

## How to avoid the ten common formatting errors

The final step toward completing a dissertation is preparing the manuscript for publication. This is an exacting and challenging process, but it is also a unique opportunity. You, as the author of the dissertation, can devote yourself to presenting the fruits of your research in a polished, professional, and elegant manner. How it appears matters; it is part of the matter of the work itself and your readers will notice.

To help you conduct this proofreading step in a spirit of creative pride, here is a succinct list of how to avoid the ten most common formatting errors.

1. Set the left margin to 1.5 inches and all others to 1 inch.
2. Use Times New Roman font, double space, with no extra vertical space between paragraphs or subheadings. Double space the entire manuscript, without exception. (This includes long or “block style” quotations, entries in the list of References or Works Cited, and captions.)
3. Avoid widows (single lines at the bottom of a page) and orphans (single lines at the top of the page).
4. Avoid italics, boldface, underline, or quotation marks to emphasize a word or phrase in a paragraph. Write better sentences instead.
5. Avoid capitalization except for proper nouns. Jung is a proper noun, depth psychology is not.
6. Omit leading or trailing ellipses from any quoted text. Only use ellipses to indicate deleted text from the middle of the quotation. If the deleted text exceeds one full sentence, use four dots, not three. To create an ellipsis, you may manually type dots with spaces in between or use the ellipsis symbol (...).
7. Format your long dashes consistently and correctly. Use what is called an "em dash" with no spaces between the words it is separating—for instance, like the dashes you see in this sentence—which is a visual example.
8. Embed block quotes within a paragraph so that the paragraph surrounding it, both above and below the quoted text, discusses the quoted text. Therefore, do not indent the first line of the paragraph following the block quote.
9. Check that every source cited in the text is in the list of references and that the spelling and capitalization are consistent.
10. Check for consistency between subheadings and table of contents entries.