

Spinsters Ink Author Guidelines

Please do not submit handwritten material. Manuscripts must be computer generated. The manuscript should be on 8 x 11-inch good white paper, double-spaced, with at least one-inch wide margins all around. Use Times New Roman in 12-point size. Please use only one side of the page, number your pages consecutively, beginning to end. DO NOT include any special headers and footers on the pages of your manuscript such as the title, author name and chapter number. Only the page numbers should appear on every page.

This is very important: Please type your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number in the upper right hand corner of the first page, the Title Page, of your manuscript. Right under this, please include the number of words in your manuscript.

We prefer authors use Word as their word processing program. Use the word count feature to determine the word length of your manuscript. To determine the word count by hand, follow these steps:

1. Count the words in 10 lines and divide the total number of words by 10.
2. Count the lines on an average page.
3. Multiply the total number of lines for the sample full page by the approximate word count for one line. This gives you the word count for one page.
4. Then multiply this total count for the words on one page by the total number of pages in your manuscript. This is the total length of your manuscript in words. Please put this number on page one of your manuscript, right under your name address.
5. To check the accuracy of your count, please repeat this process twice.

The following guidelines detail the mechanics of manuscript formatting and cover the basics of our preferred writing style.

MANUSCRIPT MECHANICS

Word Processor

Microsoft Word is our preferred word processing software.

Margins

One-inch margins on all sides are required.

Fonts

Use Times New Roman, 12-point size. Do not use a sans serif font such as Arial.

Line Spacing

All pages of a manuscript must be double spaced.

New Chapters

New Chapters should be centered and clearly marked, approximately one-third of the way down a page, for example: Chapter 10

Spaces between words and sentences

Use only ONE SPACE between sentences and words.

Paragraphs/Carriage Returns

Use a paragraph or carriage return only at the end of a paragraph. Let Word automatically wrap the text. Set tabs to move in five spaces at the beginning of each paragraph.

Justification

Set text justified left with ragged right edge. Do not use full justification.

Formatting dashes

Dashes should be either two hyphens typed together (--) or the em-dash symbol (—). If you don't know how to create or find the em-dash symbol Word or other word processing program, go with the far easier two-hyphen style. A single hyphen will make it very difficult for typesetters to find and convert to the proper em-dash.

Formatting ellipses

Like most fiction publishers, we use the less formal three-period method, even at the end of sentences. See **Writing Style** below for information about the use of ellipses.

Spaces around dashes and ellipses

Do not use spaces on either side of an ellipses or dash. The only exception is the ellipses at the end of a non-dialogue sentence.

Quote marks

Use standard, American-style dialogue format with double quote marks.

WRITING STYLE

We use the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*. We look for clear, crisp, compelling writing in the active voice. The following guidelines are designed to help authors achieve the editorial standard we always strive for as well as help authors sharpen their craft of writing.

ACTIVE/PASSIVE VERBS — Whenever possible, choose the active voice. Active: Mary decided. Passive: A decision was reached by Mary.

AFFECT/EFFECT — *Affect* means to influence. (Tanya's move will affect Mary's decision.) *Effect*, as a verb, means to cause. (Tanya's move effected a change in the way Mary dealt with customers.) *Effect*, as a noun, means result. (Tanya's move had an amazing effect on Mary.)

AFTERWARD/BACKWARD/FORWARD/TOWARD — No "s."

ALL RIGHT — Alright is all wrong.

AUTHOR — It's not a verb. (Mary wrote a book about her experiences. Mary is the author of a book about her experiences.)

CAPITALIZATION — In general, use lowercase and avoid excessive capitalization. Capitalize the names of specific people, places, or things, in other words, proper nouns. The *Chicago Manual of Style* devotes about 50 pages to examples of capitalization. Also see **TITLES** below.

COMMAS — Serial commas are not used. In this case we deviate from Chicago style. (Should be: Mary ate toast, eggs and potatoes. NOT: Mary ate toast, eggs, and potatoes.)

ECONOMY OF WORDS — Sometimes we can say much more with much less. For example:

Instead of:

a number of
regardless of the fact that
she is of the opinion that
end result
for the simple reason that
at that point in time
qualified expert
have got to

Instead of:

Use:

several
although
she thinks
result
because
then
expert
must

Use:

at the conclusion of
major portion of
as a general rule
in the event that
for the period of a week

after
most
generally
if
for a week

ELLIPSES — Ellipses are used only to indicate a noteworthy pause in speech or thought. Otherwise, simply use a period.

E-MAIL — It's e-mail with a hyphen and lowercase.

ENSURE/INSURE/ASSURE — *Ensure* and *insure* are not really interchangeable, even though they both mean “to make certain.” *Ensure* refers more to things. (Mary's method will ensure success.) *Insure* is more for finances. (Mary decided to insure her mortgage.) *Assure* infers the removal of doubt. (I assure you that I mean it.) It's all very subtle.

FARTHER/FURTHER — *Farther* refers to physical distance. (Mary said she could run farther than Jane.) *Further* refers to time or degree. (Mary said there will be no further discussion.)

FAX — It's fax, lowercase, no caps.

NUMBERS IN DIALOG – Spell out numbers within dialog.

In narrative: There were 1,000 docket on display.

In Dialog: Jane said, “There are a thousand docket on display.”

IS IT ONE WORD OR TWO? — If a word in question, check *Merriam-Webster's 11th Edition*. There are some rules of thumb, but as in many cases in the English language, there are exceptions. Generally, compound words formed with the following prefixes are always one word:

anti	antihero	over	overprotective
bi	biannual	post	postdoctoral
co	coauthor	pre	prenatal
extra	extraterrestrial	pro	prorated
inter	interrelated	re	reexamine
micro	microeconomics	semi	semiannual
mid	midlife	sub	subatomic
multi	multiracial	un	unwashed
non	nonviolent	under	underpaid

But, a word should be hyphenated if it can be mistaken for another word, for example: co-op/coop; re-creation/recreation. Always check the dictionary.

OKAY — It's not OK.

POSSESSIVES — The general rule in the *Chicago Manual of Style* is that possessives of most singular nouns is formed by adding an apostrophe and an s, and the possessive of plural nouns (there are exceptions!) by adding an apostrophe only. *Chicago* dedicates about 50 pages to the rules of possessives, so always keep in mind that there are irregularities in this rule. Some examples:

Nouns: the horse's mouth
 a bass's stripes
 puppies' paws
 children's literature
 sheep's wool

Names: Dickens's novels

the Lincolns' marriage
Burns's poems

SEMICOLON — Avoid them. Use a period instead.

THAT/WHICH — There is a difference. *That* is preferred when introducing an essential clause, one that can't be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence. *Which* is used to introduce a nonessential clause, one that can be left out without changing the basic meaning of the sentence. Clauses that carry *which* are set off by commas. Example: Mary ate the apple, *which* was green. The phrase "which was green" simply describes the apple. Mary ate the apple *that* was green. By changing *which* to *that*, we now specify which apple Mary ate. To avoid uncertainty, recast the sentence: Mary ate the green apple.

TITLES — The *Chicago Manual of Style* devotes a great deal of instruction to the handling of titles. As a general rule, titles attached to people are capitalized when they immediately precede the holder's name and used as part of the name, for example, Senator Mary Anderson. These titles are not capitalized if they follow the name, for example, Mary Anderson, senator. Titles are also not capitalized if they are in apposition to the name, for example, Massachusetts senator Mary Anderson. Titles should be abbreviated if they are used with a person's full name, otherwise spell them out, for example, Sen. Mary Anderson, Senator Anderson.

ITALICS VS. QUOTATION MARKS—

Set the following in italics: books, periodicals, newspapers, long poems, plays, movies, TV and radio shows, operas and long musical pieces, record albums, works of art.

Set the following in quotation marks: chapter titles, articles in magazines, individual episodes of television and radio shows, short poems, essays, song titles.

WEB SITE. It's two words, Web site, note the capitalization of the word Web.

WHO/WHOM — Use *who* and *whom* instead of *that* to refer to people and animals with names. Use *who* when it is the subject of a sentence, clause, or phrase. For example, Lassie is the dog *who* saved Timmy. Use *whom* when it is the object of a verb or preposition. For example, Timmy is the boy *whom* Lassie saved.