



# Chapter Formatting Guide

*"But all things should be done decently and in order." - 1 Corinthians 14:40*

## Introduction

Professional chapter formatting creates a polished, reader-friendly experience that allows your message to shine through clearly. Consistent formatting throughout your manuscript demonstrates attention to detail and helps readers focus on your content rather than being distracted by formatting inconsistencies.



### Professional Standard

Consistency is more important than personal preference. Choose a formatting style and apply it consistently throughout your entire manuscript. This guide provides industry-standard formatting that works well for Christian books.

## Chapter Title Formatting

### Chapter Number and Title Presentation

| Element             | Format Specifications                           | Example                 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Chapter Number      | Centered, 16pt font, bold, Playfair Display     | <b>Chapter One</b>      |
| Chapter Title       | Centered, 14pt font, bold, below chapter number | <b>Walking in Faith</b> |
| Spacing After Title | Double space before first paragraph             | --                      |
| Page Break          | Each chapter starts on a new page               | --                      |

### Chapter Title Options

- Numbered Style:** "Chapter 1: The Foundation of Faith"
- Word Style:** "Chapter One: The Foundation of Faith"
- Title Only:** "The Foundation of Faith" (with chapter number separately)
- Thematic Style:** "Part One: Building Your Foundation" (for section divisions)

## Body Text Formatting

## Paragraph Standards

### Basic Paragraph Format

- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt, black text
- Line spacing: Double-spaced throughout
- Alignment: Left-aligned (not justified)
- First line indent: 0.5 inches for each paragraph
- No extra space between paragraphs
- Margins: 1 inch on all sides

### Special Paragraph Considerations

- Opening Paragraph:** No indent for the first paragraph of each chapter
- After Scene Breaks:** No indent for the first paragraph after a scene break
- After Dialogue:** Normal indent when returning to narrative
- After Block Quotes:** No indent for the paragraph immediately following

## Section Breaks and Transitions

### Types of Breaks

#### Scene Break (Minor Transition)

- Use three asterisks centered: \* \* \*
- Add blank line before and after
- Use for time shifts or topic changes within a chapter
- Alternative: Use a decorative symbol or small graphic

#### Section Break (Major Transition)

- Use centered subheading with bold formatting
- 14pt font, same as chapter titles but smaller
- Extra space before and after (equivalent to 2-3 line breaks)
- Use for major topic shifts or new sections within chapters

## Special Text Elements

### Scripture Quotations

| Scripture Length         | Formatting Style                 | Citation Format  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Short quote (1-2 verses) | Italicized within paragraph text | (John 3:16, ESV) |

|                           |                                  |                                          |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Medium quote (3-4 verses) | Indented block, italicized       | Citation on separate line, right-aligned |
| Long quote (5+ verses)    | Full block format, single-spaced | Citation below, centered                 |

 **Scripture Formatting Example**

**Short quote in text:** As Paul reminds us, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good"* (Romans 8:28, ESV).

**Block quote format:**  
*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.*  
— Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

**Dialogue Formatting**

**Dialogue Standards**

- Use standard quotation marks (" ") for spoken words
- Start new paragraph for each speaker
- Include dialogue attribution (he said, she replied)
- Punctuation goes inside quotation marks
- Use single quotes for quotes within dialogue
- Format internal thoughts in italics without quotation marks

**Lists and Bullets**

**List Formatting Options**

- **Bulleted lists:** Use standard bullet points for unordered items
- **Numbered lists:** Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3) for ordered items
- **Lettered lists:** Use lowercase letters (a, b, c) for sub-items
- **Custom bullets:** Consider using ✓ for checklists or → for sequential steps

**Emphasis and Formatting**

**Text Emphasis Guidelines**

| Purpose         | Format             | When to Use                                            |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Strong emphasis | <b>Bold text</b>   | Key concepts, important warnings, chapter themes       |
| Gentle emphasis | <i>Italic text</i> | Scripture quotes, book titles, thoughts, foreign words |

|                 |                              |                                                        |
|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Technical terms | <i>Italic on first use</i>   | Theological terms, definitions, specialized vocabulary |
| Avoid           | <u>Underline</u> or ALL CAPS | These are distracting and unprofessional in books      |

### Consistent Emphasis Rules

- **Book Titles:** Always italicized (*The Purpose Driven Life*)
- **Bible Versions:** Use abbreviations in parentheses (ESV, NIV, NASB)
- **Foreign Words:** Italicize non-English words on first use
- **Internal Emphasis:** Use sparingly to maintain impact

## Page Layout and Flow

### Chapter Beginnings

#### New Chapter Setup

- Always start chapters on a new page (insert page break)
- Begin approximately 2 inches from top of page
- Center chapter number and title
- Allow adequate white space before first paragraph
- Ensure page numbers continue sequentially

### Widow and Orphan Control

- **Avoid widows:** Single lines at the top of a page
- **Avoid orphans:** Single lines at the bottom of a page
- **Chapter endings:** Don't end chapters with just one or two lines on a page
- **Paragraph breaks:** Ensure at least two lines before and after page breaks

## Headers and Footers

### Running Headers

| Page Type       | Left Page (Verso)         | Right Page (Recto)        |
|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Standard pages  | Author Name               | Book Title                |
| Chapter openers | Blank or page number only | Blank or page number only |
| Front matter    | Blank                     | Blank                     |

### Page Numbering

- **Front Matter:** Use Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv)
- **Main Text:** Use Arabic numerals starting with 1
- **Placement:** Center bottom or outer corners of pages

- **First Pages:** Omit page numbers from chapter opener pages

## Common Formatting Mistakes

### Errors to Avoid

- **Inconsistent spacing:** Mixing single and double spacing
- **Tab confusion:** Using tabs instead of proper indentation settings
- **Manual page breaks:** Using multiple returns instead of page break feature
- **Inconsistent fonts:** Mixing different fonts or sizes within the manuscript
- **Over-formatting:** Using too many different emphasis styles
- **Justified text:** Full justification can create awkward spacing

### Professional Quality Checks

- **Chapter consistency:** All chapters follow the same format pattern
- **Scripture formatting:** All Bible quotes use consistent style
- **List alignment:** All lists are properly indented and spaced
- **Page breaks:** Chapters start appropriately on new pages

## Software-Specific Tips

### Microsoft Word Recommendations

- **Use Styles:** Create and apply consistent heading and paragraph styles
- **Page Breaks:** Insert > Page Break (not multiple returns)
- **Indentation:** Use Format > Paragraph settings, not tab key
- **Line Spacing:** Set to "Exactly" for consistent spacing
- **Track Changes:** Turn off before final formatting pass

### Google Docs Considerations

- **Style Consistency:** Use Format > Paragraph styles feature
- **Page Setup:** Set margins and line spacing in page setup
- **Export Quality:** Download as Word document for final submission
- **Collaboration:** Resolve all comments before final formatting

### Professional Formatting Services

While proper self-formatting demonstrates professionalism, our team at Tranquility Pages provides comprehensive formatting and typesetting services to ensure your book meets the highest industry standards for both print and digital publication.

Questions about formatting your manuscript?

 [info@tranquilitypages.com](mailto:info@tranquilitypages.com) |  [www.tranquilitypages.com](http://www.tranquilitypages.com)

*"She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come." - Proverbs 31:25*

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