

# Formatting Your Thesis

Revised: October 2010

*This document has been created to supplement the thesis guide available via the Registrar's website. It will show you how to format various items. When in doubt, consult a style guide - Turabian, Chicago, MLA, APA, etc. You should work with your reader(s) to select the appropriate style guide for your discipline. If you still have questions, the staff at the Writing Center is glad to help. Or you can always email the Center at [writingcenter@cmc.edu](mailto:writingcenter@cmc.edu).*

## Important Note

- Your advisor's instructions regarding formatting should always take precedence over the Writing Center's suggestions.

## General

- The font should be one of the following: Times New Roman (12pt) or Courier New (10pt).
- If you decide to not to use Times New Roman, make sure that your footnotes and page numbers are also in the same font.
- The text of your thesis may be either Left Aligned or Full Justified. Note that Full Justification looks nicer, but if you put breaks at the end of a line, it will be left aligned.

## Margins:

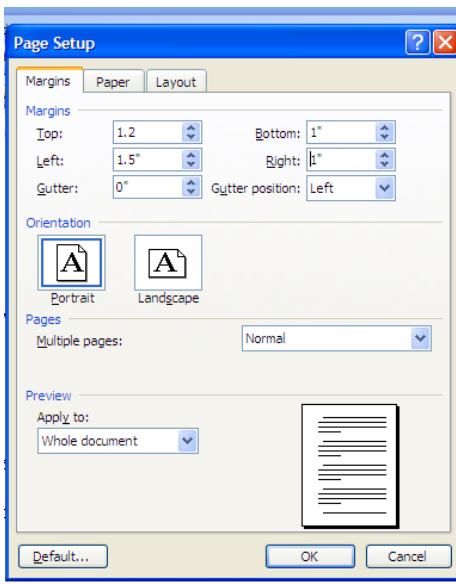
The margins for your thesis are as follows:

Top: 1.2"	Bottom: 1"
Left: 1.5"	Right: 1"

If your reader so chooses, you may change the margins for the top, bottom, and right to accommodate the preferred citation mode; however, do make sure that the left margin remains at 1.5". The extra .5" is an allotted space for the binding that will eventually hold your thesis together.

## To Set Margins:

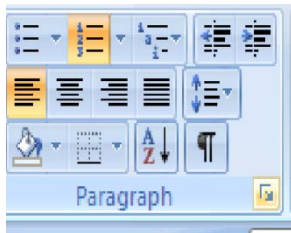
1. Click on "Page Layout."
2. Click on "Margins" followed by "Custom Margins."
3. Ensure the "Margins" tab is selected and set proper margins. See below.



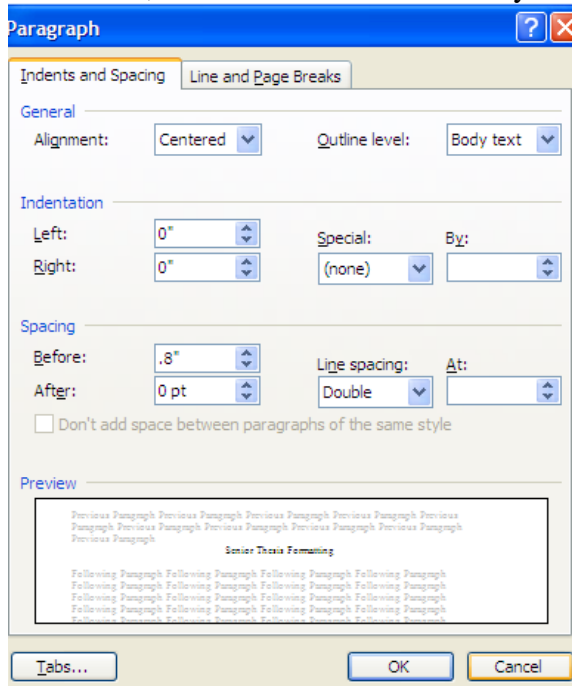
**Title:** Except for the Table of Contents, the titles of all sections should be 2” from the top of the page.

**How to do this:**

1. Under “Home” tab, click the expand button next to “Paragraph.”



2. Ensure the “Indents and Spacing” tab is selected.
3. Under “Spacing,” set the “Before” spacing to 0.8”. (Because the normal top margin is 1.2”, you only need 0.8” more to make the title 2” down from the top. Although the automatic setting is in pt., you can change it to inches, and Word will automatically change it to the proper point measurement.) See below.



## General Instructions, Cont.

- Indent the first line of each paragraph either one quarter inch or one half inch. *Be consistent.*
- Only one space should follow all punctuation marks.
- Consult your preferred style guide for specific guidelines about the various sections of your thesis.
- If you have problems using Microsoft Word or other programs, see the friendly consultants in the Writing Center.

## Tips for Saving Your Thesis

1. Save each chapter as its own file, i.e. the first chapter may be called "Chapter1.doc".
2. When you make big changes to a chapter, save the file under a new name, i.e. "Chapter1-1.doc", to indicate that it's an updated version.
3. Keep several copies of your thesis: thumb drive, hard drive, U:\ drive folder, and wherever else you'd like. (Avoid zip disks - they tend to lose data. A CD is a nice, durable option for regular backups.) You may want to create dated folders to keep track of your progress. *Remember that you cannot be too careful about keeping your thesis safe.*

Saving a copy to your U:\ drive folder:

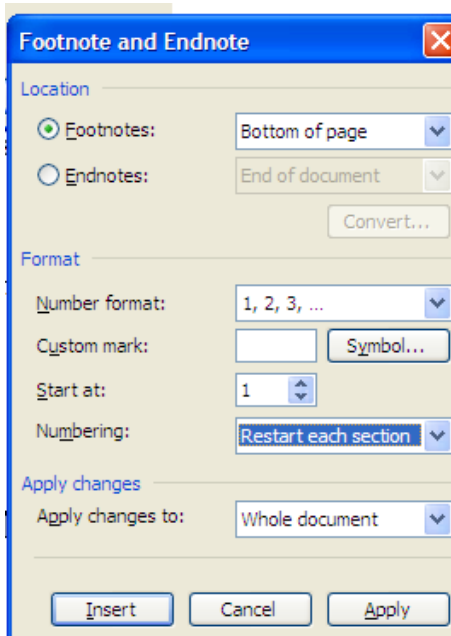
1. Create a folder with the date you last updated your thesis.
  2. Copy the thesis components to the folder with the new date. You should want to have older revisions of your thesis to refer back to.
  3. The next time you work and save your thesis, repeat the process again.
  4. **SAVE REGULARLY!**
- After you've saved a copy of your thesis, take the time to make sure the copy you backed up is uncorrupted.
  - *Make hard copies!* When you've made radical revisions, print, date, and store the hard copy in a safe place. In case of a disaster, it's much, much better to have to re-type your thesis than to have to start from scratch. These copies will also give you something to put in that "Working Papers" folder you have to turn in with your thesis.
  - Spread your backups across multiple systems and locations. Send a copy to yourself on Gmail. Store on the U-Drive (to take advantage of the ITS backups) and on your own computer (in case something happens at ITS).
  - Modify your working habits if necessary. Some people will sit in front of a computer until a chapter is finished, and they won't exit, save changes, nor make backup copies. Save to several locations continuously as you are writing.

## Title Page

- Follow the sample title page included in the Senior Thesis syllabus.
- All text is in capital letters.
- Vertically center the text.
- Save the title page as its own document.

## Footnotes and Endnotes

- Your use of either footnotes or endnotes will be dictated by the kind of citation format you must adhere to.
- Footnotes are separated from the rest of your chapters by a line. They contain references to the work you cited, as well as any notes you write to explain certain parts of your thesis.
- Footnotes start with number 1 at the beginning of each chapter. Even if you have used a source in previous chapters, you need to fully cite the work the first time you refer to it in each chapter.
- Endnotes are included at the conclusion of your chapter.
- Endnotes may be numbered using Arabic (normal) numerals or Roman digits.
- Save each chapter as an independent document to save you trouble as you format your footnotes or endnotes.
- To insert a footnote or endnote, click “References,” and choose either “insert footnote” or “insert endnote.”
  1. If you highlight your footnote/endnote numeral and right click, you may choose “note options” to alter the formatting of your notes (see below).



## General Footnote Tips

- Consult your style guide for specific formats. In Turabian, for example, Chapter 11 has precise footnote examples labeled "N". In the MLA Handbook, see Appendix B.
- The general format is: <sup>1</sup>First\_name Last\_name, *Title of Work* (City\_of\_publication: Publisher, year), page\_number.
- If you still have trouble making footnotes fit on a page, visit the Writing Center to speak to one of our helpful consultants.

## Page Numbers

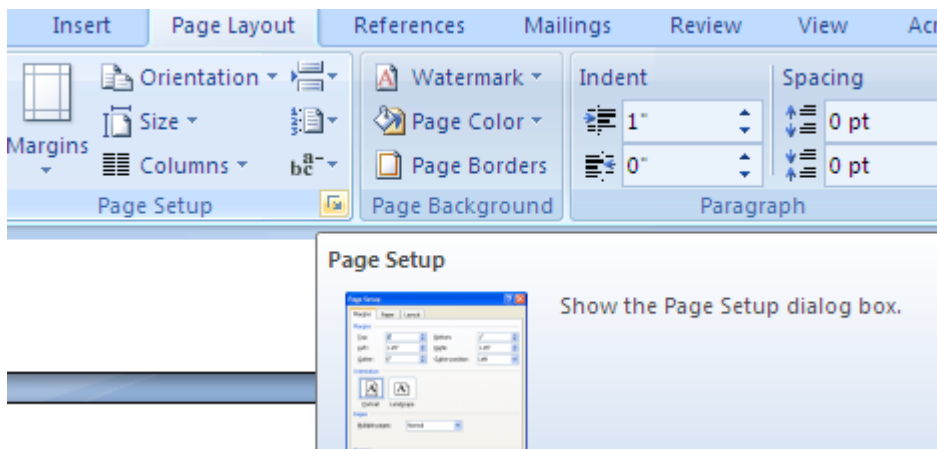
1. The placement of page numbers differs between the first page of each chapter and all other pages. For the first page of each chapter, the page number goes in the bottom center or is omitted altogether.
2. The page number for the rest of the pages goes either in the top right corner or top middle of the page.
3. Page numbers for pages including and following the first chapter are in Arabic (normal) numerals.

You may approach page numbers in two ways. The first would be to save each chapter as an independent document. The second would be to save your work as one continuous document. We will focus on the first option here as it is the simplest way to approach pagination.

**Note: Formatting your page numbers should be the final step in your thesis development. Save this process until you are completely done with your writing.**

### **Option 1: individual chapters**

1. Click “Insert” followed by “page number.” Choose the appropriate pagination form in the drop down box (“top of page” and “plain number 3” for example).
2. Click anywhere in the document.
3. Choose “page layout” tab, and click “page setup” dialogue box launcher.

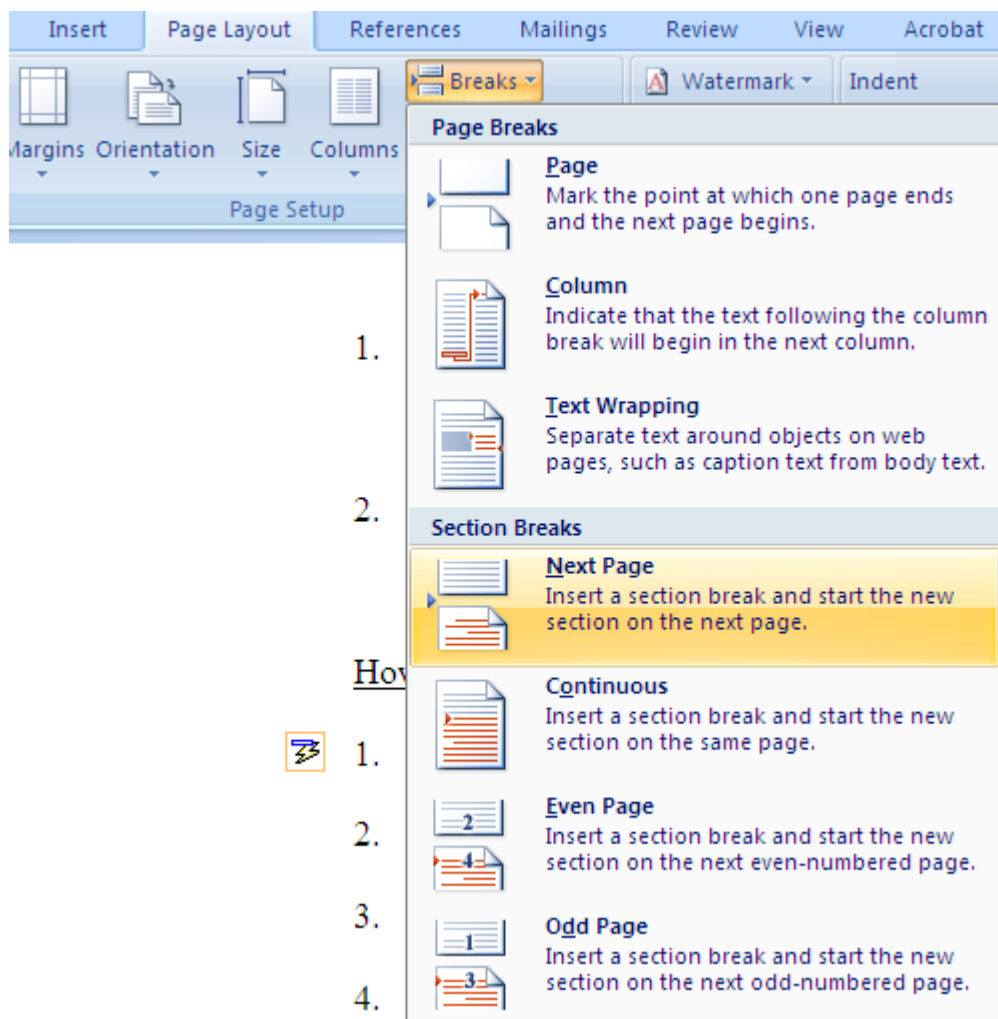


4. Click “layout” tab.
5. Under “headers and footers” select “different first page” box and click “ok.”
6. Click on the header on your second page, and insert the appropriate page number.
  1. Note: if the “different first page” box is already selected, do not clear it. Instead, delete the page number in “first page header” area on your paper.
  2. If, on your first page, you want the header to exclude a page number, simply insert the appropriate header (i.e. no page number) while the cursor is in the “first page header” area.

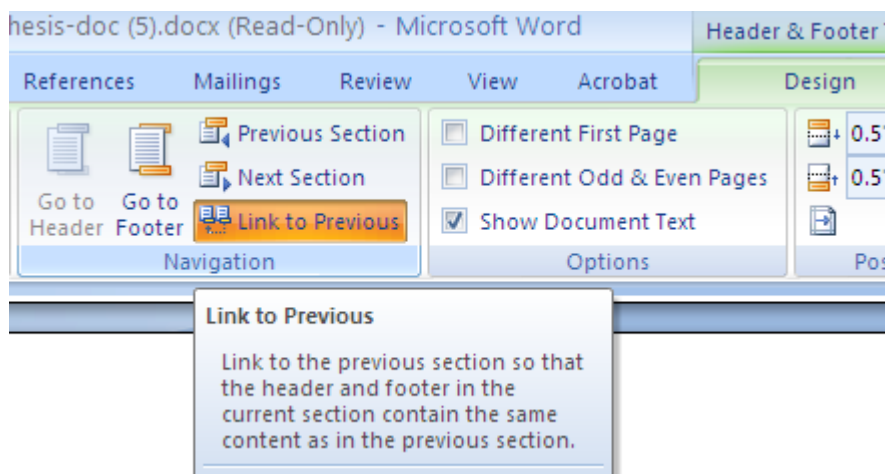
### **Option 2: Single Document**

**Note: delete any hard returns you may have inserted to separate one chapter from the next. Your document should look like one continuous stream of writing.**

1. Place and click your cursor at the beginning of your chapter and insert a section break by clicking “page layout” followed by “breaks” and “next page” under the section breaks option (you need not do this on the very first page of your first chapter).
2. Scroll down to the end of your first page, place and click your cursor at the end of your last sentence on the chapter’s first page. Insert a continuous section break by clicking “page layout” followed by “breaks” and “continuous” under the section breaks option.



3. Click anywhere on your first page and insert a header by clicking “insert” then “header” and “blank.”
4. Double click in the header at the top of your first page. A new tab, “header and footer tools,” will open. In this tab, unlink your pages by unclicking “link to previous.”



5. Double click in the footer at the bottom of your first page. Under “header and footer tools” unlink your pages by unclicking “link to previous.”
6. Repeat step three on the second page of your chapter.
7. If you want to include a page number at the bottom center of your first page, double click on the footer on page one and choose center justify.
8. Choose “insert” followed by “page number” and “current position” then choose “plain number”
  - a. Should you choose to omit a page number on the first page of each chapter, you may skip this step.

9. Double click “type text” in your header on page two of your chapter.
10. Right or Center justify the text box.
11. Click “insert” “page number” followed by “current position” and “plain number.”

**12. Repeat this process for each subsequent chapter.**

## **Bibliography**

1. The title of the page is **2"** down from the top margin.
2. The page numbers are the same as for the chapters.
3. The citation entries have a hanging indent on the first line. In other words, the second and subsequent lines of the citation are one-quarter inch or one-half inch from the left margin. Make sure that the amount is consistent with the indentation for all your paragraphs.
4. The general format is:

Last\_name, First\_name. *Title of Work*. City\_of\_publication: Publisher, Year.

Consult your preferred style guide for specific formats. In Turabian, for example, Chapter 11 has precise bibliography examples, labeled "B". Extensive examples are also available in MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.