Basic text input

This document covers the basic rules TEX has for text input. Please see `lshort.pdf` ("The Not So Short Introduction to LaTeX") for a more comprehensive introduction.

- A blank line separates paragraphs.

- Some characters cannot be input directly. Precede such characters with a backslash to print them. E.g.: ˜ # $ % ˆ & _ $ { }

- Quotation marks must be typed in explicitly. This is no MS Word that tries to guess what you're typing! E.g. look at the source for the following sentence: "It's difficult to type the word 'discontinuous' correctly."

- Similarly, dashes and hyphens must also be typed according to context:

  1. For hyphenated words, use a hyphen (type one hyphen `-`)
     e.g. co-ordinate
  2. For ranges of numbers, use an en-dash (type two hyphens `--`)
     e.g. 13–18 months
  3. In a sentence, use an em-dash (type three hyphens `---`)
     e.g. "Now wasn't I about to—where's he gone?"
     or "Don't—to quote a president—misunderestimate"
  4. To indicate letter omission, use *two* em-dashes (`------`)
     e.g. "Mr P—— lived in the town of Mt Q——"

- You can type a non-breaking space with a tilde `~`. Use this when you don't want a line to break between the words it separates; eg Mr Knuth, Figure 1, etc. . . .

- An ellipsis (. . .) is typed with `\dots`. Use it before a period when finishing a trailing sentence. (See the previous dot point for an example.)

- Originally, TEX input was plain ASCII text. To get accents, you needed to type things like `\'{e}` and `\~{n}` to get é and ñ. Nowadays it is better to use a richer input encoding scheme.

  Include `\usepackage[utf8]{inputenc}`[1] to tell TEX that you are giving it a unicode file. (Make sure that you tell your application that you want to indeed use this encoding scheme.[2]) Now you can type accents directly from the keyboard, so typing words like "résumé" or "naïve" is much more pleasant.

- Look in the source of the preceding dot point for the two methods of creating footnotes. To create margin notes, use the `\marginpar` command.

It's real easy to make notes in the margin...

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[1] If you are exchanging your documents with people using Windows, it will be better for cross platform purposes to use the latin 1 encoding scheme — use `[latin1]` instead of `[utf8]`.

[2] iTeXMac will detect automatically; in TeXShop go to Preferences:Document and look in the lower right corner...