



Style Sheet

Elk Lake Publishing, Inc. (ELPI)

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS:

All submissions **must** be formatted in our standard style:

1. Microsoft Word document, Word 2010 or later version.
2. One-inch margins all around.
3. 12-point Times New Roman font (all headings, subheadings, and text should be formatted in this font). **Do NOT use all capital letters or bold for headings.**
4. Double-spaced (See #7 for detailed instructions).
5. Black ink.
6. Left margin justification, ragged right.
7. **Do NOT use tabs** for indenting paragraphs. In Word, go to icon in format paragraph that allows line spacing (while here, you can indicate 2.0 line spacing), click on line spacing options, click on special (first line) and ensure the default is 0.5". Do not have a line space follow or precede your paragraphs.
8. Chapter headings should be flush left and capitalized with NO indent. Add one extra paragraph return after the chapter heading before the text begins. To end a chapter, press CTRL + Enter or COMMAND + Return for Mac.
9. For a scene break, enter a return, ***return, another return. If you get a strange line across the page, press the undo key and the line will be deleted.
10. Only number the pages through Insert Footer so they can easily be removed prior to publication. Do not insert extra pages.

11. Use a header on each page including your name and the title of your novel. Use Insert Header so it can be easily removed prior to printing.
12. Pictures or diagrams should be submitted separately. You may use a notation in the manuscript such as [Insert picture one here].
13. Do NOT use any formatting other than standard bullets, italics, or bold type.
14. **IMPORTANT:** Check your document prior to submission for any extra spaces, paragraphs, line spaces, etc., by going to File, Options, Display, Show All Formatting Marks. Delete any “extras.” For example, there should be no tab characters in the document or spaces after a sentence ending a paragraph. If you do not do this, your document will have errors in formatting. If you use a Mac, go to Word, Preferences, View, Show All Non-printing Characters.

PUNCTUATION:

1. ELPI uses the serial comma. (Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) 6:19: When a conjunction joins the last two elements in a series of three or more, a comma—known as the serial or series comma or the Oxford comma—should appear before the conjunction.)

Example: James brought his computer, lunch, and jacket to the conference.
2. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when the conjunction joins independent clauses. (See CMOS 6:22.)
 - a. **Example:** Susie’s book was published, but she still felt she had much more to learn.
 - b. **Example:** John went on a hunting trip last weekend, and he forgot his gun.
3. Limit comma splices (except in very rare instances: “I rose, I ran, I recovered.”) Change to two sentences, add a conjunction, or use a semicolon.
4. ELPI prefers the em dash (—) as opposed to the semicolon in most instances. According to CMOS, no spaces should be added on either side of the em dash.

Example: Susie went on a shopping spree—an event she regretted.

NOTE: When an em dash is used to indicate interrupted speech, put the dash inside the quotes: “Stop!” He yelled at his son. “If I have to tell you—”

However, when the dialogue is interrupted by an inserted action, the em dash goes outside the quotes: “Come, Coki”—she held out a treat—“come and get your treat!” Ellipses could also have been used in this example. “Come, Coki ...” She held out a treat. “... come and get your treat!”

5. An ellipsis is always a series of three dots. See CMOS 13.53 for the use of punctuation at the end of a sentence, e.g., or ...? ELPI format is space ... space with no spaces between the dots. “How did you eat that so ... so fast?” The best solution is to use Word's insert symbol option.
6. Periods and commas always precede closing quotation marks, whether double or single. For the positioning of other marks, see CMOS 6:10.
7. ELPI follows CMOS 6.63 for capitalization with colons. The first word following a colon is lowercase unless (a) the first word after the colon is a proper noun, (b) the colon introduces two or more related sentences, (c) the colon announces a definition, or (d) the colon preceded a speech in dialog or a quotation.
8. To form possessives properly, we also follow CMOS (7.16-19). If the singular noun ends with -s, add an apostrophe s—the bass's stripes, Jesus's robe, General Motors's mission statement. If the plural ends with s, just add an apostrophe—the Lincolns' marriage, the Williamsses' house. If the plural doesn't end with -s, add 's—the children's teacher, the oxen's yoke.
9. Semicolons are used to join two parts of a compound sentence in the absence of a conjunction. We prefer two sentences rather than the use of the semicolon.
 - a. **Example:** Howard moved the lamp from his desk; he replaced it with a telephone.
 - b. **Preferred:** Howard moved the lamp from his desk. He replaced it with a telephone.
10. When using quotation marks, quoted words, phrases, and sentences run into the text are enclosed in double quotation marks. Single quotation marks enclose quotations within quotations. Double marks are used only when they come at the end of the larger quotation.

Example: John said, “I love the advice ‘never a borrower nor a lender be.’”
11. ELPI prefers italics for inner dialog, words used for emphasis, and the first instance of a foreign language word.
 - a. **Example:** *Heavens! I never expected this.* [she thought] *I didn't think I'd win!*

Note: Descriptors such as “she thought” or “she wondered” or “he silently prayed” are not necessary with the italics.

- b. **Example:** This is *not* the way *I* expected things to end.
12. ELPI uses plural pronouns for gender neutrality.

Example: Each person is responsible for their own books.

FORMATTING SCRIPTURE:

1. Scripture passages within paragraphs are to be enclosed in quotation marks and **not** italicized. Do not include the Scripture reference in the quotes. If used as a block quote, no italics, no quotation marks, and one point size smaller text.
 - a. **Example:** If used as a block quote or a header: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1 NIV) Note: Entire quote is one point size smaller. The punctuation goes after the quote.
 - b. **Example:** If used within a sentence or paragraph: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1 NIV). Same font size; the punctuation goes after the reference.
2. When a Scripture passage (e.g. Genesis 1: 1-14) is cited in any given paragraph, succeeding references should be documented with only the verse (v. 10). If the chapter is changed, but not the book, document with chapter and verse (9:6).
3. ELPI prefers all pronouns relating to the Trinity to **NOT** be capitalized. Do not capitalize Son and Father when referring to members of the Trinity. Do **NOT** capitalize who, whose, and whom. Do not capitalize words like glory, gospel, or heaven. See the Christian Writer’s Manual of Style (CWMS) for an extensive guide to the capitalization of religious terms.
4. ELPI prefers the New Living Translation or the New American Standard Bible for Scripture quotations, but other versions are allowed. Try to limit versions to two or three within a manuscript.

RECOMMENDED STYLE GUIDES:

1. All editors/submissions to ELPI should be using the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) 17th Edition (released in September 2017) and/or The Christian Writer’s Manual of Style (CWMS) 4th Edition. An online subscription to CMOS is available for \$31.50 from ELPI.
2. ELPI prefers the Merriam Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. This is available online for \$29.95 annually. (<http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/>) Please use this dictionary or the CMOS as a reference for hyphenated words and correct spelling.

3. Writers/editors should have access to Bible software such as Biblesoft or BibleGateway.com.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. World Wide Web and Scripture(s) are always capitalized (www in a web address is not). Internet is no longer capitalized when used within a sentence.
2. Most “e” material is hyphenated: e-book, e-zine, e-mag. Email (email) is not.
3. Catch your “that” usage. Many times, the word *that* can be omitted (See #4).
4. Be careful of using *it*. Construct your sentences so ~~that~~ you can use a synonym for the word *it* is replacing.
 - a. **Example:** We went to a celebratory gala last night. ~~It~~The party was fantastic.
 - b. **Example:** “It’s a beautiful day, isn’t it? I’m glad we came here.” Instead, “What a beautiful day for us to come to the park.
5. Watch for repeated or pet words. Try not to use the same word more than once in a sentence or paragraph. Avoid adverbs if possible. In descriptions, one good word is better than two or three.
6. Numbers and times of day should be spelled out in most cases. (See CMOS 9.2ff for numbers and CMOS 9.37ff for time.)
 - a. **Example:** She went to the doctor at 3:00 for her 7th visit.
 - b. **Better:** She went to the doctor at three o'clock for her seventh visit. Note: Odd times such as 3:27 are not spelled out.
7. Be careful to show and not tell. Be careful not to include too much minutiae in descriptions, thereby telling and not showing. Resist the urge to explain (RUE).
 - a. **Example:** Jane woke up, rolled over to the edge of the bed, stood up, put her robe on, buttoned the buttons, and then went to answer the door.
 - b. **Better:** “Just hold on!” Jane shouted. “I hear you!” Muttering to herself that some people were just too inconsiderate of the hour, she threw on her robe as she stomped over to answer the door.

GENERAL TIPS:

1. When you've read your manuscript checking for errors many times, put the book away for a day or two before you look at your work again.
2. Read your book aloud—you'll hear awkward phrases.
3. Have several beta readers—they'll pick up on things you've missed because you're too close to the story.

SUGGESTED MANUSCRIPT WORD COUNT:**

Contemporary romance: 55,000 to 65,000

Women's contemporary fiction: 65,000-75,000

Romantic suspense: 75,000 to 85,000

Historical romance: 65,000 to 75,000

Historical: 75,000 to 90,000

Thriller, mystery, speculative (non YA): 75,000 to 90,000

YA most genres: 50,000-60,000; speculative: no more than 75,000

Epics and Sagas: 90,000-100,000

Nonfiction: 35,000-50,000

****Although these word counts may be exceeded, ELPI prefers them to be as close as possible.**

