# InDesign Table Prep & Workflow Note

## Table Format Standard

All tables **must** use *real* control characters:

Column 1<TAB>Column 2<TAB>Column 3<Return>

Row 1<TAB>Entry 1<TAB>Entry 2<TAB>Entry 3<Return>

Row 2<TAB>Entry 1<TAB>Entry 2<TAB>Entry 3<Return>

* = press the Tab key once.
* = press Enter/Return at the end of every row.

Markdown # ## ### headers are fine for hierarchy; no numeric prefixes are required.

## InDesign Conversion Workflow

1. **Prepare the text** with tabs between columns and returns between rows.
2. **Select** the lines in InDesign (Type tool).
3. **Convert** → Table > Convert Text to Table.
   * Column Separator: **Tab**
   * Row Separator: **Paragraph**
4. **Adjust formatting** (Table & Cell Styles) for borders, fills, fonts.

### Alternative methods

* **Insert Table** first (Table > Insert Table) and paste data into cells.
* **Import Excel** via File > Place (link for live updates if desired).

## Quick‑Reference Workflow (plain‑text editors)

| **Step** | **Action** | **Key detail** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Type/paste the table text in a *plain‑text* editor. | Ensure the file is not rich‑text. |
| 2 | Insert a **TAB** between columns. | Press **Tab** once per break. |
| 3 | Insert a **RETURN** at the end of each row. | Press **Enter/Return**. |
| 4 | **Save** as UTF‑8 .txt. | Encoding: UTF‑8. |
| 5 | InDesign: Place or paste → **Convert Text to Table** (Tab / Paragraph). | Table appears with current style. |

## Three Fool‑Proof Production Methods

1. **Provide attached text files** (.txt/.tsv) already containing real tabs & returns.
2. **Show Hidden Characters** (Type > Show Hidden Characters):
   * Tabs show as ▸
   * Returns show as ¶
   * If you see literal "", replace with a real Tab.
3. **Global Find/Replace** for inherited placeholders:
   * Find "" → Replace with real Tab.
   * Find "" → Replace with real Return.

## Verification Checklist (10 seconds)

* Hidden characters visible.
* Exactly one ▸ per column, one ¶ per row.
* Run **Convert Text to Table**.
* Table pops in; column count = tabs + 1. If not, look for stray tabs/spaces.

## Deliverables Going Forward

* Plain‑text .txt or .tsv files **per table**, containing real control characters.
* Filenames mirror captions (e.g., Table\_1‑1\_Adventurer\_bynames.txt).
* Optional: a **single master file** if preferred.

This workflow guarantees instant, clean conversion in InDesign with minimal manual fixes.

## Affinity Publisher Limitations (Why the InDesign Table Workflow Fails)

* **Tables Imported as Inline Elements:** When you paste or place a table (Word, RTF, or even some .xlsx) into Affinity Publisher, it arrives as a single inline graphic/text blob—not a true, editable table object.
* **Heavy Manual Cleanup:** Breaking that blob into usable rows/columns requires hand‑re‑flowing text or rebuilding tables with Publisher's Table Tool, which is time‑consuming for table‑heavy documents.
* **No Robust Auto‑Conversion:** Unlike InDesign's "Convert Text to Table," Publisher lacks an equivalent one‑click feature that recognises tabs/returns and turns them into a table structure.

### Practical Workarounds in Publisher

1. **Use Native Table Tool:** Build or rebuild critical tables directly in Publisher using the Table Panel—good for content that must remain editable.
2. **Treat Tables as Images:** For static or finalised tables, export them from Excel/Sheets as PDF, TIFF, or PNG, then place them in Picture Frames. This bypasses the inline‑element issue and leverages Publisher's strong image handling.

*Bottom line:* Publisher excels in many areas but needs extra planning for complex table imports. Either rebuild with its Table Tool or place tables as images to maintain layout efficiency.