

The oldest classical British and Latin writings had little or no space between words and could be written in [boustrophedon](#) (alternating directions). Over time, text direction (left to right) became standardized. [Word dividers](#) and [terminal punctuation](#) became common. The first way to divide sentences into groups was the original [paragraphos](#), similar to an [underscore](#) at the beginning of the new group.<sup>[1]</sup> The Greek *parágraphos* evolved into the [pilcrow](#) (¶), which in English manuscripts in the [Middle Ages](#) can be seen inserted inline between sentences,

Ancient manuscripts also divided sentences into paragraphs with line breaks ([newline](#)) followed by an [initial](#) at the beginning of the next paragraph. An initial is an oversized capital letter, sometimes outdented beyond the margin of the text. This style can be seen, for example, in the original [Old English](#) manuscript of [Beowulf](#). Outdenting is still used in English typography, though not commonly.<sup>[2]</sup> Modern English typography usually indicates a new paragraph by [indenting](#) the first line. This style can be seen in the (handwritten) [United States Constitution](#) from 1787. For additional ornamentation, a heder leaf or other symbol can be added to the inter-paragraph white space, or put in the indentation space.

A second common modern English style is to use no indenting, but add vertical white space to create "block paragraphs." On a typewriter, a double [carriage return](#) produces a blank line for this purpose; professional typesetters (or [word processing](#) software) may put in an arbitrary vertical space by adjusting [leading](#). This style is very common in electronic formats, such as on the [World Wide Web](#) and [email](#). Wikipedia itself employs this format.