

Presentation

There are certain demands editors place on writers as regards the presentation of a manuscript and these we have to follow. More importantly, however is the need to present a professional looking document which the editor (or whoever) will find clear and easy to read. So to those ends,

- Leave a large margin (about 1.5 inches) on the left hand side of your page. Editors like to make comments as they read and proof readers need space to annotate errors and changes. So set your margin before you start.
- Use 12 point size for text. It is easier to read than **10 point**, which is ok for a letter or **14 point**, which is tending towards the childish.
- Only use capital letters for the beginnings of sentences or names, though it can be used (sparingly) for the title or for emphasis.
- There should be only one space after a full stop. Normally, when using a typewriter, the convention was that there should be two spaces but this has now changed.
- Double space (or at a minimum 1.5 spacing) your work. It makes for easier reading for example,

this is much easier to read:

How did we reach that stage? We had a completely blank canvas to work on – it was a completely new series, there were few guidelines though we were given a mission statement and the Nursery Education Curriculum

Guidelines which did nothing to boost my confidence, so how did we start? After various lengthy phone calls we decided that it would be better to get together and thrash the whole thing out in a two day brainstorming session. We decided to meet on neutral and peaceful ground so we rented a cottage in Ballantrae for a couple of nights and set to work.

than this:

How did we reach that stage? We had a completely blank canvas to work on – it was a completely new series, there were few guidelines though we were given a mission statement and the Nursery Education Curriculum Guidelines which did nothing to boost my confidence, so how did we start? After various lengthy phone calls we decided that it would be better to get together and thrash the whole thing out in a two day brainstorming session. We decided to meet on neutral and peaceful ground so we rented a cottage in Ballantrae for a couple of nights and set to work.

- Stick to a simple, professional looking font like Calibri or Times New Roman (which this is). I know there are a lot of **wonderful** fonts *in your computer* but only *indulge in them* in **the privacy of not-for** publication writing.
- Use Bold, Italics or whatever sparingly and never, ever use them in conjunction with anything else i.e. either Bold or Italic or Underlined but not two or more together. **It looks amateurish.** (doesn't it?)
- Limit the use of dots they break upthe flow ofthe story just like this.
- Limit the use of exclamation marks (!). If you find that in your writing you are using more than one or two a page, then think again.

- Make your paragraph beginnings clear. Use either an indent (with your tab key) or miss an extra line between them. **Do not do both.** Save your work as Word 97-2003 to avoid this.
- Add a footer with page numbers (page x of y preferably), your name, title of piece and email address for an editor. For competitions, use a one word pseudonym, title of piece and page numbering.
- Use your spellchecker always. It's amazing what you find you've missed. But then proof read it in printed form because spellcheckers don't pick up miss takes like this or event this.
- Use the print preview or have a look at the whole page in reduced size to see what the finished page looks like. Does it look balanced or are there areas of white space or where text is cramped or too busy? Does it look **professional?** If it does, then print it.

The main rule is to keep everything simple. Less is actually more!