

Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Tips

Fran Campana

Computer Applications Training

fran@colostate.edu

970.491.7976

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

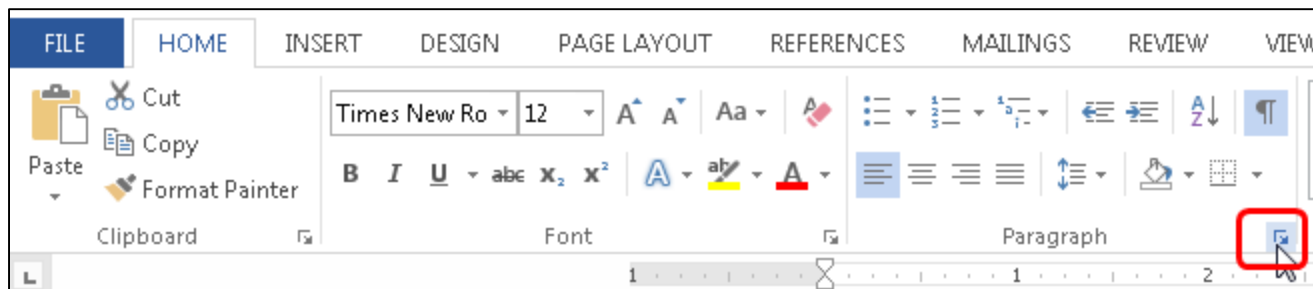
Common Mistakes

- 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>

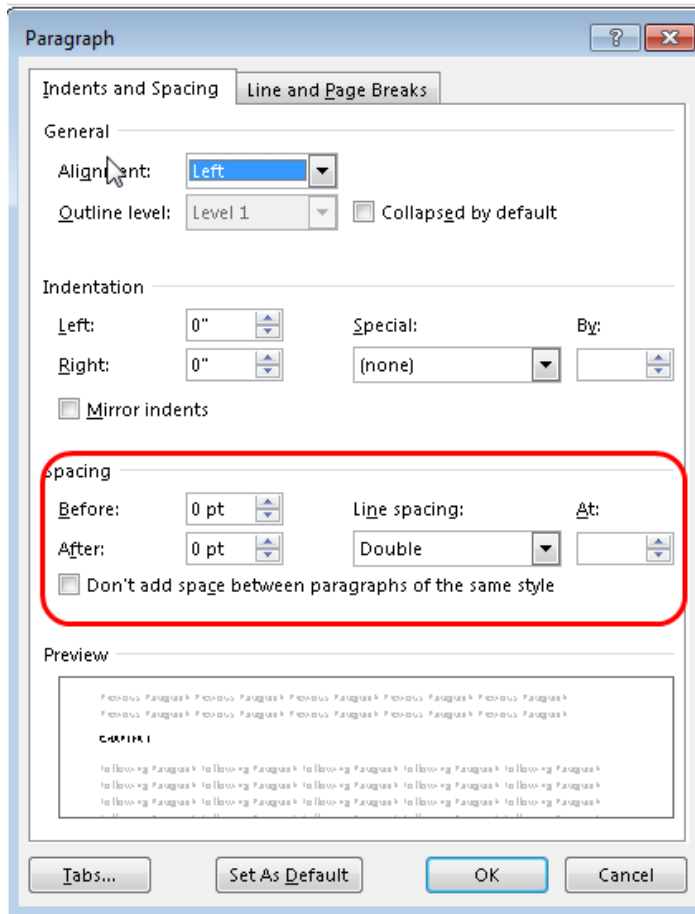
Common Mistakes

- 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

- 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:

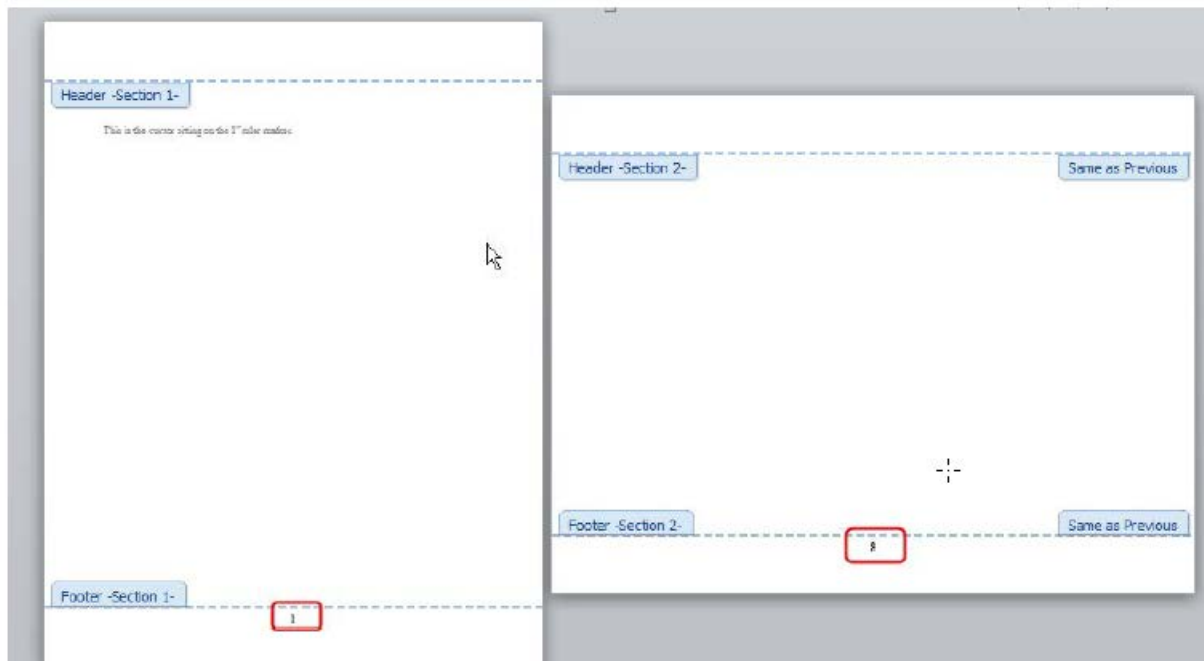
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Common Mistakes

- 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.

Questions?