



# How to Create a Script Template in Microsoft Word

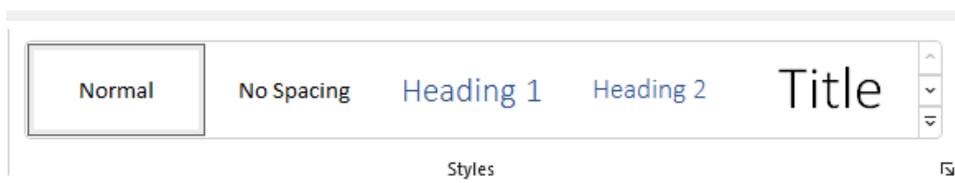
By Steve Puffenberger

The “standard” script template specifications are found here:

[https://www.simplyscripts.com/WR\\_format.html](https://www.simplyscripts.com/WR_format.html)

You can use Microsoft Word or any common word processor to help automate your screenwriting by configuring “Styles.” This guide is specifically for Microsoft Word.

When you open Word, on the “Home” ribbon you’ll see a section called “Styles, which, by default, looks like this:

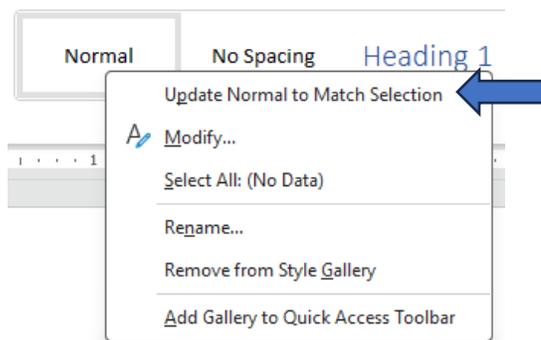


You may see more or fewer style tiles depending on your screen resolution and magnification level.

## Set Font

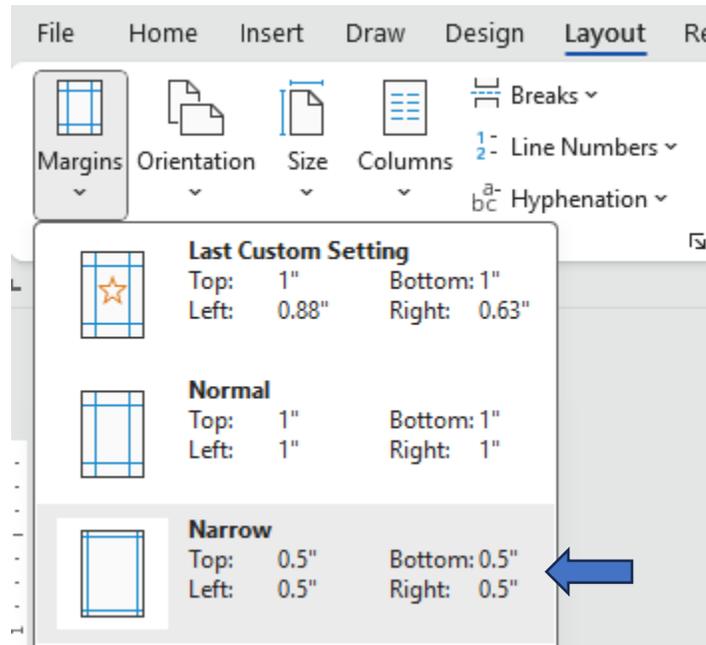
Start by changing the “Normal” style to match the font specification in the Simply Scripts spec sheet, usually 12-point Courier or Prestige Pica (a fixed-character spacing font):

1. Create a new blank document
2. Type some text on the page (you’ll delete it later)
3. Select all the text you just typed.
4. Change the font to *Courier* or *Prestige Pica* 12-point.
5. With cursor in the text, in the Home ribbon, RIGHT click the “Normal” style button
6. Choose “Update Normal to match selection.”
7. ‘Now your global font will be the proper one.



## Set Page Margins

Simply Scripts states that the top and bottom page margins should be ½ inch. Conveniently, Microsoft has that as a standard. Click “Layout” in the ribbon, then “Margin.”



Choose the “Narrow” margin which gives you 1/2” top and bottom margins as per the spec You can customize this. Side margins vary for the different parts of the script which we will set using Paragraph Style Indentations.

## Page Numbering

1. Double-click in the top margin of the page
2. In the “Header and Footer” ribbon, click “Page Number.
3. Choose “Top of Page”, “Plain #3,” showing the number on the right.
4. Click Page Number again, then “Format Page Number”
5. Under “Page Numbering,” change “Start At” to 0 (zero).
6. In Header and Footer Ribbon, click “Different First Page” to remove page number from title page.

## Set Style Margins with Indention Levels

In the “Margins” list at SimplyScripts, you’ll see the list of styles you will be creating and the margins (from edge of page) that comprise the standard:

To create the indentions to conform to the standards:

### Margins

**Stage direction and shot headings** (also known as **slug lines**) have a margin of 1.7” of the left and 1.1” on the right. **TWO BLANK LINES PRECEDE EACH SHOT HEADING.**

**Dialog** has a left margin of 2.7” and a right margin of 2.4”.

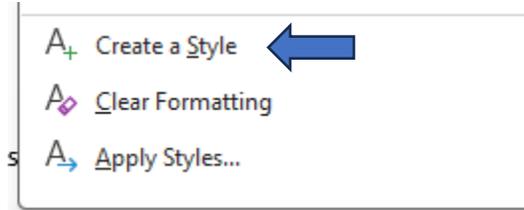
**Character names over dialog** (speaker) have a left margin of 4.1”.

**Parenthetical direction within dialog** has a left margin of 3.4” and a right margin of 3.1”.

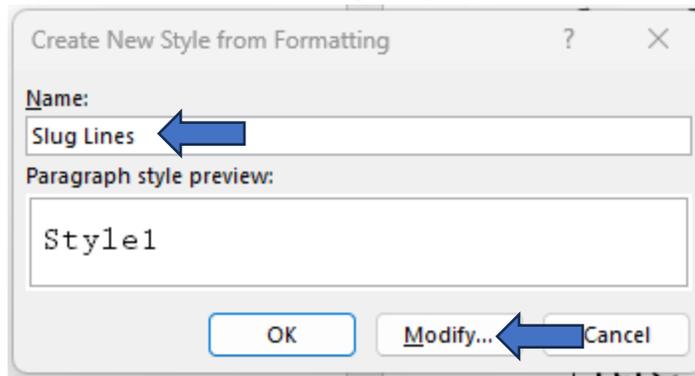
**Scenes transitions** such as CUT TO: and FADE OUT, have a left margin of 6.0”.

**Scene/shot numbers:** When a script is number from the left edge of the page and the right scene page.

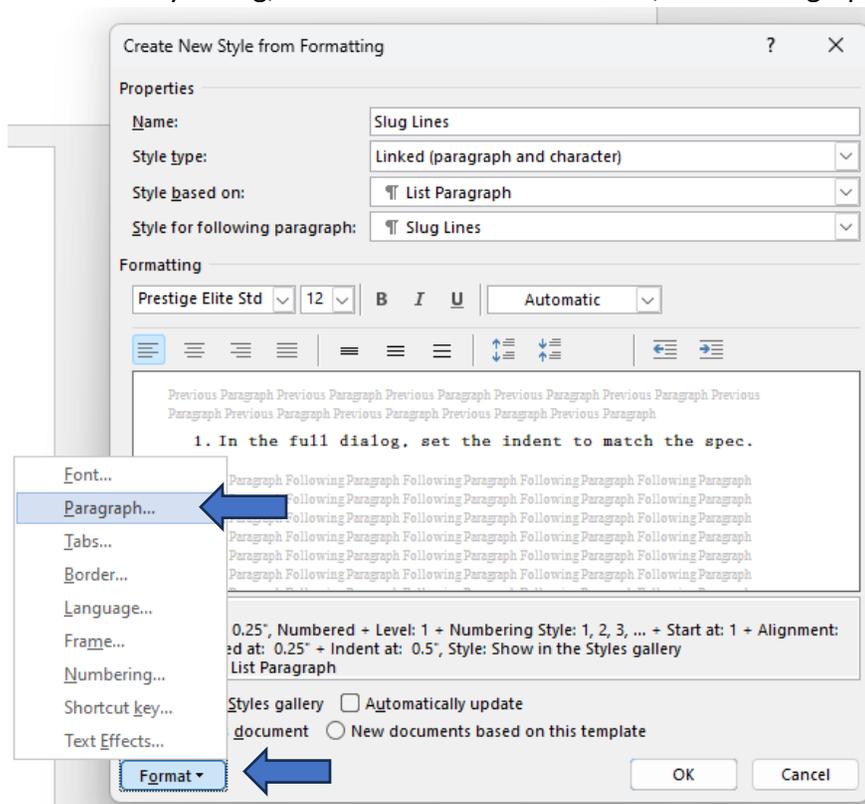
1. Type some text and select it (will be deleted later)
2. Click the bottom arrow at the right side of the Styles panel in the ribbon
3. Click "Create a Style"



4. Type the name for the margin style you want to create, then click "Modify."



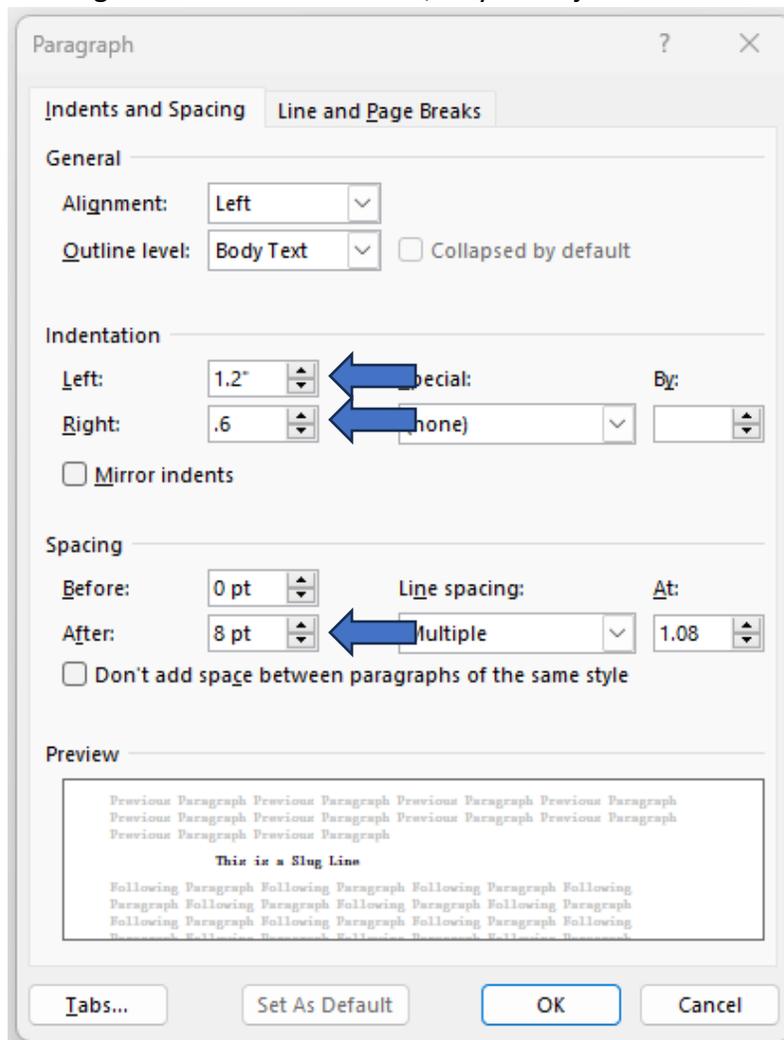
5. In the Modify dialog, click "Format" at the bottom, then "Paragraph"



6. In the Paragraph dialog, change the margins to match the spec.

**IMPORTANT!** The margins in the spec sheet are from the page edge, but the indentation in Word starts with the overall page margin. With a ½-inch margin you'll need to subtract .5" from each margin in the spec sheet.

For slug lines L is 1.7 and R is 1.1, so your adjusted entries would be as below:



For SPACING, click the 8pt and change to 12 for a full one line space after each paragraph.

7. Click OK accept the paragraph settings, then OK to create the new style.

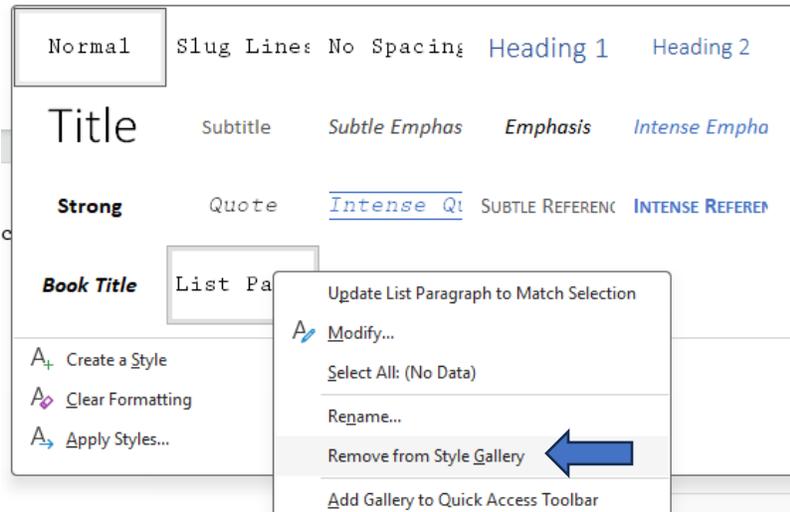
## Repeat

Repeat the process for each of the styles listed in the SimplyScripts spec sheet.

## Organize

Click that bottom button to the right of the Styles panel again to see all styles you've created. You can remove the default styles with "Remove from Style Gallery." (Be sure to leave "Normal" intact since it controls your font.)





## Title Page

On the first page, using “Normal” style, add a number of lines to start typing midway down.

1. Add the working title (you can change it later)
2. Add your Writer Number YY-DExx-Wxx
3. Insert your logline
4. Highlight all text and choose the “Center” alignment.
5. Click Insert | Page Break.

If page numbering and the header are set correctly, you should have a blank Page 1 ready for your script.

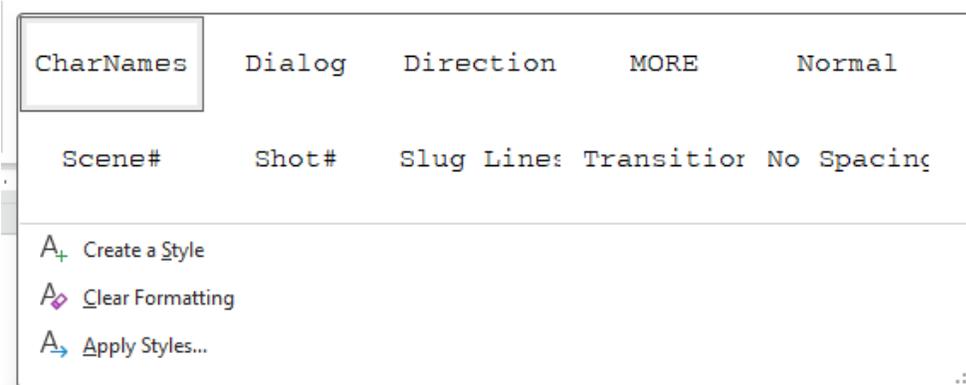
## Save the Template

Delete any sample text you typed to set the styles.

Save the template with a file name that says “Template.” When you begin writing open it and **SAVE AS with a new filename** before you start writing.

## Using Styles while Writing

When you’re done, your style choices will look like this (with list expanded):



To use styles it's really easy:

1. Type a paragraph
2. Click the style you want to apply to the paragraph.
3. Type another paragraph (or select one) It will maintain the previous paragraph style.
4. To change style, simply click the style to apply to that paragraph

For speedy typists, just slug everything in in one style (stream of consciousness typing), then go back and set styles.

Refer to the other instructions from SimplyScripts on what needs to be in all caps, extra lines, etc. When done correctly this format will yield 1 minute of content per page. For Write of Passage, your maximum page count is 12.

## Contact Pages

Remember to add a blank page after your script, then the Contact Information required:

- Writer number
- Writer name
- Writer address
- Writer email and phone
- DE name and contact

You can use the "Normal" style for these, then center the text.

## SAVE FREQUENTLY:

(Jesus saves, and so should you.)

You can save drafts however you like in Word format, and share drafts in Word if you'd like your DE to make changes directly. Otherwise, send you DE interim PDFs.

## Export

The final script must be in the PDF format. You can export from Word to PDF:

1. File | Export
2. Choose PDF/XPS document
3. Choose a folder and click "Save."

Open the PDF to make sure it looks OK.

FOR THE FINAL, be sure it's saved with the correct naming convention: 24 (the year)-DE# (your DE's number)-W# (your Writer number), then the title (without spaces),

e.g. "24-DE99-W99MyFinishedScript.pdf"

Enjoy writing in Word with Styles!