

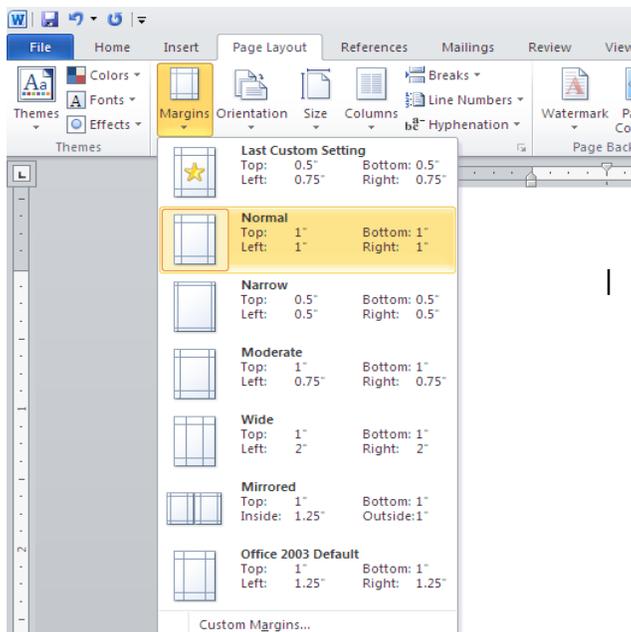
How to Format a General Paper in Word

This tutorial is to give a general idea of how to get the most out of Microsoft Word when writing your papers. It is a wonderful program that can make your paper writing experience slightly less stressful, and maybe help you keep a few of those hairs you're pulling out. This will work for Microsoft Word 2003 and higher, though remember each version will have slight differences.

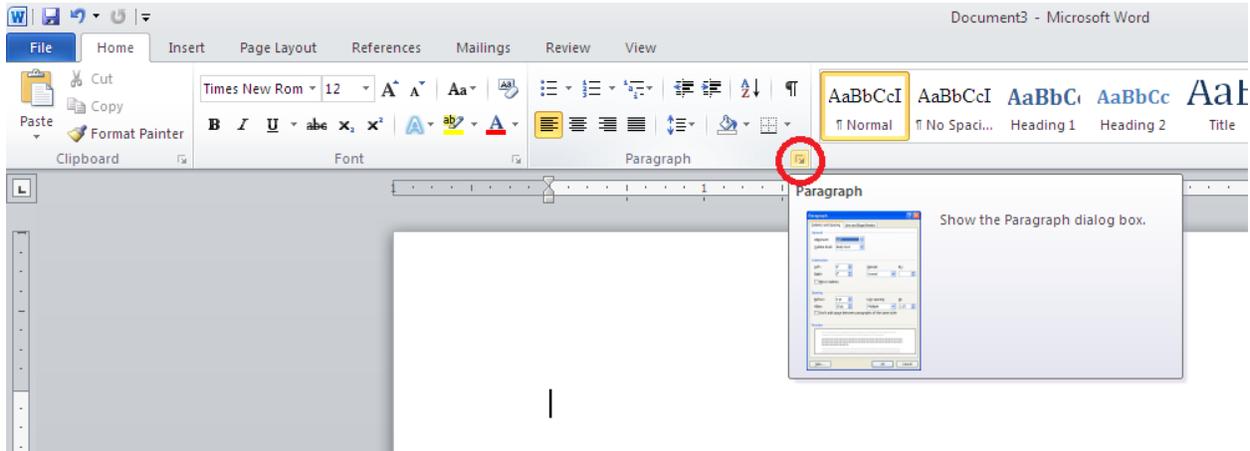
The Blank Page

The default formatting for a blank document in Word is nowhere near what your teacher wants in a paper, so we're going to start there. First of all, change your font. You may have certain requirements from your teacher, but for the most part the default for a paper is Times New Roman at 12 pt. Most likely Word's default is Calibri at 11 pt, so change that right away to avoid random font changes later on.

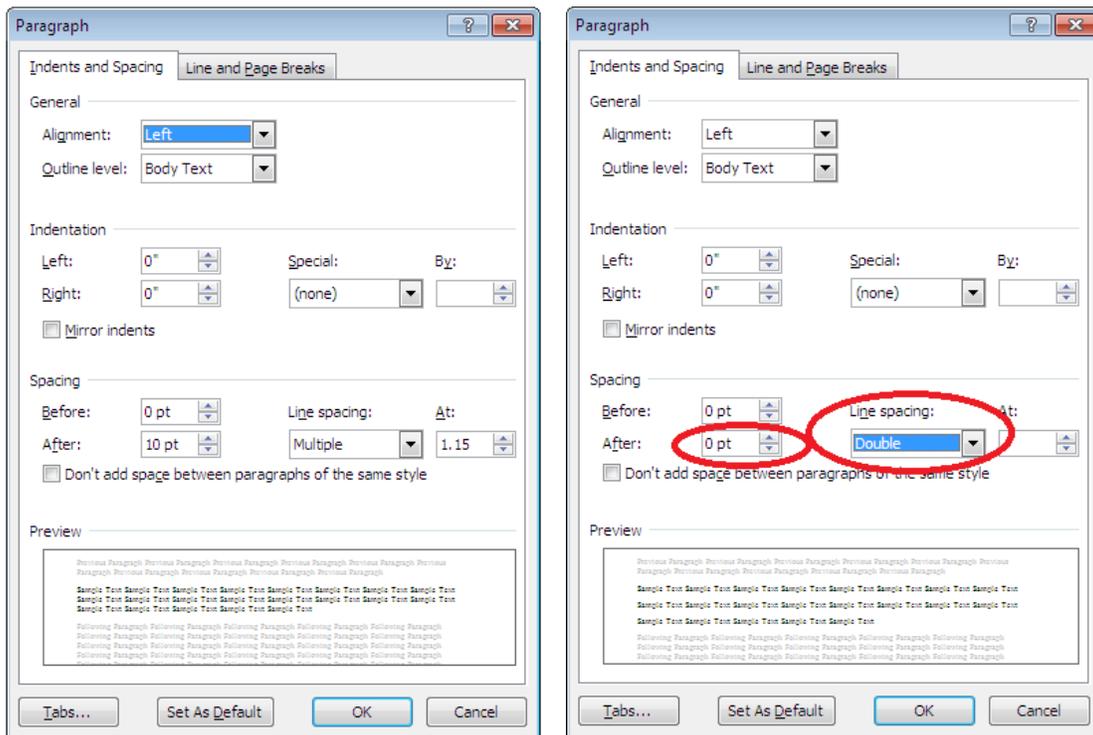
Next, check your margins! This step is especially important if your word processor was not programmed for sale in the United States. Many Asian-language-programmed word processors have very different default margins. Most teachers want a 1 inch margin all around, meaning the top, bottom, left, and right margins are all the same. You can check or change this by choosing the Page Layout tab, then clicking on margins.



Next is a bit more complicated. We need to set the paper to double space with no extra white space between paragraphs. For this we need to open the Paragraph box. Under the Home tab, go to the Paragraph section and click the small arrow in the bottom right corner.

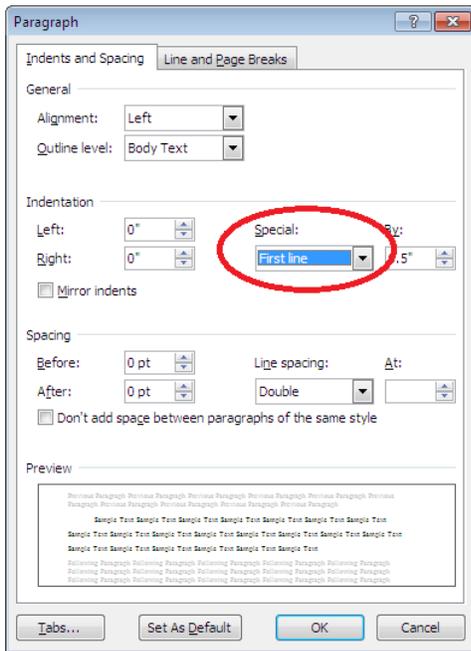


This will open the Paragraph box.



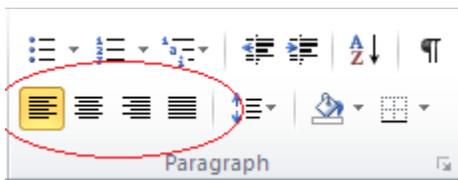
This box is very important to formatting. As you see above, there are two things you'll need to change first. One is the Line Spacing drop down menu on the right side. That needs to be

changed from Multiple to Double and will automatically double space your paper. The other thing you need to change is the After box next to line spacing. It will be set at 10 pt, but needs to be lowered to 0 pt. This gets rid of the extra white space created each time you hit enter for a new paragraph.



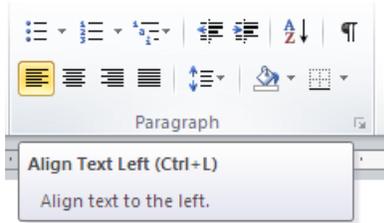
Another feature to be aware of in the paragraph box is the Special drop down menu. This is where you can set First Line, which will automatically indent each new paragraph for you. Remember not to do this until after you've written your title or it won't be centered. It can also be changed to Hanging, which is vitally important when making any kind of reference or works cited page. Hanging will automatically indent each line except the first, creating the format for your references required by APA, MLA, and Chicago.

Aligning Your Text

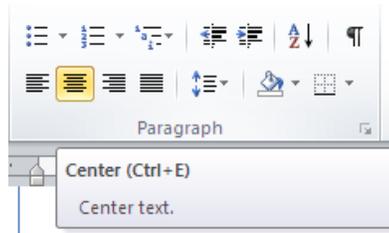


Let's examine how your paper looks. How you align your text or justify the paper, —————>
determines how it looks on the page. To change alignment, look for the four text boxes in the —————>
Paragraph section. What most of you are familiar with is Align Text Left. This tutorial has been
set up in this way. It means that the left margin is a uniform line of text going down, while the —————>
right margin is ragged or ending whenever the words need it to. Unless told otherwise, this is —————>

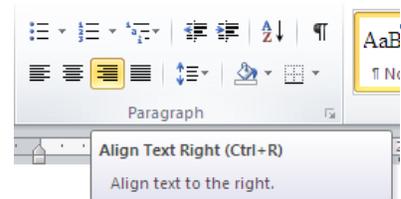
how most teachers want the paper to look. It is the first of the four.



The next option is Centered. Most of you should be familiar with this since it is how you would place a title. It centers all text between the left and right margins. It shouldn't be used that much except in titles and headings.



← The third option is rarely used: Align Text Right. Like aligned left, align right will make
← a uniform line of text on the right margin, but a ragged line on the left. This is rarely used in
← academic papers.



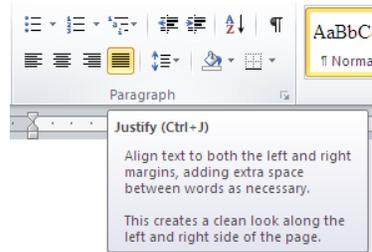
The final option is called Justify. This means that both margins will have uniform lines of text, with no raggedness on either side. There are major problems with justifying your text. The biggest one is caused by the way that it achieves those margins. It changes the spacing between the words and oftentimes between the letters to make sure the margins are even. To show you an obvious example:

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

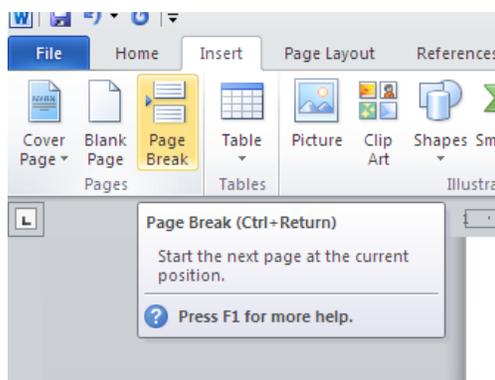
Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

When words are too long to fit on the same line, it can create too much space or cram them together. This can make it look like you're missing spaces or have too many. Avoid justifying unless told to do so by the teacher.



Page Breaks

The next thing I want to look at how to do is a page break. How often have you made up your works cited page and then added to your paper, making your pages move? Page break stops that from happening. Each time you insert a page break a new page is made. It still registers in your page count correctly, but it is separate from the page above it, meaning no matter how much you type and change things above it, nothing on that page will move. A new page will be created before it if you end up going off the end of the previous page. It is very easy to insert a page break. Under the Insert tab, on the left side, is the button for page break. Click it and a new page will be made and always stay happily at the end of your paper.



Undoing Auto-Hyperlinks

Word has the habit of making a hyperlink to any website typed in, which when making a reference or works cited page is not a good thing. There is a quick and simple way to undo any hyperlinks without manually changing the font color and de-underlining it. Pressing Ctrl and Z

together once (or its Mac equivalent) will undo any kind of auto-formatting and return the text to normal.