sole official registration agency for the U.S. Yea I know ... sounds like a monopoly.

Note that if you are selling a product that is not a book, you would generally use a GTIN (Global Trade Item Number), such as a UPC (Universal Product Code) or an EAN (European Article Number).

When it comes to barcodes, some websites generate them for free, such as bookow.com.

STEP 17. ABOUT THE AUTHOR, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND THE COLOPHON

A brief author biography (About the Author) should ideally appear both at the end of the book, and on the back cover. It should be written in third person. A shorter, punchier version of the bio is commonly placed on the back cover of paperbacks, or the inside flap of hardcovers for marketing purposes.

Acknowledgements is straightforward. Thank and acknowledge whoever necessary.

A colophon, derived from the Greek *kolophon*, meaning summit or finishing touch, is a brief statement placed at the end that details production specifications, such as typeface, paper, and printing house used.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Elia Kazan holds a Master of Arts degree in English from Arizona State University and a Juris Doctor from the Elisabeth Haub School of Law. He is an author of over twenty books.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection was curated from the archives of Project Gutenberg. I am grateful for their commitment to preserving classic works, making them freely accessible to the public.

COLOPHON

College Short Stories, Volume One is set in EB Garamond Medium, a digital revival of the quintessential humanist typeface designed by Claude Garamond in the 16th century. This edition is composed in 11-point type with line spacing set at exactly 15 points, a balance for both elegance and readability. This edition was produced with the intent of simplicity and excellence. It was printed in the United States on uncoated, 60lb cream paper.

STEP 18. FINDING A PRINTER COMPANY

You can print this PDF manuscript using Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, Ingram Spark, or one of these other companies. I personally use Mixam.com.

And voilà. Now you have a book. Hopefully though it doesn't suck. "They shouldn't uv chopped down the oakwood cuz everythin you roach in your notebook was no good!" —Eminem



About the Author

Elia Kazan is an author, publisher, scholar, and rap artist. For more information, visit his website eliakazanbooks.com

Colophon

This text uses Arial, size 13,
line spacing set at exactly 16.5 points,
indented at 0.3 inch.

Spacing is set at 0 pt before and after paragraphs.
Text alignment is justified (with hyphenation turned on).
Margins are 1 inch top and bottom 1-inch,
and 1.25 inch left and right.