

Matthew Carless
Every manuscript should
have your address and
contact details on the
first page only.

700 words.

An agent's address can be
included underneath if you
have one.

SHORT STORY MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

by Matt Carless

This standard manuscript format is required for prose fiction so that work can be easily read and edited by editors and copy editors. It also allows editors to both estimate the word count and accurately determine how many pages will be required to produce a book using the page size, style, and type font of their choice.

Short story manuscripts do not require a separate title page. The author's real name and address, telephone number and e-mail address should be shown in the upper left corner of the first page, single-spaced. The title of the story appears in all capitals about half way down the page. The author's name follows the title on the by-line and should be

shown as the author wants it to appear when published. A real name, or pseudonym may be used and may include initials or actual given name, and professional designation.

All text should be double-spaced and flush-left, not justified, with a "ragged" right margin. All paragraphs are indented by five spaces and not separated by an additional blank line. Each sentence should end with two spaces.

Top and bottom margins must be set to allow for 25 lines of text to the page (not including the page header). Left and right margins must be set to allow for an average of 10 words to a line in order to accurately assess the final word count. In publishing terms, one "word" equals six characters (including punctuation and spaces), thus each line of text must allow for a maximum of 60 characters of text.

Each page, except the first, must include a header consisting of the author's real surname, the title of the work (or a keyword) in capitals, and the page number.

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Scene breaks are indicated like this. Do not simply add an extra line space as this can be missed by the typesetter. Indicate italics by underlining.

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Writers should never use the word-count feature of their computers to determine the number of words in a

manuscript. The term word count, as used in the publishing industry, is actually inaccurate. Editors count pages, not words. Properly prepared manuscripts, with 25 lines of type to a page and an average of 10 words to a line are assumed to contain 250 words on each full page. Partial pages, where the text covers half or less of the available space, are counted as 125 words for the publishers purposes, except for the first pages of chapters or short stories which are counted as full pages. Once the initial word-count has been calculated, it should be rounded up to the nearest 100 words (1000 for novels).

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