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# A Few Basic Typing Rules

1. A **period** *touches* the word before it, but *not* the word after it. The same is true for a **question mark**.

He lives in Chicago. He wants to get a job in New York.

*WRONG:* He lives in Chicago . He wants to get a job in New York .  
*WRONG:* He lives in Chicago.He wants to get a job in New York.

Where did he go? I didn't see him leave.

*WRONG:* Where did he go ? I didn't see him leave .

2. A **comma** and a **semicolon** also *touch* the words before them, but not the words which follow.

I had coffee, a sandwich, and a piece of cake.

*WRONG:* I had coffee , a sandwich , and a piece of cake.  
*WRONG:* I had coffee,a sandwich,and a piece of cake.

I thought I was going to be late; however, I arrived just in time.

*WRONG:* I thought I was going to be late ; however , I arrived just in time.

3. Names of **nationalities** and **countries** are always **capitalized** – adjectives as well as nouns.

I like Italian food, French wine, and Japanese sushi.

4. **Days** of the week and **months** of the year are always **capitalized**.

On Monday, October 12, we have no class.

5. **Don't capitalize** schools or businesses that are not part of the **name** of the school or business.

I am a university student. She works for a big software company.

I attend Boston University. She works for Microsoft Corporation.

6. **Quotation marks** *touch* the words they go around.

“Hello,” she said. “How are you doing?”

*WRONG:* “ Hello , ” she said . “ How are you doing ? ”

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## Choosing Fonts

The most common font is Times Roman 12 point. That is the font for this sentence and the following paragraph. It is probably the default font on your word processor.

If you use another font, be sure it is possible to read it. Many fonts that look interesting in a headline or a title become very hard to read in a paragraph. Which of these paragraphs is easiest to read – this one or the ones that follow?

*If you use another font, be sure it is possible to read it. Many fonts that look interesting in a headline or a title become very hard to read in a paragraph. Which of these paragraphs is easiest to read?*

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## Font Sizes

A normal font size is **12 points**. This is almost certainly the default size on your computer.

If you want to fit more on a page, you can use **11 points**.

If you use **10 points**, it becomes hard to read.

At **9 points**, it is almost impossible to read.

If you use a larger size, like **14 points**, it looks strange, like the type in a children's book. Do *not* use it in a paper for university.

An **18-point** font or larger is used *only* for a headline or a title, never for the body text in a paper that you hand in to a teacher.

## Double-Spacing and Correct Paragraphing

This is a sample paragraph. It doesn't really contain any information; it is just an example of the form that you should use when writing an essay or almost any writing assignment for college. Note that it is in a 12-point font. It is double-spaced and each paragraph is indented about ½ inch. Unless you have changed the settings in your word processing program, hitting the Indent or Tab key (→) will automatically indent the first line of the paragraph correctly. There is a one-inch margin on the top, bottom and sides, which the computer will automatically choose unless you make changes. Notice also that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. Quotation marks “touch” the words they surround.

When you come to the end of a line when typing, *do not* hit the Enter key. Simply keep typing and let the computer move your words to the next line for you. When you make changes to your work, it will be much easier to format your paper correctly if you follow this advice.

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# Writing Assignment: A Persuasive Essay

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**ASSIGNMENT:** Write a 1½ - to 2-page essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Use the outline you have been working on for the information you will include in your essay. Also look at the rubric (the chart on the blue paper with “good ... partial ... missing” for each section of the essay) to help you with the content and form.

The essay must be in standard “university” format:

- typed
- double-spaced
- in a 12-point, readable font
- spell-checked and proof-read
- formatted for a standard “letter” (8-½ x 11 inch) paper (*not* A4)

Look at *Double-Spacing and Correct Paragraphing* on the other side of this page as a guide to what your paper should look like.

**DUE DATE:** Tuesday, April 5 by 3 pm.

## To double space in Microsoft Word:

1. Choose **Format** > **Paragraph** from the top menu bar
2. In the box that appears, find **Line Spacing** and choose **Double**.
3. Click **OK**.

If you have already typed your page single spaced, you may have to highlight all of it (CTRL+A) and then follow the steps above.

## To choose the type of paper (Letter instead of A4)

1. Choose **File** > **Page Setup** from the top menu bar.
2. In the box that appears, choose the **Paper Tab**.
3. In the **Paper Size** drop-down menu, choose **letter**.
4. Click **OK**.