

Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Tips

Plan Ahead

- Allow enough time for formatting
- Visit the Graduate School Website and review the manual
- Review the Tip handouts and videos on the CAT website
- Visit the Open Labs
- Ask Questions

Graduate School Website

- Prior to writing your document, visit the Graduate School website and review the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide.

<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/documents/eTD-Formatting-Guide.pdf>

- Prior to writing your document, preview the document samples the Graduate School has posted.

<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/current-students/thesis-dissertation/index.aspx>

Computer Applications Training (CAT)

- Review the handouts and videos on the CAT website for assistance with:
 - Fonts/Paragraph Spacing
 - Styles (need these for auto-generated TOC)
 - Margins
 - Footnotes/Endnotes
 - How to Insert Page Numbers
 - How to Generate TOC (Auto and Manually)
 - How to Insert Table of Figures and List of Tables

Common Mistakes

- Title Page
 - Title should be in all upper case
 - Font size should match the document font size
 - Don't use a larger font size for title page
 - No comma between term and year
 - Committee members → no titles
 - No page number
 - Text needs to start at the 1" margin
 - Word headings can sometimes add extra spacing before a line, need to remove

Common Mistakes

- Many times, students look at someone else's document as a guide to format their thesis or dissertation.
- Please do not do this. Start by reviewing the manual for current guidelines and requirements.

Common Mistakes

- Copyright Page
 - Required
 - No page number listed on this page
 - Not included in page count
 - Copyright page text needs to be double spaced
 - do not insert a the copyright symbol
 - Your name must match your name on the title page
 - Text needs to be vertically centered on page
 - don't use the Vertical alignment tool to vertically align your page, just eyeball it

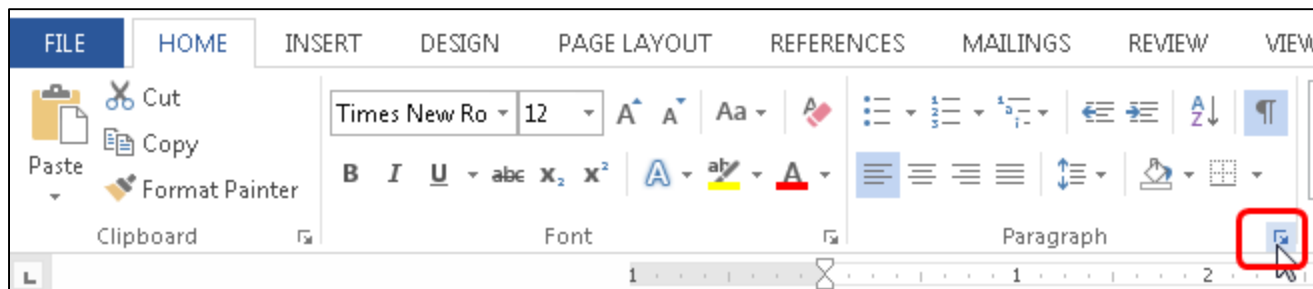
Common Mistakes

- Microsoft Word has some system defaults in place when the Microsoft software is installed.
- Problem areas:
 - Font Size
 - Font Style
 - Paragraph Spacing
- View the CAT handout on how to adjust the Microsoft Word settings:

<http://lib.colostate.edu/cat/thesis-dissertation-formatting>

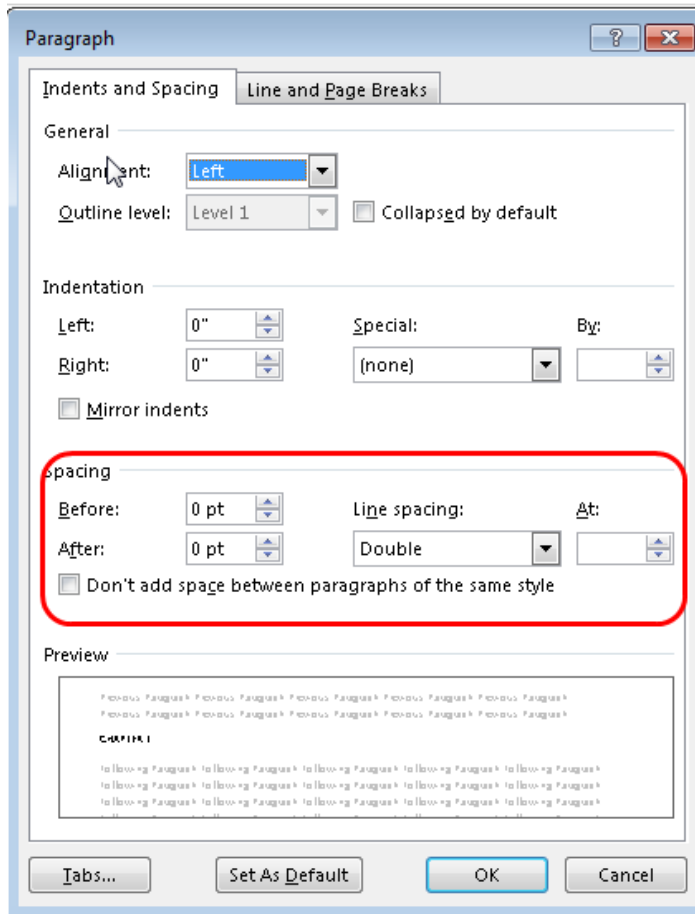
Common Mistakes

- Paragraph Spacing
- Paragraph spacing for the text needs to be double spaced
 - How to verify your document is set up correctly?
- Position the cursor some place in the paragraph text and select the Paragraph Launcher from the Paragraph Group within the Ribbon of Microsoft Word



Common Mistakes – Paragraph Spacing

- Make sure the spacing before and after the paragraph is set to 0 pt (zero)

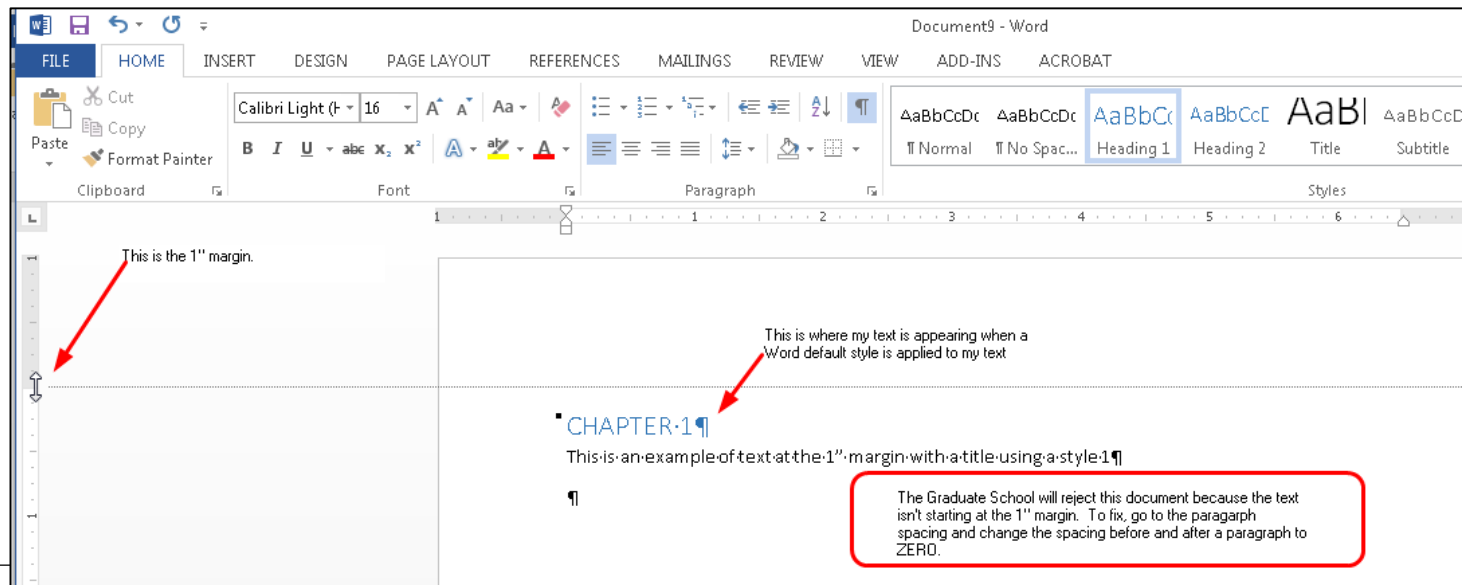


Title page and copyright page usually have the biggest issues with extra spacing applied. A document will get rejected if the paragraph spacing is more than a double space.

Tip: any time you press the ENTER key, you are ending a paragraph and starting a new one

Common Mistakes – Paragraph/Heading Spacing

- The paragraph spacing is a common issue in headings, too
- For Example, if you have a Heading 1 applied to a title, the formatting by default is set up to apply extra spacing before the title on the page. This will prevent your text from appearing at the 1” top margin (rejection).



Common Mistakes

- Preliminary Pages
 - 1” margin all the way around
 - Preliminary Titles should be all uppercase
 - Spacing after the Titles needs to be consistent. View templates.
 - Do Not Bold Titles
 - Font size for titles should be the same font size used in the doc
 - Lowercase roman numeral page numbers
 - Paragraphs
 - If your text is using a first line indent, then all paragraphs in the doc need to use a first line indent. This includes the first paragraph within a new section or chapter. This also includes the Abstract.

Common Mistakes

- Abstract Page
 - ONLY One abstract per document
 - If you insist on using more than one Abstract, call it something other than Abstract
 - Synopsis
 - Summary
 - Maybe don't use a heading??
 - Page starts with page ii
 - Spacing after title needs to be consistent with other preliminary pages
 - Text must start at the 1" margin

Common Mistakes

- Only one Acknowledgments page/section per document
- Many times students add acknowledgments within each chapter
- Consolidate all your acknowledgments and put them on the Acknowledgments preliminary page

Common Mistakes

- Follow the placement order for the preliminary pages:

ORGANIZING AND FORMATTING THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

A typical thesis consists of three main parts - preliminaries, text, and supplementaries. Each part is be organized as shown below:

1. Preliminaries:

- Title page (required)
- Copyright page (required)
- Abstract (required) *only one abstract allowed*
- Acknowledgments (optional) *only one acknowledgments page allowed*
- Preface (optional)
- Autobiography (optional)
- Dedication (optional)
- Table of Contents (required)
- List of Tables (optional)
- List of Figures (optional)
- List of Plates (optional)
- List of Symbols (optional)
- List of Keywords (optional)
- Other Preliminaries (optional) such as Definition of Terms

Common Mistakes

- Table of Contents
 - TOC must contain dot leaders
 - Don't type the dots manually in the TOC
 - Page Numbers within the TOC to be flush with the right margin
 - View the CAT website for handouts/tutorials
 - <http://lib.colostate.edu/cat/thesis-dissertation-formatting>

Common Mistakes

- Tables
 - Captions for Tables go above the tables
 - Make sure the tables fit within the 1” margins
 - Make sure your caption style/formatting is consistent
 - Don't reuse caption labels, each label must be unique
 - Meaning don't use Table 1 in chapter 1 and then again in chapter 2
- Figures
 - Captions for Figures go beneath the figure
 - Make sure the figure fits within the 1” margins
 - Make sure your caption style/formatting is consistent
 - Don't reuse caption labels, each label must be unique
 - Meaning don't use Figure 1 in chapter 1 and then again in chapter 2

Common Mistakes

- Chapters
 - Formatting for Chapter titles must be consistent
 - Be consistent with your font size for each chapter
 - If your document text is using a 12 pt and you want to use a 14 pt for your chapter titles, then check with the graduate school first.
 - Spacing around headings and subheadings need to be consistent

Common Mistakes

- Titles can be bold or not bold, your choice
 - Just be consistent in every chapter
 - If you bold your chapter titles, then bold your References and Appendix titles
- Double space entire document
 - Double check how your references should display, single or double spaced. Be consistent.
- Use a first line indent for each new paragraph
 - Option: Either use a first line indent throughout the doc or don't use it at all. If you don't use a first line indent, apply an extra paragraph return between paragraphs. **BE CONSISTENT.**
- Sub headings can be formatted as you wish, just be consistent

Common Mistakes – Chapters

- Be aware of orphan and widow lines
- Widow
 - A paragraph-ending line that falls at the beginning of the following page/column, thus separated from the rest of the text.
- Orphan
 - A paragraph-opening line that appears by itself at the bottom of a page/column.
 - A word, part of a word, or very short line that appears by itself at the end of a paragraph. Orphans result in too much white space between paragraphs or at the bottom of a page.

Common Mistakes – Chapters

- The Graduate School Requires the following:

Paragraphs

- When dividing paragraphs, at least two lines of text should appear at the bottom of the page and at least two lines of text on the next page.

Subheadings

- A sample page for major headings and subheadings is available.
- Style for subheadings is optional but the style should be consistent throughout.
- Subheadings within a chapter (or section) do not begin on a new page unless the preceding page is filled. Continue the text to the bottom of the page unless at the end of a chapter.
- Subheadings at the bottom of a page require two lines of text following the heading and at least two lines of text on the next page.

Common Mistakes – Subheadings

- Do not force subheadings to a new page unless you are in violation of an orphan control
- Be consistent with your spacing before and after a subheading for every section/chapter of your doc
- Per the Graduate School Manual:

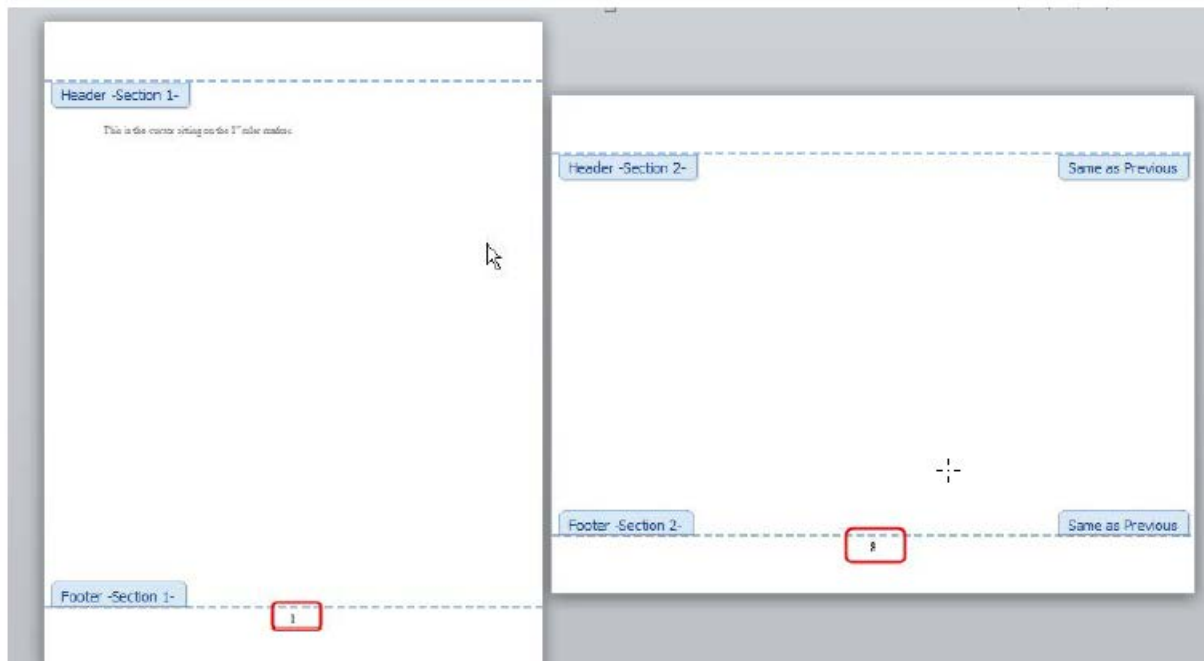
Subheadings

- A sample page for major headings and subheadings is available.
- Style for subheadings is optional but the style should be consistent throughout.
- Subheadings within a chapter (or section) do not begin on a new page unless the preceding page is filled. Continue the text to the bottom of the page unless at the end of a chapter.
- Subheadings at the bottom of a page require two lines of text following the heading and at least two lines of text on the next page.

Common Mistakes

- Landscape Pages
 - Make sure the figure and/or table is displayed the correct way
 - Make sure the page number is in the correct location

Example of Default Page Number Locations on Portrait and Landscape Pages:



Common Mistakes - References

- The Reference title must match the chapter title (or whatever you are using for level 1).
 - For example, if the chapter title is centered, bold, uppercase, then the Reference title formatting must match
- Numbering References
 - **Check with the Graduate School**
 - If you number your references at the end of each chapter, don't restart the numbering with "1" for each new reference page.
 - Communicate with the Graduate School to get detailed instructions/options

Common Mistakes - Appendices

- The formatting of your appendix titles must match your chapter/section formatting.
 - For example, if your chapter title is bold, centered, uppercase, then your appendix title must match
- Captions for tables and figures:
 - Don't reuse numbering for figures and captions.
 - For example, if you used Table 1 in chapter 1, then don't use Table 1 for the first table within the appendix. Instead, use something different such as Table A1.
 - It is your choice on how you create the name convention for your tables and figures.
 - Just be sure each caption label is unique

Common Mistakes

- Giving credit to authors
 - Many times, students will have a paragraph of text beneath a chapter title giving credit to Authors for their contributions.
 - The placing of this text should be in a footnote

Common Mistakes

- White Space on a page
- Make sure your sections flow and that you don't have too much white space at the bottom of a page.
- Check with the Graduate School on what is acceptable.

Common Mistakes

- PDF Errors
 - When making a PDF, it is best practice to embed fonts
 - Calculations seem to be issues when the font is not embedded during the PDF process.
- Submission Errors
 - Submit early and allow yourself enough time to correct any errors if the document is rejected.