

Andrew Nonymous
Your manuscript should
have your address
and contact details
on the title page only.

700 words.

If you have an agent, your
agent's address can be
included beneath.

NOVEL STANDARD MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

by Andrew Nonymous

Part One

Chapter One

Standard manuscript format is often required for novels so that work can easily be read by editors. It allows editors to estimate word count and determine roughly how many pages will be required to produce a book using the page size, style and font used by their house. This PDF file was generated using Scrivener's compile feature and was created using the "Novel" project template.

Manuscripts for full-length novels require a separate title page. The author's name, address, telephone number and e-mail address should be shown in the upper-left corner of the title page, single-spaced. The title of the story should appear in all-caps about half-way down the page. The author's name follows the title on the by-line as the author wants it to appear when published. A real name or pseudonym may be used and may include initials, actual given name or professional designation.

Chapter Two

All text should be double-spaced and left-justified with a ragged right margin. Paragraphs should be indented by about five spaces (half an inch) and not separated by an additional blank line. (It used to be traditional to separate each sentence with two spaces, but in these days of word processors this is now less common.) A 12-point font such as Courier, Times New Roman or Arial should be used throughout. In Scrivener, however, you can write using any font and formatting you choose--the options in compile can be used to change the formatting in the compiled document. In the "Novel" project template, the compile settings will deal with changing the font and formatting to those required for standard manuscript format.

Top, bottom, left and right margins should all be approximately one inch, not allowing for the page header. Each page except for the title page should include a header comprising the author's real surname, the title of the work (or a key word

from the title) in capitals, and the page number. In Scrivener, all of this is handled for you by the "Manuscript" compile formats.

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Scene breaks are indicated with the hash character. Do not simply add an extra line space as this can be missed by the typesetter. The "Separators" tab of Scrivener's compile format designer can handle this for you if you are writing each scene as a separate text document. In general, this will be handled by compile in Scrivener, however, so that you can either leave empty lines in the text (and Scrivener will insert the hash character during compile) or use different documents for different sections (and Scrivener will add the hash between them).

Some editors and publishers prefer emphasis to be indicated by underlining rather than italics. In Scrivener, this conversion can be handled by compile. The "Manuscript (Courier)" compile format will convert italics to underlines, whereas the "Manuscript (Times)" format will not.

Part Two

Chapter Three

Begin each new chapter on a new page like this with the chapter number about a third of the way down the page. In Scrivener, this can all be dealt with in the compile settings. In Scrivener, all of this is handled automatically by the "Manuscript" compile formats.

Although it is often said that writers should not use the word-count features of their computers to determine the number of words in a manuscript, most publishers and editors will happily accept a word processor word count these days. In Scrivener, you can insert the word count of your manuscript by using Edit > Insert > Draft Word Count. (For a manuscript, you may wish to have the word count rounded to the nearest 100, in which case select Edit > Insert > Draft Word Count > Rounded To Nearest 100--this feature is used on the title page of this manuscript, in fact.)

Note that the actual word count will not be inserted, but a tag that will be substituted for the word count upon export. In reality, the formatting of a manuscript is often only really crucial when submitting directly to a publisher--first time novelists will usually submit to an agent first, and agents are often less picky about format and will point you in the right direction before submitting your work to a publisher.

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Much of the information contained in this document is based on a description of novel manuscript format by Matt Carless for the BBC Writers' Room website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom>

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