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## Formatting a Novel Manuscript

### Title page (NB – this is not usually counted in a ten-page submission)

- Top left:
  - *your name, email, address, and phone number*
- OR, if you have a literary agent...
  - *your name, your literary agent's name, address and phone number*
- OR, if you have a literary agent who never answers the phone or checks email...
  - *include all your details AND your agent's details*
- Top right – word count and genre
- Title – centered one third down from the top – IN CAPITALS (no other formatting)
- By-line – centered two lines below title – “by (new line) Your Name”

### All manuscript pages

- Include a header with name/title and page number top right (start first chapter on 1)
- One-inch margins (the default in Word)
- 12-point, serif font – Times New Roman is perfect
- Only one character space after a period (ie, between sentences)
- Black text on a white background only
- Double spaced throughout
- Chapter headings should be centered half way down a new page – no other formatting.
- Date and place can be included underneath chapter title if it's important for the reader to have that information up front.
- All other text should be flush left and ragged right (not fully justified like in books)
- The first line of each paragraph half must be indented an inch using the “first line” indentation automatic instruction (not by putting in a tab and *definitely* not several spaces)
- No extra line between paragraphs unless...
- ... there's a jump in time or place within a chapter – to mark that shift to a new 'scene', include a blank line between paragraphs.
- If a new 'scene' happens at the bottom of a page, use a \*\*\* centered to make that 'scene shift' clear. (*Did you know the \*\*\* is called a dinkus? Few people do!*)

***Here's an example from one of my own manuscripts...***

Caroline Leech  
2026 My Street  
Houston  
Texas 77000

Cell: \*\*\* \*\* \*

E-mail: [caroline@carolineleech.com](mailto:caroline@carolineleech.com)

Genre: Young Adult

Word count: 97,000 words

**TITLE PAGE**

WAIT FOR ME

by

Caroline Leech

CHAPTER ONE

Craigielaw Farm, Aberlady, East Lothian, Scotland

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Lorna was ankle-deep in cow-shit and milk when she first saw the boy with the steel-gray eyes and only half a face.

Only dimly aware of the rumble of a truck lurching up the lane, Lorna tried to push the dogs away from the reeking, steaming mess with the broom. But Caddy and Canny dodged around her and continued to lick up the milk from where it had puddled in the deep crevices between the cobbles, a rare treat for them. Like the dogs, Lorna was keeping her head down. Her father was raging at Nellie, which made a nice change since it meant that, for once, Jock Anderson's grumpiness wasn't directed at Lorna.

"But Mr. Anderson—" began Nellie. Lorna kept her head down and the yard broom moving. She tried to push the dogs away from the reeking, steaming mess, but Canny and Caddy dodged around her. They were determined to lick the spilled milk from every cobbled crevice.

“What news?” she whispered.

Lorna shook her head and mouthed, “Later.” As soon as they were alone after school, she would tell Iris all the details of that morning. After all, Lorna and Iris had shared everything since they were tiny. It was strange, though; as the day wore on, Lorna became aware of an unfathomable desire to keep the arrival of that awful damaged stranger to herself.

Three o’clock finally came. William Urquhart stood up from his desk with an officious clatter. William was the son of the parish minister and was also Aberlady School’s head boy. As such, he was responsible for ringing the big handbell by the front door to signal the beginning and the end of the school day.

As he passed by, William winked at Iris.

Iris giggled and blushed.

Lorna groaned.

What was Iris thinking? Of all the boys she could set her sights on, why did it have to be pompous William Urquhart?

As the first heavy peal of the handbell sounded from the front door, Lorna was on her feet, signaling to Iris to be quick.

Iris clearly had other ideas. As everyone else surged from the room, she very carefully flipped down the lid of the inkwell set into her desk, wiped her pen nib on a cloth rag, and placed her workbook into her desk, lining it up carefully on top of the pile already inside. Then she took a hairbrush from her schoolbag and began tugging at the knots in her messy brown curls, pulling the hair straight down her shoulder with the brush, only to have them bounce back up again, looking no tidier than when she started.