S M F

STANDARD MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

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Guideline and tips for Standard Manuscript Format +downloadable references.

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Standard Manuscript Format, SMF
Guidelines and Tips

So you want to submit something in **SMF (Standard Manuscript Format)?** SMF simply means: Your work should only be submitted with a 12 point Serif Font, double-spaced, indented on every paragraph, including dialogue and always without an extra space after each - paragraph; also taking care to underline words that are to be italicized instead of using italic.

If you do not follow SMF, or what the publisher and/or agent has specified for submissions, your work: WILL MOST LIKELY END UP IN THE SLUSH PILE! Yes, I yelled that out to you ;)

So always read the submission guidelines for any publisher, contest or agent etc. Follow it. Do exactly as they have specified. When in doubt, then always use SMF. Because I bet that you don't want your work going to that pile.

It's a place where horribly formatted pieces go to die. They are never read or heard from, ever again. It's the Seventh Circle of Literary [consideration] Hell. And much like Dante's Inferno, you probably don't want to retaliate with violence or waste your time cursing out the writing Gods after it has been rejected, so format your work with great care. Much like the time you have spent writing it. Your hard work deserves to live, to be read and then considered, not just tossed into some pile, right? ;)

Note: Using Sans Serif Font (Calibri here) and especially goofy font choices like Comic Sans MS will also land your piece in that awful Slushy Purgatory/Gehenna too. SO ONLY USE SERIF FONTS! Yes, I yelled again ;) Grammar, spell and cite check everything as well. And YES! You must cite another person's work if you have used it, always. Follow the MLA or APA citation guide. Examples include: quotes, art, photos, music, and lyrics, really anything that can be attributed to another person's work.

A short list of Serif Fonts:
- 12 pt. Times New Roman (most preferred and most readable)
- 12pt. Cambria
- 12pt. Garamond
- 12pt. Centaur
- 12pt. Century
- 12pt. Bookman Old Style
- 12pt. Book Antiqua

Other SMF points to remember:

1. When italicizing words, like Lorem Ipsum NEVER italicize them in SMF or any other manuscript format, ONLY underline it like so: <u>Lorem Ipsum</u> (see document example).
2. Always format every page with a header, excluding your TITLE PAGE (see document example).
3. Always number your pages. Preferably along with your header at the top right of your pages.
4. Always set-up your pages with 2.5cm to 3.5cm margins: TOP/BOTTOM/LEFT/RIGHT
5. Double-space each line. NEVER add an extra space after any paragraph to begin a new paragraph (see document example).
6. Always indent (Tab) the first line of each new paragraph and dialogue.
7. Try to double-space after each period.
8. To signify a break either use: * -or- *** centered, on only one line.
9. To end, always use either: THE END *-or-* ###

Final Checklist:
(See the PDF examples of SMF: #2 Title Page & #3 Novel/Short-Story)

- ✓ Title Page
- ✓ 12pt. Serif Font
- ✓ Properly formatted header
- ✓ Properly formatted page numbers
- ✓ Double-spaced
- ✓ Words to be italicized, underline only
- ✓ Use words for numbers, NEVER numbers within your writing. "1, 2, 3..." Should be: "one, two, and three…" etc.
- ✓ Never use ampersands "&", always type "and"
- ✓ Spell checked
- ✓ Grammar checked
- ✓ Style checked
- ✓ Properly cited (MLA, Modern Language Association of America; APA, American Psychological Association etc.)