Technical Tip: Creating Your Manuscript Template (PC)

(1)   Open a new Word document.

(2)   It mostly likely defaults to one-inch margins, but to check, click on the "Layout" button to give you that ribbon. On the far left is a button called "Margins." Click it. You should see a "Normal" setting that defaults to all one-inch margins. If that is not clicked, click it.

(3)   Now go back to the Home tab to give you that ribbon. Above the "Styles," box, you'll see a series of styles that are common to this document. Most everything you type will default to the style called "Normal," so let's make sure that "Normal" is the normal that you want. Locate that style, click on it, and then right click. When you right click, you have several options; click "Modify."

This will open a dialog box with lots of options.

(4)   About halfway down on the left, you'll see "Formatting." Make sure that the first box says Times New Roman and the second box says 12. If they don't, click on the dropdown arrow and choose those options.

(5)   Next, right below that, you'll see buttons with lines in them. The first set on the left is giving you the options to have your copy flush left and ragged right, centered, flush right, or justified (straight on both sides). You want to choose the first button for flush left and ragged right.

(6)   The next three buttons show lines really close (single spacing), sort of close (1.5 spacing), and far apart (double spacing). You want to click on the third button for double spacing.

Wait, you're not done yet! Let's deal with the other two issues:

(7)   In that same box, bottom left is a button that says "Format." Push it, and then click on "Paragraph." Yet another dialog box pops up!

(8)   In this box, halfway down on the right side, you'll see the word "Special." In the box should be the words "First line." If not (it probably says "None"), click on the dropdown arrow and choose "First line." In the box beside that, you can set how far the indent should be. It's probably best to put .5 there.

(9)   Keep going, there are a few more boxes on the left below that under "Spacing" with "Before" and "After" choices. Make sure that those read 0. (The default often has 10 in the After slot, which is creating extra space between the paragraphs. You want it to say 0—so change it. And don't use "Auto.")

(10) Since you already set this to double spacing on the previous menu, you should see the word "Double" under "Line Spacing."

(11) Now click OK. This will take you back to that previous dialog box. Do one more thing here to seal the deal and help you not have to do this again:

(12) At the very bottom, right above that format button, are a couple of choices. Put a dot in the circle that says "New documents based on this template." Now click OK.

(13) This will take you back to your blank document. Now do a "Save As" and save this document as your own personal template for doing all of your writing. Calling it "Mytemplate" should work. Store it on your desktop and you'll always have a template ready to go when inspiration strikes.