



TRANSCRIPT: SEASON 2, EPISODE 6
WORD FORMATTING TIPS: FIND AND REPLACE, WILDCARDS AND
THE RIBBON

Denise Cowle: Hello and welcome to another episode of The Editing Podcast.

Louise Harnby: Hello! This week we thought we'd give you some quick tips on formatting your Word file. Now these aren't the kind of things a professional interior formatter will be looking at – that's part of the design process and is far more complex. What we're talking about are final tidy-ups you can carry out to get your file in shape, and that accord with mainstream publishing standards.

DC: That's right. And we recommend you do these right at the end of the revision process because you might have introduced a few little problems while you're doing deeper levels of editing on your document.

LH: And bear in mind that it's easier to do these if you're working in Microsoft Word. I know we've said it before but Word – despite its flaws – really is the best word-processing software because of the onboard functionality and the ability to use plug-ins.

DC: And by the way, you're going to be using Word's find-and-replace tool for most of these tidy-ups. I love this tool – it saves such a load of time.

LH: That's true yet it's surprising how many people don't know about it. So we better tell people how to access it.

DC: Yes. So on a PC you can access it via a keyboard shortcut – press CONTROL H. On a Mac it's COMMAND H ... I think.

LH: I think you're right. I haven't worked on a Mac for a long time but I'm pretty sure you're right. Anyway, the other tips we'll give you can be accessed via the Word ribbon – so they're still really easy fixes.

DC: Yes, and this first tip is a ribbon-based one. So, if you're formatting your paragraphs so that they're usually indented, take a look at all those that come directly after chapter titles, headings, subheadings and other section breaks. We recommend these should be formatted without an indent – unless you've been

told otherwise by the person in charge of styling (for example, your publisher, your designer, or your university's style guide). You might hear editors, publishers and formatters refer to these non-indented paragraphs as 'full out'.

LH: Now, this is a bit tricky to describe on a podcast but I'll give it a go. Head up to the ribbon and look at the ruler. On the left you'll see a couple of little chevrons. When a paragraph is indented, these chevrons aren't aligned. All you need to do is click on either the top or the bottom and drag it into position so that one is on top of the other. Ideally you should create a Word style for these non-indented paragraphs. We're not going to go into how to do that here but we'll make sure there's a link to a tutorial in the show notes and the transcript.

DC: It would be really good to do an episode on Word's styles actually. We'll have to give some thought to how to do it so that it makes sense when there are no pictures though!

LH: Yes, I agree! So here's another quickie tip using Find and Replace. We recommend you get rid of double spaces in your file. Some authors stick them in after full points, but there's really no need.

DC: Absolutely – get rid of them. They make text look really gappy. And modern word-processing software manages spacing after full stops beautifully, whatever font you're using.

LH: It's really just some ancient hangover from decades ago. So open the F/R tool and in the FIND WHAT box, type in two spaces. In the REPLACE WITH box type in a single space. Then hit the REPLACE ALL button. You might need to do it a few times if there are triple spaces or more.

DC: And following on from that, you can also find rogue spaces at the beginning and end of paragraphs. To do that, open the F/R tool and in the FIND WHAT box, type in a carat followed by a lower-case p (for ... what's the whisky-foxtrot, Louise?)

LH: No clue. P for Peter. P for penguin. P for pants.

DC: Thanks so much for your help, Louise. Not. So type in a carat ... actually, I should explain what a carat is. It's not a carrot! It's the little hat symbol – you can find it on the number 6 key on your keyboard. So ... just hit SHIFT + 6 followed by a lower-case p for pants followed by a space. Then in the REPLACE WITH box type in just the carat and the p. Then hit the REPLACE ALL button. Again you might need to do it several times.

LH: Then you can almost repeat the process but this time you're going to type the space first, and then the carat and the lower-case p. In the REPLACE WITH BOX you need just the carat and the p again. And again, hit REPLACE ALL.

That'll get rid of all those nasties. It's actually well worth doing this because I've seen people talking in the Alliance of Independent Authors forum about how these kind of rogue spaces cause the paragraph spacing to go wonky when their books are live on KDP.

Right, next up is double line returns. Denise, this one's easy too, isn't it?

DC: Yes, and we're back to talking about our penguins again. So open the F/R tool and in the FIND WHAT box, type in a carat, a lower-case p for penguin, another carat and another p. In the REPLACE WITH box type in just one carat and one p.

LH: I think it's best not to use the REPLACE ALL button for this. I usually check each one to make sure it's not a proper section break.

DC: Yeah, me too. So to be a little more cautious with this, use the FIND NEXT button instead. Now, how about tabbed indents? We want to get rid of them, too, and replace them with proper indents.

LH: So open the F/R tool and in the FIND WHAT box, type in a carat and a lower-case p for penguin, followed by another carat and a lower-case t for ...

DC: Tango!

LH: Oooh, get you, Officer Dibble. Yes, and just leave the ^p for a para break. Now to find all the unnecessary tabs at the beginning of paragraphs by clicking the REPLACE ALL button.

DC: Make sure any hyphens between number spans are changed to en dashes. If you want to add an en dash manually, you can find it by heading up to Word's ribbon and selecting the INSERT tab. Then look to your right for the section in the ribbon called SYMBOLS. Click on that and a little window will open. Select MORE SYMBOLS and then click on the SPECIAL CHARACTERS tab. The en dash will probably be listed near the top.

There's an inbuilt keyboard shortcut for this in Word, but you need to use the number keypad on the right of the main keys. Hit CONTROL + numeric hyphen and you'll get an en dash.

LH: And you can locate the offending hyphens in number spans using F/R but I will literally send everyone to sleep if I have to describe that here.

DC: Why don't we create a PDF that we can link to that in the show notes? Then people can just copy and paste right into F/R.

LH: Great idea. Now, the other thing it's worth looking out for is hyphens that are being used as parentheses. These need to be changed to dashes too.

Depending on your style, you could change them to spaced en dashes (that's en for November) or closed-up em dashes (that's M for mother). Again, you can find the em dash in the SYMBOLS tab in Word's ribbon but we can locate them quickly using F/R too. Again, we'll include the strings for that in the booklet.

DC: Next up is finding a paragraph that ends with no punctuation. I see this a lot.

LH: Me too.

DC: Now this is rather handy for non-fiction books or documents in which you've got lots of bullet points. Your chosen style might not ask for bullet points, but if it does, you'll be able to catch them. And, of course, it'll pick up the same problem in the main text of a fiction work too. So go on, Louise, tell us the code.

LH: So make sure Track Changes is switched off and open F/R and check the USE WILDCARDS box. In the FIND WHAT box type `[a-z]^013`. Then use the FIND NEXT button to check every instance.

DC: And one final thing that we'll mention here is finding a full point followed by a lower-case letter. That's another gremlin that crops up frequently in all types of Word files. So open F/R, check the USE WILDCARDS box, and type a full point, a space and `([a z])` into the FIND WHAT box. Then use the FIND NEXT button to check every instance.

LH: Now the PDF we've included a link to has the F/R strings for a few extras in addition to those we've talked about here.

- Finding lower case letters at the beginning of paragraphs
- Adding or removing spaces between initial capital letters in names
- Finding, add or remove commas in bracketed citations
- Changing date styles with wildcard searches
- Changing 'ands' and ampersands in in-text citations
- Changing straight quotes to curly
- And removing unnecessary spaces before or after punctuation

DC: Great. So now it's time for Editing Bites! This is the regular part of the show where we each offer you a recommended tool or resource.

Mine is the Word Tips website run by Allen Wyatt. It's an absolute goldmine of useful information on getting the most out of Word, and he also has a weekly newsletter that I subscribe to.

LH: And mine Jack Lyon's *Wildcard Cookbook for Microsoft Word*. What I love is that Jack shows you what the wildcards mean and do, which means you can follow his examples and make up your own wildcard searches and understand the logic behind them.

DC: That's all for this week. Thank you so much for listening to The Editing Podcast. You can rate, review and subscribe via your podcatcher.

And please tell your writer, editor and business friends ... basically anyone who writes! You can get in touch with us via The Editing Podcast Facebook page. Drop your questions in there too and we'll get back to you.

LH: And don't forget – all the links we've mentioned are in the show notes. Thanks for listening.

Editing bites

- *Wildcard Cookbook for Microsoft Word*: Amazon UK: <https://amzn.to/2KFh39H>. Amazon US: <https://amzn.to/2KJrVDi>
- Word Tips: <https://wordribbon.tips.net/index.html>

Other resources

- *15 Word Formatting Tips: Find and Replace, Wildcards and the Ribbon* (Free PDF): <http://bit.ly/2XmHyHN>

