DIY Formatting and Layout Guidelines

"Print-ready" means that you give us your book PDFs once they're final. You've written, edited and proofread your book, and you've formatted it to look the way you want. Whether you hire someone to help you or format the book on your own, here are some helpful guidelines.

Book Block Formatting Guidelines
(with some basic instructions for MS Word)

You don't have to have complicated design software to write your book - there are many basic word processing programs that you can use to create your document. Some common examples are MS Word, Open Office, and Pages. Regardless of where you start, your final result needs to be a PDF where the page size matches your intended trim size. And remember, we are not responsible for errors in formatting, so check your pdf carefully before sending it for printing.

Consistency is key
When formatting a text on your own, it's important to remember that consistency is key. To that end, you should figure out what you want your pages to look like, and then apply the settings to the whole document for margins, tabs, font & point size, line spacing, etc.

Don't WYSIWYG
WYSIWYG – What You See Is What You Get – is *not* a good rule of thumb for document formatting.

For example:
Do not use the space bar to align your text, use the tab key for any indentations (i.e. the beginning of each paragraph). If you want something centered on the page, highlight the text and click on the center tool. Same goes for aligning anything to any part of the page, whether you want everything left, right or centered, use Word's formatting tools instead of the space bar.
Do not use the Enter key to create a new page. Instead use the Insert Page Break tool to start a new page.

Trim size
The trim size is size of your final book after it's printed. Described as width by height in inches, a standard size is 6" x 9". For your book to print properly, you need to make sure that your text document is set to match your trim size.
Set your trim size by modifying the paper or page size of your document. In MS Word look under Page Setup or Page Layout, choose Paper Size. Change from the default paper size to whatever trim size you've chosen and Apply to Whole Document.
Most paperback book trim sizes range from 5" x 8" to 6" x 9", with various width by height combinations in between. However, you are not limited to preset trim sizes when printing on our book machine, so you can choose any combination of width and height that suits your taste as long as it falls with the min and max requirements dictated by the materials we use.
When establishing your trim size, keep in mind that the appropriate trim size for your book does depend upon the number of pages & your spine width. If you're considering a larger format book, check our maximum trim size guidelines to make sure your intended book size can be printed on our book machine.

Margins
Your margins are the space between your text and the edge of your printed page.
In MS Word under Page Setup or Page Layout, you can set the Top-Bottom-Left-Right Margins to your taste. We recommend a minimum of at least .8" on all sides, and some people have margins of up to an inch wide.

Tabs
Standard tabs are between .25" to .5". It's a good idea to choose your preferred tab size and apply that setting to your whole document. That way any tabs used throughout will be the same size and the document layout will be visually consistent.
In MS Word, under Paragraph, you can modify your Tabs settings.

Line spacing
Single space is discouraged, as it is difficult to read. Double space is wider than necessary, so 1.15 or 1.5 is suggested.
In MS Word, under Paragraph, you can modify the settings for Line Spacing.

Fonts & Point Size
Choose the font and point size for your body text. Serif fonts are more readable than serif fonts for body text. Standard point size is between 10 pt and 12pt type. Good suggestions:

Garamond   Palatino   Times Roman   Century

Choose font and point size for your heads (chapter titles, section heads, etc) that complements your body text. Using the same font for both usually works well if you bold and or increase the size by 2 points or so. Alternatively, you can use a sans serif font for heads to complement serif font in body text. Good suggestions:

Gill Sans   Verdana   Arial

Front, Core and Back Matter
Everything mentioned so far should be consistent throughout the document. However, there will be some formatting options that should be applied to some pages and not others. The best examples are page numbers and headers. It may be helpful to separate your book into three documents, consisting of front matter, core matter and back matter. This way the pages in your core matter will have correct page numbers and headers, while the pages in your front and back matter will be free of any unnecessary markings. When you're ready to create the PDF, convert each document to PDF separately, and then combine them. If you are unable to merge multiple PDFs into the final bookblock file, we're happy to help – just make sure that any separate documents have the same basic format structure (page size, etc). Also, be sure to send every part of the book each time you send book block files so that we know exactly what files to combine.

Front matter
- anything leading up to the first page of your text (page one of your book)
- title page, copyright page, acknowledgments and dedication, foreword, preface, introduction, table of contents, and any blank pages.

<u>Core matter</u>
- your core text, where page one of your book actually begins.

<u>Back matter</u>
- anything after your text ends
- afterward, about the author, bibliography, index, glossary, etc.

When you insert pages on your core matter document, you can start at page one or set your first page number to start on whatever number will incorporate the non-numbered pages in your front matter.

Headers / Footers
Decide if you want any headers or footers on your text pages – some books have the book title, chapter title or author name at the top or bottom of each page. Keep in mind that you can insert them on odd or even pages only.

In MS Word, go to the Insert function to add headers/footers.

As suggested by their names, the header will show up at the top of the page, and the footer will show up at the bottom. In either case, the header/footer text will appear in the space between your body text and the edge of the page. For example, if you set up a .8" margin on all sides, then the header/footer will appear within that .8" margin.

Make sure that the header/footer text is still at least 0.25" from the edge of the page. Adding headers/footers that are *too* close to the body text can make the page look crowded, so refer to other books for examples and use your own judgment.

Choose a font that complements your body text font. Try setting it to about 2 points smaller than your body text size, maybe italicize it, whatever looks good to you.

Consider whether you want them centered on the page or aligned to the outside margins. Aligning headers/footers to the inside margins is not a good idea, as they will get lost in the spine. Centering them is easiest, because then the alignment remains the same for every page. Aligning toward the outside margins means that you'll have different alignment between even and odd numbered pages.

Page numbers
In MS Word, go to the Insert function to add page numbers.

Consider whether you want your page numbers at the top or bottom of your page, centered or aligned to the outside of your page. As with headers/footers, aligning page numbers to the inside margins of your page is not a good idea, as they will get lost in the spine. Centering at the top or bottom is easiest.

Choose a font that complements your body text. Try using the same point size, or 2 points smaller (whatever looks best to you).

Chapters/Sections
Remember to use the Page Break function to start a new chapter or section. Do not hit the enter key until you scroll down to the next page.

How do you want to begin each chapter or section?
- Choose an appropriate point size (bold, 2-4 points larger than your body text).
- Consider placement of the chapter heading – centered or aligned to the left; at the top of the page, or farther down?
- Consider the chapter drop – do you want the first paragraph to start at the top of the page or 1/3 of the way down?
- Do you want first few words or first line of the paragraph to look different - indentation, capitalization, drop cap, bold?

- Keep in mind that the first chapter or section of any book usually shows up on the right-hand side of the book (always an odd-numbered page).

Example of a chapter head:

THIRTEEN

And So It Begins and Ends

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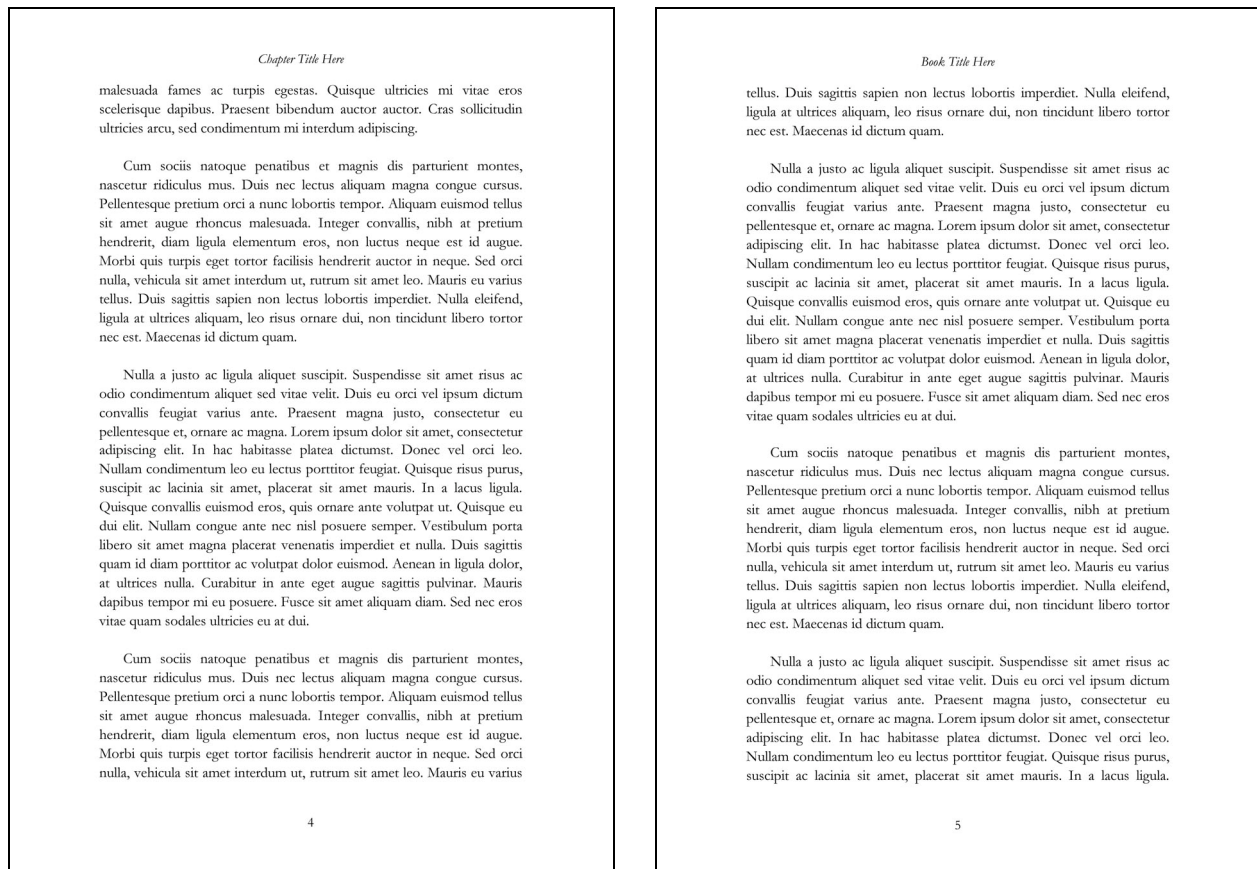
The chapter number shows up at the top of the page – Garamond, 10 pt, all caps.

The chapter title is right below – Garamond, 20 pt, bold and italicized.

The text begins several lines down, and the first letter of the text is a drop cap. The body of the text is Garamond, 11 pt.

Example of formatted text:

- Page size: 6" x 9"
- Font: Garamond
- Font size: 11 pt
- tabs 0.25"
- top-bottom-left-right margins all set to 0.8"
- line spacing at 1.15
- page numbers on bottom center of each page, Garamond 10 pt
- headers centered at the top, alternating pages
- both headers and page numbers in Garamond 10 pt, italicized
- all text justified (aligned to both left and right margins)

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This shows what two book pages look like side by side when holding an open book in your hands. Even pages fall on the left, and odd pages fall on the right. When formatting your document, each PDF page should equal one book page.

Other Book Basics

Regardless of your book's subject matter, all books should begin with a **title page**. The title page should contain the book title and author, and can also list the subtitle and publisher name if relevant. The next page in your PDF should be the **copyright** page, so that title page and copyright page will print on the front and back of the same sheet of paper.

Some people like to have a blank sheet of paper at the beginning of their book, right before the title page. If you plan to have this, just remember that a blank sheet of paper equals two blank pages in your Word doc / PDF. The title page should fall on the on right-hand side of book, so it should be an odd page in your document (the 1st or 3rd page depending on whether you want a blank sheet at beginning).

Whether your book has any dedications, a table of contents, etc, is up to you. Browse some existing books for examples – depending on the nature of your work, you can choose examples of novels, memoirs, non-fiction, etc to get a sense of standard formatting options.

Creating a PDF
Your ability to convert your document into a PDF may depend on what software you already have on your computer.
The first thing to try is usually the Save As option – you can often choose to save as a PDF.
Some programs will have an Export option, which will allow you to generate a PDF.
You may also be able Print To a PDF (instead of to a regular printer).
- If you choose this option, make sure that the PDF you "print" retains the same page size as your original document.
- Printing to a PDF often results in text centered on an 8.5 x 11 page (which we don't want).
- You may have to go into the Settings in your Print Dialog box to set the paper/page size to match your document size/intended trim size.

If your current software set-up does not allow you to generate a PDF, you may have to download a PDF conversion tool from the internet. Some PDF conversion tools will have you upload your file to a website, and then the resulting PDF will be emailed to you.
Regardless, make sure that your software is set up so that any PDF conversion will embed all fonts.

Scanning Images
You must own the rights to, or have permission to use, any images that you include in your book.
When scanning for your interior pages, remember that the image will print in black and white. Images for the cover will print in color.
Scan should be at least 300 DPI, and scaled to the approximate size you plan to use in the book.
Save either B&W or color images as TIFF files.

Cover Layout

Covers can be designed in a variety of software, including MS Word, Adobe InDesign or Illustrator.

For layout purposes, your cover is the back + spine + front of your book, laid out as a single landscape-oriented image. It will be printed on a 17" x 11" sheet of coverstock, which will wrap around the printed bookblock and be trimmed down to specified trim size.

- Cover image must be centered vertically and horizontally in landscape-oriented 17" x 11" PDF document
- No crop / registration marks are necessary
- ¼" bleed on all sides
- CMYK is ideal, though we can print files created in RGB as well

Calculating Spine Width

Before designing your cover, you must know your spine width.

To calculate this, you'll need your page count and the PPI (Pages per Inch) of the paper you're using.

The PPI value for our standard cream & white papers is 434.

The formula for calculating spine width is:

Number of pages ÷ PPI = spine width in inches

(So the spine width for a 250 pages book printed on our standard paper would be 250 ÷434 = 0.576")

If you plan to print your book on anything other than our standard paper, please consult with us to determine the proper PPI and spine width.

Example of a cover layout:

- Trim width of 6" x 9"
- book length 140 pages
- spine width of 0.3228" (140 pages ~ 434 = 0.3228")

- Document size 17" x 11"
- Cover size 12.3228" x 9" (back cover 6" x 9" + spine 0.3228" + front cover 6" x 9")
- - - - - - Indicates 0.5" margin from edge of cover, free of any graphic or text elements.
- Though not shown here, there should be a bleed extending 0.25" to 0.5" beyond all sides of the cover image.
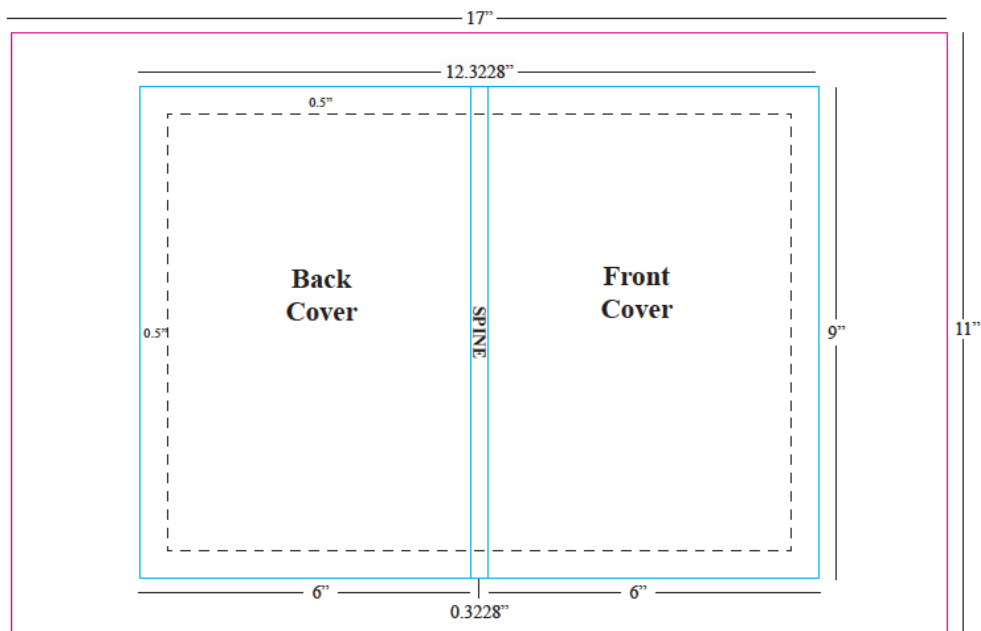
Tips

- It's better to allow more cushion in your design than to crowd the margins. Ideally you'll want at least .5" between any text and the edge of the page.
- The background image or color of your cover image should extend all the way to the edge of the bleed area. (The bleed area should be 0.25" to 0.5" beyond the edge of the image – it does not need to extend all the way to the edge of the 17" x 11" document).
- Allow at least 0.5" to .75" vertical cushion on either side of the text on your spine.
- To place text on the spine, rotate it so that the left type margin falls at the top of the book. The type will then read correctly from left to right when the book lies front cover up on a horizontal surface.
- If you have your own ISBN and barcode, remember to put it on the back cover of your book.

If you don't have the graphic design software needed to create a properly laid out cover, try simply making the component pieces. If you're able to make an image for your front cover and another image for your back cover, we can help you assemble them and add a spine. Cover layout is often the hardest part, even if you know what you want your design to look like. If you're unsure of how to proceed, contact us and we'll see if we can help.