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Your manuscript should
have your address
and contact details
on the title page only

800 words.

If you have an agent, your
agent's address can be
included beneath.

STANDARD MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

by A. Nonymous

CHAPTER ONE

Folder Names Become Subtitles

Standard manuscript format is often required for novels so that work can easily be read by editors. It allows editors to estimate word count and determine roughly how many pages will be required to produce a book using the page size, style and font used by their house. This PDF file was generated using Scrivener's Compile feature and was created using the "Novel" project template.

Manuscripts for full-length novels require a separate title page. The author's name, address, telephone number and e-mail address should be shown in the upper-left corner of the title page, single-spaced. The title of the story should appear in all-caps about half-way down the page. The author's name follows the title on the by-line as the author wants it to appear when published. A real name or pseudonym may be used and may include initials, actual given name or professional designation.

All text should be double-spaced and left-justified with a ragged right margin. Paragraphs should be indented by about five spaces (half an inch) and not separated by an additional blank line. (It used to be traditional to separate each sentence with two spaces, but in these days of word processors this is now less common.) A 12-point font such as Courier, Times New Roman or Arial should be used throughout. In Scrivener, however, you can write using any font and formatting you choose--the "Formatting" pane of the Compile dialog can be used to change the formatting in the compiled document. In the "Novel" project template, the Compile settings will deal with changing the font and formatting to those required for standard manuscript format.

Top, bottom, left and right margins should all be approximately one inch, not allowing for the page header. Each page except for the title page should include a header comprising the author's real surname, the title of the work (or a key word from the title) in capitals, and the page number. In Scrivener, all of this is handled in the "Page Settings" pane of the Compile dialog.

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Scene breaks are indicated with the hash character. Do not simply add an extra line space as this can be missed by the typesetter. The "Separators" pane of Scrivener's Compile dialog can handle this for you if you are writing each scene as a separate text document.

Indicate italics by underlining. In Scrivener, you can use

italics and set them to be converted to underlines upon export or print by using "Convert italics to underlines" in the "Transformations" pane of the Compile dialog.

CHAPTER TWO

Another Chapter Folder

Begin each new chapter on a new page like this with the chapter number about a third of the way down the page. In Scrivener, this can all be dealt with in the Compile settings. The "Separators" pane of the Compile dialog can be set to start a new page for each chapter folder, and the "Formatting" pane can be used to add page padding at the top of the new page and insert the chapter number (the latter by selecting "Section Layout..."). All of this has already been done for you in the "Standard Manuscript Format" compile preset, used by default for the "Novel" project template.

Although it is often said that writers should not use the word-count features of their computers to determine the number of words in a manuscript, most publishers and editors will happily accept a word processor word count these days. In Scrivener, you can insert a word count of your manuscript by using Edit > Insert > Draft

Word Count. (In the "Novel" template, where the Draft folder has been renamed "Manuscript", this menu option will also be renamed "Manuscript Word Count".) For a full-length novel, you may wish to choose "Rounded to Nearest 100", as on the title page of this manuscript, or "Rounded to Nearest 1000". Note that the actual word count will not be inserted, but a tag that will be replaced by the word count upon export.

In reality, the formatting of a manuscript is often only really crucial when submitting directly to a publisher--first time novelists will usually submit to an agent first, and agents are often less picky about format and will point you in the right direction before submitting your work to a publisher.

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Much of the information contained in this document is based on a description of novel manuscript format by Matt Carless for the BBC Writers' Room website.

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