

# Build Your Own eBooks For Free!

A Step-by-Step Guide to Formatting  
and Converting Your Manuscript into ePub  
and Kindle Books Using Free Software



## M. A. Demers

Published by Egghead Books, Canada

[www.mademers.com](http://www.mademers.com)

Copyright © 2017 Michelle A. Demers  
INSI 0000 0003 5669 426X

Published by Egghead Books, 2017

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author, except by reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

Cover design by Michelle A. Demers. Background design based on an image by Gerd Altmann. Many thanks.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Demers, M. A., 1964-, author

Build your own eBooks for free! : a step-by-step guide to  
formatting and converting your manuscript into ePub and Kindle  
books using free software / M.A. Demers.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-0-9916776-7-2 (softcover).--ISBN 978-0-9916776-8-9 (EPUB).--

ISBN 978-0-9916776-9-6 (Kindle)

1. Electronic publishing--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Self-publishing--  
Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Kindle (Electronic book reader). 4. Electronic  
books. 5. File conversion (Computer science)--Handbooks, manuals, etc.  
I. Title.

Z286.E43.D446 2017

070.50285'416

C2017-901669-5

C2017-901670-9

# Contents

Is This Book For You?	1
What You Will Need	3
eBook Development	6
Characteristics of eBooks	7
Reflowable eBooks	7
Fixed Layout eBooks	9
PDFs	10
Language Options	10
1 Format Your Manuscript	11
Language Settings	11
Document Properties	13
Document Set-Up	13
The Importance of Using Styles	14
Fonts	20
Cutting and Pasting	24
Blank Lines and Line Breaks	24
Page Breaks	26
Dashes	26
Ellipses	26
Footnotes	27
Internal Hyperlinks	28
Miscellaneous Formatting Principles	28
Save as Web Page, Filtered	30
2 Build Your eBook	32
Step 1: Import Your HTML File Into Sigil	32
Step 2: Delete Font Definitions	35
Step 3: Create Your Stylesheet	35
Step 4: Clean Up Your Stylesheet	38
Step 5: Clean Out Your Document	50
Step 6: Create Your Links (optional)	58
Step 7: Create Your “Page” Breaks	60
Step 8: Add Your Cover	62
Step 9: Build Your Table of Contents	68
Step 10: Add Your Metadata	71
Step 11: Validate Your ePub	73
Step 12: Test Your ePub	75
A Word About Publisher Formatting	78

3	Convert to Kindle	79
	Step 1: Delete Cover File	79
	Step 2: Specify Cover	79
	Step 3: Remove Apple Cover Code	80
	Step 4: Edit TOC	80
	Step 5: Add the HTML Table of Contents	80
	Step 6: Add Start Reference	82
	Step 7: Update Metadata	83
	Step 8: Convert to Mobi File	83
	Step 9: Test Your File	86
4	Advanced Formatting	90
	Creating New Style Classes	92
	New Character Classes	93
	Multiple Classes	94
	Controlling Emphasis	95
	Adding Color	95
	Font Color	97
	Lines	97
	Blockquotes	100
	Text Boxes	101
	Tables and Columns	104
	Lists	110
	Editing the HTML TOC	113
	Font Embedding	114
	Internal Images	122
	Inline Images	131
	Frames	131
	Kindle Media Queries	134
	Endnotes	135

# Is This Book For You?

Do you want to:

- Avoid the cost of ebook conversions?
- Have control over the look and function of your ebooks?
- Create professional-quality ebooks you can be proud of?

If so, then this book is for you.

**With the free, easy-to-use program Sigil**, the savvy self-publisher can build an ePub for upload to retail sites such as Kobo or Apple, then make a few modifications to the ePub and upload it to Kindle Direct Publishing for conversion to Kindle. Or you can convert it yourself using Amazon's free Kindle Previewer.

**Other free software can be used to test your files** before you upload them to retail sites. If you write your manuscript in an open-source word processor such as OpenOffice, then even that is free.

**What I love most about using Sigil is that I control the look and feel of my ebooks.** Many conversion companies simply use template code they have developed for efficiency and cost-effectiveness but which doesn't leave much room for creativity. If you want anything different you have to pay extra—if such options are offered at all. But with Sigil you can create the ebook *you* want and at no extra cost. It's a win-win.

**Even if you choose to hire out the design of your ebook**, having Sigil on hand and understanding its basic functions means you can later make file changes without cost. If you find typos in your manuscript and want to fix them, or if you publish another book and want to add advertising matter to your earlier ebooks, you can do this yourself rather than pay a conversion company again. Modifying your files will become *very* expensive if you have to pay someone every time you need to update your ebook.<sup>1</sup>

**If you are an author who wishes to sell only on Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing**, you can bypass learning Sigil and instead upload an

HTML document exported from your word processor. However, your manuscript will still need to be properly formatted (Chapter 1), and the HTML document will still need to be modified (Chapter 2). It will still be recommended that you convert with and test your file in Kindle Previewer (Chapter 3). You will find, then, that **not only does uploading an HTML document restrict your options, but you don't save yourself much time or effort over working with Sigil**. And as you work through this manual you will find that taking that extra step into Sigil is not a difficult one.

\* \* \*

When Amazon first launched Kindle Direct Publishing in January 2010, the retail giant and ebook innovator accepted just about any text document for conversion to the Kindle format. Problems quickly arose for users, who discovered that the auto-conversion method wasn't as successful as Amazon claimed: many such ebooks suffered from odd formatting behaviour, or simply looked dreadful. These problems continue to this day, and in fact have increased.

Many authors then try but fail miserably to use auto-conversion tools such as Calibre or Smashwords' Meatgrinder to build ePubs and mobi files. After tearing their hair out to no avail, these authors are often advised to resort to the nuclear method: save their manuscript as text only, then reformat the whole thing again. Needless to say, such a drastic option is enough to make any author of a 300-page manuscript want to cry.

**But if you use Sigil, resorting to the nuclear method will never be necessary:** you will be able to easily find and delete any problems in your manuscript. The result will be a clean, stable, well-functioning ebook.

Many authors find the idea of working with HTML code to be too daunting. But you do not need to understand the code or how it works; you only need to be able to follow the directions outlined in this manual. It is a bit like baking: you do not need to learn chemistry to make a cake, you only have to follow the recipe. For the majority of text-based ebooks, the process is straightforward and easier than you might imagine. You will find, too, that the more you build your own ebooks, the less mysterious HTML becomes. You can even develop your own template code to create consistency in an ebook series, for example, or to streamline the process for your later ebooks.

# What You Will Need

## A Word Processor

This manual assumes the majority of authors are using **Microsoft Word**. (Although Word is not free, its use is so ubiquitous that to offer instructions for any other word processor would be a disservice to the majority of readers.) Users of **OpenOffice**, **LibreOffice**, **NeoOffice**, **Google Docs** or **Atlantis** can follow the same principles indicated for Word users and export to HTML. With some you also have the option to export to ePub and fix if necessary in Sigil. Same applies to **Apple Pages**, which can export to ePub but not HTML. Users of **Scrivener** will need to export to text and import into a word processor because Scrivener does not support styles (and the eBooks it makes are not industry standard).

**Instructions herein refer to Word 2013 for PC.** I chose this version because it is neither the latest, which most users rarely have, nor the oldest, which most users have by now abandoned. And if you regularly update your copy of Word, many of the options update as well, so you should easily be able to follow the instructions herein. Earlier versions of Word for PC have equivalent functions, as do Word for Mac and other word processors. Tinker with your program as necessary.

## HTML Editor (optional)

If you decide you only want to go the HTML-to-Kindle route, you will need an editor such as Notepad (PC), TextEdit (Mac), or the open-source HTML editor KompoZer. None of these will be necessary if you work in Sigil.

## Sigil

Sigil is best downloaded from its official host, GitHub (see links at end of chapter). Sigil can also be found on third-party websites, but I *strongly advise that you do not download from these sites*: they often add malicious code such as adware, or they bundle Sigil with a trial version of another program you don't want or need. Downloading from GitHub also ensures you have the latest release.

Note that you will only need the actual Sigil program, not any of the developer files; you only need the Mac-Package, Windows-Setup, or Windows-X64-Setup file, whichever is appropriate for your system. Note that, as an open-source software, Sigil is updated often as new features are added or bugs are found and fixed. Thus you may find that something

has changed slightly from what you see in this manual. If you need further help, there is an excellent forum on the website MobileRead dedicated to Sigil.

## ePub Validator

For validating your eBooks, you can use the **online validator** at the **International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF)**, but I find using **Pagina's** free **EPUB-Checker** to be a quicker and easier solution. Importantly, EPUB-Checker does not require an Internet connection when you use it, and it handles files larger than 10MB, a restriction of the online validator tool.

## ePub Apps

For testing eBooks, you can use **Adobe Digital Editions (ADE)** or any of the many other free ePub apps available. I like to use ADE in my computer for initial testing, then I use **Aldiko** for Android on my tablet. I finish with my **Kobo** device and apps. **Apple** computers and tablets have the built-in **iBooks** reader. There are ePub apps for many browsers such as **Firefox** or **Chrome**.

There are a number of ePub apps for smartphones, whether Android or iOS. When choosing which apps to use, make sure eBooks can be sideloaded directly into your phone or downloaded to your device via Dropbox or your Google account, to cite two examples.

## Kindle Previewer and Reading Apps

For conversion and testing for Kindle, you will need to download **Kindle Previewer 2.94** from Amazon. At time of writing, Amazon were beta-testing **Kindle Previewer 3**, which includes their Enhanced Typesetting features. I recommend you install both versions on your computer and test in each. You can also download the **Kindle for PC (or Mac) app** and test there. For mobile previews, download the free Kindle app for your phone's operating system.

Kindle Previewer replicates (though not perfectly) the display behaviour of the latest Kindle devices. It will also create a Kindle for iOS file, but you cannot view it in Previewer; it must be sideloaded onto an Apple device. For publishers on PC who do not own an Apple device, you have to go on faith or ask someone with an Apple device to test for you.



**eBook devices and apps rarely function identically, even from the same manufacturer.** For example, a Kindle device and Amazon's Kindle for PC app do not contain all the same functions and do not display identically. **It is recommended that you test your ebook in as many devices and apps as is possible within your budget.**

## Links

### **Sigil**

<https://github.com/Sigil-Ebook/Sigil/releases>

### **Adobe Digital Editions**

<http://www.adobe.com/solutions/ebook/digital-editions/download.html>

### **Kindle Previewer**

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?docId=1000765261>

### **Kindle for PC/Mac**

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/digital/fiona/kcp-landing-page/ref=kcp\\_ipad\\_mkt\\_lnd](https://www.amazon.com/gp/digital/fiona/kcp-landing-page/ref=kcp_ipad_mkt_lnd)

### **IDPF online validator**

<http://validator.idpf.org/>

### **Pagina EPUB-Checker**

<https://github.com/IDPF/epubcheck>

### **Sigil forum on MobileRead.com**

<https://www.mobileread.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=203>

All links are valid as of writing but may change in the interim. If so, a quick online search will bring them up.

# eBook Development

Ever since the inception of their ebook retail division, and the launch of Kindle Direct Publishing, Amazon have remained committed to developing a proprietary format, the Kindle, and to manufacturing format-specific Kindle devices; the Kindle is thus both an ereader device and a file format. Kindle books have the file extension .azw; the AZW file is a variation of the older mobi file, which is a variation of the PRC file first developed by Mobipocket Creator (which Amazon purchased). Kindle devices and apps will thus read all three files: AZW, mobi, and PRC.

In contrast to Amazon's Kindle, the rest of the tech industry has been primarily devoted to the open-source ePub format, which is sold on all other ebook retail sites outside of Amazon. Very early on the ePub was way ahead of Kindle in terms of features, allowing, for example, the inclusion of embedded fonts, drop caps, colored text, bulleted lists, text boxes, right margin indents and so on that Kindle books did not.

Amazon's response to this was Kindle Format 8 (K8). K8 brought the Kindle into the same league as the ePub, but this created two problems for publishers: 1) older Kindle (mobi7) devices could not read K8 code; and 2) the code produced for these K8 features in programs such as Word was simply incompatible with K8 devices.

Amazon addressed the first issue with media queries—additional code that allows the publisher to create different versions of their ebook in a single file—but such files could not be created by Amazon's auto-conversion process. Publishers whose ebooks required media queries had to learn a new skill or pay an ebook designer.

Amazon have never really addressed the second problem, mainly because they cannot change the code in Word or any other word processor. Instead, Amazon continue to accept text documents for auto-conversion while simultaneously discouraging authors from submitting them, which has resulted in contradictory directions on the KDP website.

The truth is, as Amazon rushed to develop K8, the differences between the proprietary Kindle and the open-source ePub became less and less marked. Now, for text-based ebooks (such as novels), the only real difference between the two formats is a few lines of code.

Where the ePub and Kindle formats do differ dramatically is in image handling. Adding internal images to a Kindle book is far easier than adding them to ePubs. For the typical author self-publishing an ebook with only a cover image, this issue will not arise. **Consequently, I have separated this manual into standard and advanced formatting techniques, saving the more complex but less common techniques for the latter section.**

Because the ePub format is open source, companies are free to modify it as they wish and to use the code as the basis for proprietary formats such as Apple's iBooks Author format or Nook's Kids Book Builder. Device manufacturers also create quirks in their device programming to force publishers to build retailer-specific files, which in turn forces consumer loyalty to a retailer's catalogue and devices. Where applicable these differences are discussed in this manual.

## Characteristics of eBooks

An ebook appears on your computer as a single file but it is actually what is known as an archive, a zipped folder containing separate subfolders and files. These subfolders and files contain the ebook's text, images, fonts if embedded, stylesheet(s), and metadata, and to which ebook retailers add code for such things as digital rights management (DRM).

When talking about ebooks, you will always hear references to HTML. HTML is the language of the Internet; it is what web pages are built upon. Another coding language, XML, is a document mark-up language designed for encoding documents intended to be read across the web. XHTML is a combination of the two and is what ebooks are built upon.

There are essentially three types of ebooks on the market now: reflowable, fixed layout, and PDF.

## Reflowable eBooks

Reflowable ebooks require different formatting than print books because ebooks do not have fixed margins, page length, or font size. Instead, the font is scalable—meaning the user can adjust the font size on their device to suit their reading preference—and thus there is no fixed placement of the text on the screen; the text simply flows through. Also, each device has a different screen size so you cannot design to a specific digital “page,” and some devices allow users to adjust the white margins around the text.

Consequently, in reflowable ebooks there are no page numbers, though some devices can display “page” markers so the ebook can be quoted and properly referenced as a print book can be. Page markers are added by the reading device, so you needn’t worry about adding these to your document.

Reflowable ebooks are the preferred format for novels and other text-based ebooks. While reflowable ebooks often contain images, the text is dominant. The majority of self-published authors release reflowable ebooks, of which there are two formats: Kindle and ePub.

## The Kindle Format

The older Kindle mobi7 format is all but phased out, and many publishers simply no longer accommodate consumers still using older Kindle devices. That said, there are many still out there, and thus some publishers still use media queries to satisfy these consumers. If you are releasing a novel or similar, media queries will not be necessary. For publishers with more complex ebooks, the code for adding media queries is illustrated in “Advanced Formatting.”

As already indicated, Kindle Format 8 allows for more advanced formatting than mobi7. We will thus be focusing on K8, indicating issues with mobi7 only where applicable.

There is a new format, Kindle Format X (Ten; extension .kfx). KFX is a whole new Kindle format, based on Javascript instead of XHTML. Amazon convert existing ebook formats into this new proprietary format, and as such publishers must still produce ePub, mobi, or HTML files, using the formatting found in this manual, for upload to Amazon.

KFX books are not compatible with older mobi7 or mobi8 devices, of which there are literally millions in the hands of consumers. These consumers will have a K8 or mobi7 version of your ebook sent to their devices.

At time of writing, KFX is still in the beta stage and is not being applied equally to all new ebooks because KFX does not yet support all features found in K8. Critics have complained that KFX formatting has been applied—without notification to publishers—to tens of thousands of ebooks already on sale, sometimes with adverse effects. eBooks available in KFX show “Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled” on the ebook’s product page.

KFX also includes a new encryption method to prevent Kindle books from being converted to other formats in software such as Calibre (at least until Calibre's developers, and others like them, figure out the code). This applies even to ebooks not DRMed by the publisher. Critics believe this is a strategy to force consumer compliance to Kindle devices and apps.

## ePub2 Versus ePub3

The eBooks created by Sigil are the ePub2 format, based on HTML4 and CSS2. ePub3 uses HTML5 and CSS3, the next-generation code. Kindle Previewer (Kindlegen), which converts eBooks to the Kindle format, will accept both ePub2 and ePub3 files but cannot read all ePub3 elements. Uploading ePub3 files to Amazon is therefore not recommended.

For the publisher releasing a reflowable ebook, ePub3 is not required. More importantly, ePub3 devices are backwards compatible but ePub2 devices cannot read ePub3 files. So unless your ebook requires ePub3 code, producing an ePub3 ebook will impede your sales efforts. This manual, like Sigil itself, thus limits itself to ePub2.

## Fixed Layout eBooks

Fixed layout ebooks contain static pages where the text and images are fixed and cannot be changed by the end user. Fixed layout ebooks often contain pop-up text boxes, or the reader can zoom in on graphics or text. Some fixed-layout formats can also contain other media such as video or audio files; if so, these are called rich media ebooks. Fixed layout ebooks are the preferred format for image-centric ebooks: comic books, graphic novels, children's books, cookbooks, and some textbooks.

Amazon have developed free software for building fixed layout ebooks for Kindle: Kindle Kids' Book Creator, Kindle Comic Creator, and Kindle Textbook Creator.

Apple's version is the free iBooks Author, a proprietary format (.iba) built on a modified ePub. iBooks Author files can only be built on Apple computers, sold through the Apple iBookstore, and read on Apple devices.

Barnes & Noble have also developed a proprietary children's ebook software, Nook Kids Book Builder, which, like iBooks Author, creates modified eBooks. Children's Nook books can only be sold on B&N and read on Nook devices.

Retailers who have produced software for fixed layout ebooks require that such ebooks be built in their proprietary software or they cannot be sold on the retailer's site. As such, fixed layout ebooks are not covered by this manual.

## PDFs

Adobe PDFs have been around for ages, but in the early days of ebooks the PDF format was rejected for its poor quality on the small, low-resolution screens of the early ereaders. With the advent of larger, higher-resolution tablet screens, PDFs are making a comeback for their close proximity to the print book, and are popular with libraries. However, there is not yet wide distribution of PDFs, and most of the major ebook retailers—Amazon, Apple, B&N, Kobo—do not sell the PDF format. As an indie publisher you will likely only encounter the PDF if you opt also to sell a print version of your book or have access to library distribution.

## Language Options

Amazon currently accept ebooks published in Afrikaans, Alsatian, Basque, Bokmål Norwegian, Breton, Catalan, Cornish, Corsican, Danish, Dutch/Flemish, Eastern Frisian, English, Finnish, French, Frisian, Galician, German, Icelandic, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Luxembourgish, Manx, Northern Frisian, Norwegian, Nynorsk Norwegian, Portuguese, Provençal, Romansh, Scots, Scottish Gaelic, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh. eBooks published in other languages will be removed from sale.

The ePub2 format can display any language that is read left to right and horizontal. Right-to-left and vertical languages usually require ePub3 files, and as such are not covered in this manual. And although the ePub format has wider language support than Kindle, not all retailers accept all languages. For example, while Kobo accept most languages, Apple sell only ebooks in English, Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. If publishing in a “global language” (read: non-Latin alphabet), check first with the retailers you wish to sell through.

An ebook in a global language almost always requires the publisher to embed the necessary font to display all foreign characters correctly. Font embedding is covered in “Advanced Formatting.”

# 1 Format Your Manuscript

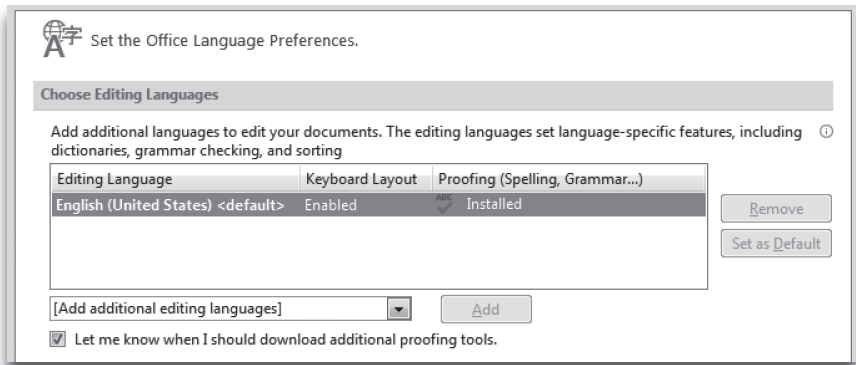
Authors who follow these formatting guidelines will create a manuscript that will be much easier to convert to the ePub and Kindle formats, and one that is much less likely to produce common errors that degrade the quality of your ebook.

**Most of you will be reading this after you have already written your manuscript.** Don't worry: much of what I am writing here can still be applied after the fact. If not, you will be able to fix things later in Sigil. That said, the more you can do to clean up your manuscript before importing into Sigil, the less work you will have later.

## Language Settings

In your Word options, under the Language tab (File > Word Options > Language) is the ability to Choose Editing Languages. (You can also access this via Review > Language > Language Preferences.) In the dialogue box that opens you will find the default editing language already installed. The default in copies of Word shipped in North America is “English (United States)”. Beneath this is an option to add more editing languages, and a button to set your default editing language from among those specified in the box (Fig. 1.1).

Fig. 1.1



In your Word document itself you have the option to set the proofing language (Review > Set Proofing Language). This sets the default language of the Normal style within your document and, if you choose, the default Word template (Fig. 1.2).

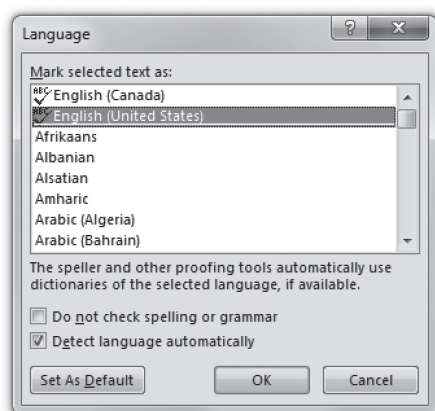


Fig. 1.2

When your Word document is later exported to HTML, in it will be a line of code that states which language your document is written in. **Contrary to logic, this code is determined by the default editing language in your Word options, not by the proofing language of your document.** The code will thus always be `<body lang=EN-US>`

if you have a North American version of Word and have never changed the default editing language.

**A problem arises if the proofing language of your document differs from your default editing language.** If so, then Word creates a formatting override (“inline styling”) for the Normal style in your document. Since all ebook styles must be based on the Normal style, this creates an override in *every paragraph of your manuscript*, otherwise known as bloated code. For example, if your editing language is the default U.S. English but your document language is UK English, you will find `<span lang=EN-UK>` in every paragraph of your document. If you are writing in French you will find `<span lang=FR>`, and so on for other languages.

When you later build your ebook in Sigil, you will specify your ebook’s language in the metadata, which will tell the ereader device what language your ebook is written in. However, both the language code and the inline styling created by Word will remain unless you remove them. The first is easy to delete (it’s only one line of code) but the inline styling found in every paragraph will be tedious to remove. While it may not harm your ebook, I’m of the opinion that the cleaner your code the more stable your ebook. So this is best fixed at the outset, and it is easy to do.

**To fix the problem, you need to synchronize the primary editing language in your Word options with the proofing language of the Normal style in your document:**

1. First ensure your default editing language in your Word options is the same language your document is written



in. If not, change as appropriate.

2. If you changed the default editing language, close then reopen Word to put the change into effect.
3. Open your manuscript, select all text (Ctrl+A) and set the proofing language to match (even if it was correct to begin with). This will erase from your manuscript code any previous language overrides.

The flip side to this is that **if you use foreign words or phrases in your ebook, you can set the language just for those words or phrases by highlighting them and then selecting Review > Set Proofing Language.** This will create an inline language style just for the select text. If the user then clicks on a foreign word, some ereaders will then open this secondary dictionary instead of the primary language dictionary. The definition will be in the foreign language, too, though—the ereader will not translate—but this mechanism can be useful for multilingual consumers who may simply not be familiar with the foreign word(s) you have used. I am hoping that in future we will see translation dictionaries in ebooks, which will benefit from this technique.

## Document Properties

Word offers the option to include in your document metadata your author name, document title, subject, keywords, category, status, and comments; you access this by selecting File > Info. The author name is automatically filled in with the name of the program user (as set in your operating system); **the remaining fields are blank and should be left that way. If not, delete any field entries.**

## Document Set-Up

**Set your document to a single page size** applied to the whole document. Do not split your document into sections that are formatted differently. If you already did this, remove the section breaks.

**Page margins are irrelevant**, so you may set your margin width as you wish. However, the same margins must be applied to the whole document. If you set different margins partway through your manuscript, you will inadvertently create a section break.

**Turn off most AutoCorrect options:** File > Proofing > AutoCorrect Options.

Then, under tabs for both/either AutoFormat and AutoFormat As You Type, uncheck: “Automatic bulleted lists”, “List Styles”, “Ordinals (1st) with superscript”, “Border lines”, “Automatic numbered lists”, “Tables”, and “Set left- and first-indent with tabs and backspaces”. Left as is, many of these AutoCorrect options will later cause you grief.

**There are no page numbers in ebooks, no header or footer information.** If you used these in your manuscript, remove them.

**You will later use Sigil to build your table of contents.** If you used your word processor’s table of contents module, or if you built a table of contents by hand, remove it.

## The Importance of Using Styles

Most authors who use Word do not use custom styles; instead, authors are in the habit of using the default Normal style then using the tab key and formatting toolbar to create headings or different styles of paragraphs. Unfortunately, not only are tabs not recognized in ebooks, but **the habit of simply overriding the Normal paragraph results in a very poorly coded ebook, one that can be unstable when viewed on different devices.**

When you modify text, the paragraph is still defined by its primary style and then additional information is generated that indicates the changes made. For example, if you modify a line of Normal text to create a chapter heading by increasing the font to 18 points and centering the text, in your Styles window you would find “18pt, Centered” added to your list.

(In older versions of Word, a plus sign [+] is added to the style in use, followed by the modifications made. For example, in the list of styles in use in your document, Normal would be indicated by the ¶ symbol and the modification would appear below it as “Normal+ 18 pt Centered”. In newer versions of Word, the plus sign is added only to styles other than Normal.)

The problem with using this method is that such paragraph modifications are translated into inline text styling when you export to HTML, and this inline styling can create havoc in your ebook.

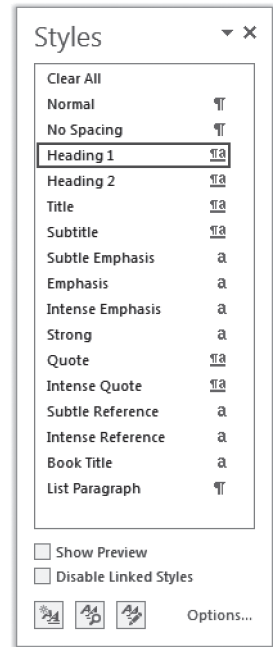
**More importantly, ebooks use what is called a Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) to format the different paragraph styles and headings contained within your ebook.** When you later convert your manuscript to HTML,

the styles you use in your word processor will form the basis of your CSS; if you do not use styles, it will be much more difficult to build your ebook. The sooner you embrace styles the sooner you will be on the road to creating a more professional manuscript and a more beautiful ebook. If you have already finished your manuscript and did not use styles, do not fret: you can create your styles now and then apply them to your text.

## Creating Styles

**A style is akin to a recipe: it says this style equals whatever combination of font and paragraph formatting you input.** Styles can be quite specific to include any possible paragraph formatting from font type and size to paragraph alignment and indentation and Before/After values, and so on. The beauty of styles is that if you later decide to modify your document, you merely have to modify the relevant styles rather than go through your 300-page manuscript. For example, if you have a chapter heading style that has an After value of 24 points and you later think this is too little, you can change the After value in the style to, say, 36 points and every chapter heading that uses that style will automatically be adjusted without affecting other text not based on that style, such as your body text.

Fig. 1.3



**Word has a number of default styles**, the most obvious one being Normal, but also various default heading styles, a hyperlink style, a footnote style, and so on. You can create your own styles to suit your document or you can modify the default styles.

**To modify a default style**, click on the Styles submenu on the toolbar to open the Styles dialogue box (Fig. 1.3). In the list that appears, pick the style you want to modify; in this example we are modifying Heading 1. Hover over the ¶<sup>a</sup> symbol; it will change to an arrow. Click on the arrow and select Modify from the drop-down menu that appears.

In the Modify Style dialogue box that opens (Fig. 1.4), set your basic attributes: font family (Times New Roman, for example), font size, font style (Bold, Italic), font color (use Automatic for black), paragraph

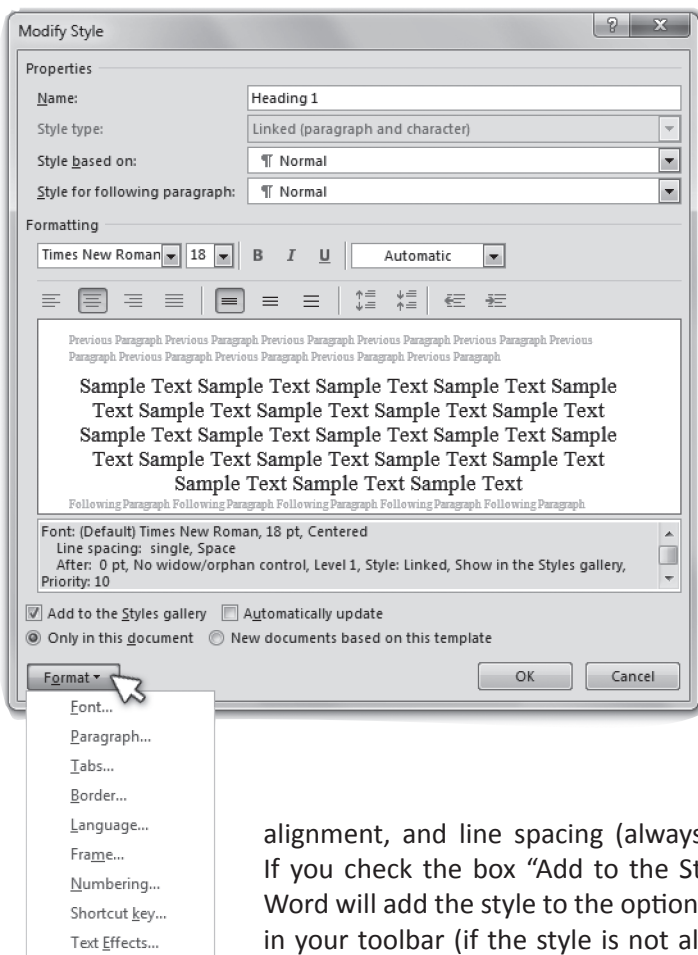


Fig. 1.4

alignment, and line spacing (always use Single). If you check the box “Add to the Styles gallery”, Word will add the style to the options that appear in your toolbar (if the style is not already there). Never check “Automatically Update”.

Although this initial dialogue box also gives you the option to adjust before/after margins and left/right indents, this is better done in the Paragraph dialogue box. While still in the Modify Style box, click on the Format button in the lower-left corner. A number of options will appear. Click on Paragraph. Here you can adjust the spacing and margin indents, create a first-line indent or hanging paragraphs (Fig. 1.5).

**You can also create your own styles.** To create a new style, in the Styles box click on the New Style icon (the first of the three icons in the lower-left corner, Fig. 1.3). Input your new style’s attributes. **NOTE: all styles must be based on Normal.** Give the style a name and click OK.

You may find as you reformat your manuscript that it can be very useful to click on the Options button in the lower right-hand corner of the Modify Style box and, in the next box that opens, select “In Current Document” under “Select styles to show:” (Fig. 1.6). This reduces the lengthy “All styles” list down to a more manageable one. You will also find it helpful to check the boxes for “Paragraph level formatting” and “Font level formatting” and “Show next heading when previous level is used”, and then select “Only in this document”. Leave all other options unchecked. Click OK to close.

## Applying Styles

**To change a paragraph or heading’s style,** simply place your cursor anywhere in the paragraph or heading and click on the style you wish to change to. This will apply the new style to the paragraph or heading.

**If you already used styles in your manuscript,** you may find that you only have to make a few changes to your styles in order to accommodate the general formatting principles outlined in this chapter.

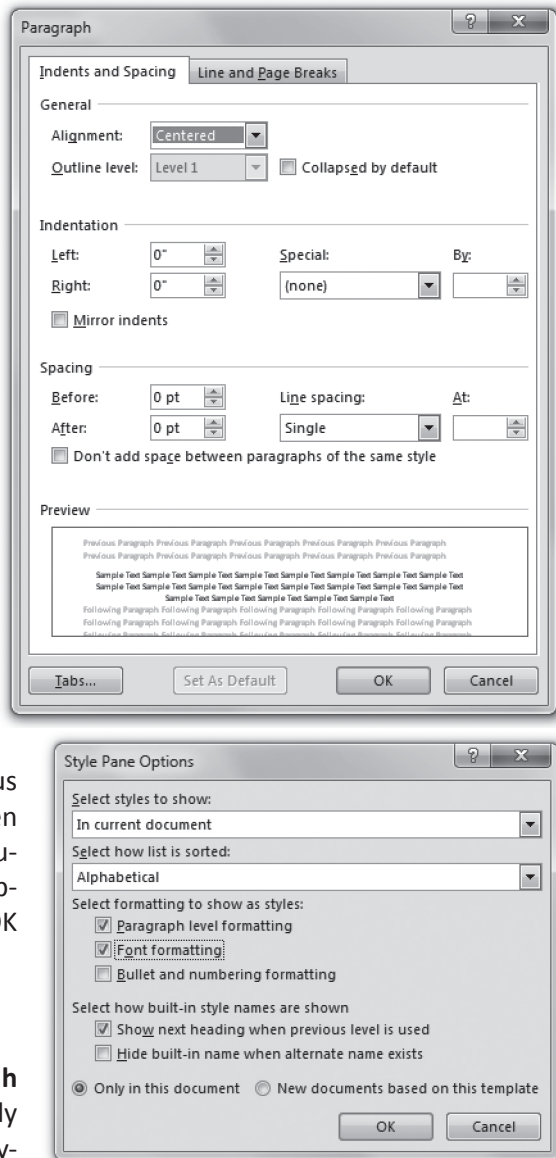


Fig. 1.5 (top) and Fig. 1.6 (bottom)

**If you have not used styles in your manuscript**, and you used the Normal paragraph throughout, the quickest route is to modify the Normal style to create a line break (if wanted) or to eliminate issues such as tabs. Then reformat your headings and any special paragraphs. Delete any unwanted line breaks created with a carriage return, and delete any tabs. Both can be quickly accomplished using Search & Replace.

**WARNING:** If you modify the Normal style to include a first-line indent, remember to remove that indent when you format your heading and other styles.

**WARNING:** When you convert a paragraph to another style, some versions of Word will erase text effects such as Italic or Bold. Sometimes Italic is erased but Bold remains; other times the formatting remains if only a portion of the paragraph has been modified, while erasing all formatting if the whole paragraph is modified. Sometimes Word will convert the paragraph to the new style but keep an override such as font size even though Word erases every other override. It's a real mishmash. Be mindful of this when converting a paragraph from one style to another.

## Heading Styles

Your chapter heading should be created with Heading 1. Your first subheading should be Heading 2, and the subheading of Heading 2 should be Heading 3, and so on. This is because when you later build your table of contents (TOC) in Sigil using its automated module, it is programmed to recognize these headings and will cascade them for you in ascending order:

(Chapter) Heading 1

(Sub) Heading 2

(Sub) Heading 3

Sigil allows you to edit the TOC manually, but by using the headings as intended you avoid the work you will otherwise have to do to build your TOC. What I usually do is use Heading 1 for my chapter headings; if I want to format other page headings such as Acknowledgements, About the Author, and so on, differently from my chapter heading, I use a different style and then manually add these entries to my TOC later in Sigil.

**WARNING:** Do not use Heading styles on your title page. If the end user turns off publisher formatting (discussed in more detail in the next chapter), most ereader apps are programmed to treat any Heading 1 and

Heading 2 entries as chapter headings and may add a page break before them.

## Character Styles

Character styles can be created in the same way as paragraph styles: open the Styles box and click on the New Style button to open the options box. Give the style a name, and in the field beneath, Style Type, open the drop-down menu and select Character. You will then see that paragraph formatting options are grayed out, leaving you only font options to choose from.

To apply a character style, highlight the relevant text and then click on the style.

**WARNING:** Never create a character style that involves changing the font size. For inexplicable reasons, Word creates the style but then uses inline styling for the font size. It makes no sense, and you will just have to fix the mess later in Sigil. If you want to create a character style that changes the font size, you will have to do it later in Sigil. This is covered in “Advanced Formatting.”

**WARNING:** Do not use a character style to create drop caps. Drop caps must be built by hand later in Sigil: the code Word creates does not display properly in ebooks. Drop caps are covered in “Advanced Formatting.”

## Emphasis and Strong

**Two default character styles in Word that you may find useful are Emphasis and Strong.** Emphasis by default italicizes the text, and Strong bolds the text. However, they create different code than Italic or Bold, and this code is interpreted by Text-to-Speech (TTS) software differently than Italic and Bold. TTS software is used to read your ebook aloud to the user, though few ebook devices have this option. (Some older Kindles do, and there are apps available for Windows, Android, and iOS.)

In theory, Emphasis (`<em>`) tells the TTS reader to emphasize the text, as in “Get out—*Now!*”; Italic (`<i>`) is used for foreign words, interior dialogue, titles of books, and so on, and is read in a normal tone.

Similarly, Strong (`<strong>`) is used to bold text and is pronounced more forcefully by the TTS editor than Emphasis. You might use it, for example, in “The sign said ‘**Danger—Keep Out!**’”

Now, I say “in theory” for two reasons: 1) some TTS software is programmed to emphasize all italicized text, which defeats your efforts; and 2) in HTML5, `<strong>` no longer means “strong emphasis” but now simply means “important”. So it all depends on how the TTS software is programmed. That said, it certainly doesn’t hurt to put in the code for those TTS readers that are programmed as expected.

Emphasis and Strong (or Bold) can be used together to create emphasized Bold Italic text. They can also be further controlled through classes when you create your ebook in Sigil. This is covered in “Advanced Formatting.”

## Fonts

When you export to HTML, and your styles are translated into CSS, each style will specify which font you used for that style; this is called a font-family attribute. However, ebook devices are limited in the fonts they have installed, no two devices have the same fonts installed, and thus most are not able to display the font your code indicates. The result is that ebooks have been developed based on the user selecting which font they wish to read your ebook in, chosen from among their device’s or app’s options, rather than the font you wrote your book in.

**Amazon no longer want font-family attributes included at all in Kindle files** because this can interfere with the user’s ability to choose their preferred font. **Consequently, regardless of which font you use, you will delete this information when you build your ebook. Choosing a font for its look is therefore pointless.** With ePubs the same principle applies.

For ease of use, **I format my manuscripts in Times New Roman** because it contains recognized text effects and the Windows-1252 character set, both discussed below.

If it is essential that your ebook display more than one font, or a specific font, that font can be embedded in your ebook. Font embedding is covered in “Advanced Formatting.”

## Text Effects

**Digital devices in general will recognize Italic, Bold, Superscript, Subscript, and Strike-through text effects.** All other text effects cannot be read and will be converted to Regular text. This includes Double Strike-through, Shadow, Outline, Emboss, Engrave, Small Caps, All Caps, Hidden Text, Horizontal Scaling, Raised Text, and Lowered Text.



**Underline is now a special case as the code for it (<u>) has been deprecated (rendered obsolete) in ePub code. To create underlined text you now must create a character style.** Creating a new character style for Underline is covered in “Advanced Formatting.”

(Although the code for Underline will still be read by pretty much every ereader out there, using <u> will cause your ePub to fail validation, an essential step to putting your ebook on sale.)

If you need underlined text that will not easily be found without later digging through your manuscript line by line, use Word’s Underline feature for now so as to create an easily found bit of code, but know that it will have to be replaced later.

**Both Superscript and Subscript will cause odd line spacing in ebooks,** and thus the trend is to use them only when necessary, such as in mathematical concepts. So instead of writing “1<sup>st</sup>” one simply writes “1st”. If you have an AutoCorrect option set to change ordinals to superscript, I recommend you turn it off.

## Text Characters

Amazon have focused on languages that use the Latin alphabet. This is why you will find on the Kindle Direct Publishing website a directive to use only Latin-1 characters. This is actually a bit misleading since **Kindle books will in fact read all characters found in the Windows-1252 character set** (Fig. 1.7), which incorporates Latin-1 and also the subsets Basic Latin, General Punctuation, and a handful of characters from Latin Extended-B. Windows-1252 is also known as Western European (Windows).

Fig. 1.7

