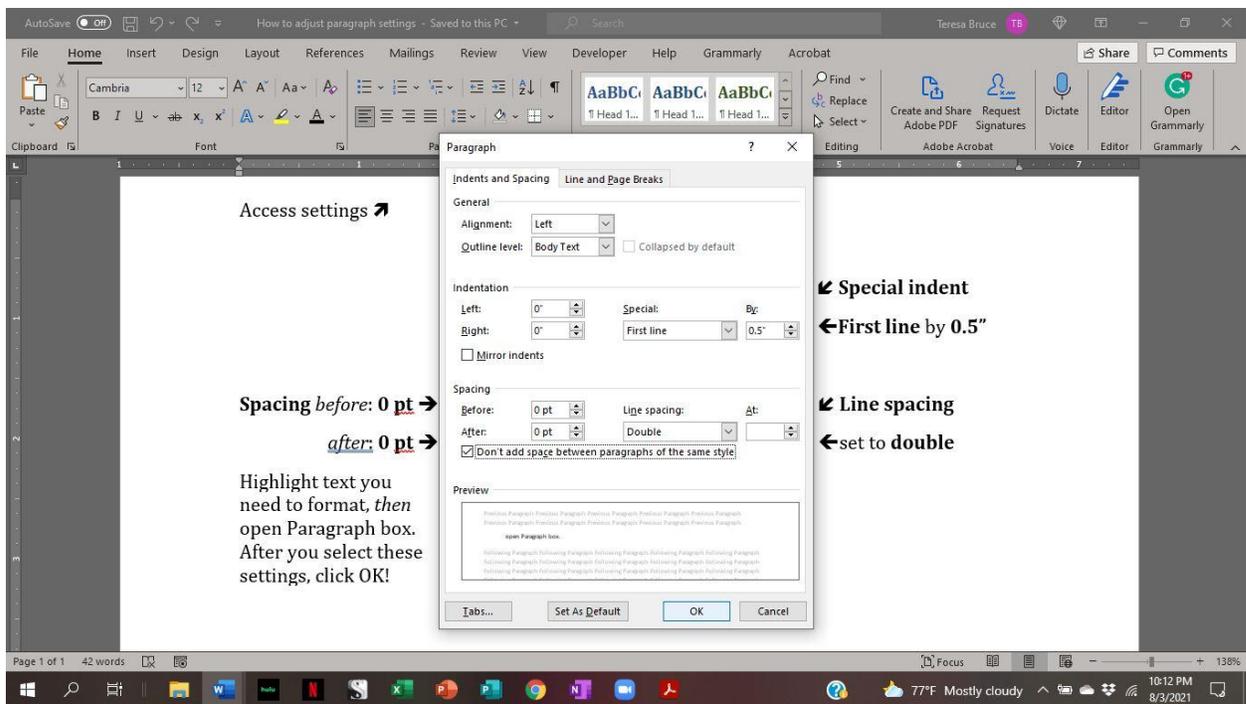
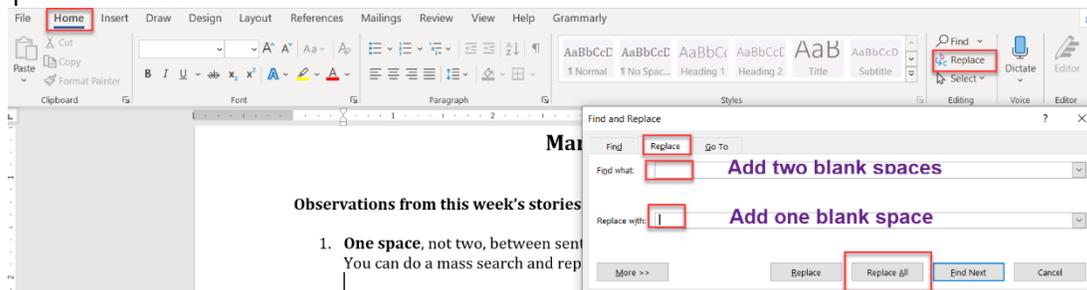


1. **Story format.** It is best to get in the habit of indenting your paragraphs and not using the block style with an extra line between paragraphs. I don't know of any publishers or magazines that use this format as a standard for submissions.

You can create double-spaced, indented paragraphs *without extra line spaces* by selecting the paragraph drop-down menu and adjusting the options.



2. **One space** - One space, not two, between sentences, always and forever, since well before the 1990s. The same rule applies to the one and only space after a colon. You can do a mass search and replace using the MS Word replace feature.



3. **Repetition.** We have at least one million words in the English language, so we don't need to repeat words in the same or nearby sentences. Make use of a thesaurus for help.

*I moved to South Florida, and then, I moved to Wisconsin.
I moved to South Florida, and then, I relocated to Wisconsin.*

4. **Numbers.** Use words to spell out all numbers below 101, including ages, and use numerals for (almost) everything 101 and above.

*I bought six new books.
I'll add those to my collection of 600.
My class has thirty-two students.
My hometown has only 400 people.*

5. **Abbreviations.** Using abbreviations for states, types of roads, etc., is correct, but we are writers, and words are our currency. I strongly encourage you to words over abbreviations whenever possible.

I turned onto Sixtieth Street and made it to Jasmine Avenue before I ran out of gas.

6. **Action verbs.** Try, try, try to use verbs that show action rather than relying on *am, is, was, and were*.

*We were giving away our furniture.
We gave away our furniture.*

*I am walking to school.
I walk to school.*

7. **Compound words.** Check compound words to see if they are two separate words, hyphenated, or one word—*backyard, front yard, in-depth*. You can type the word(s) in question into an online search engine followed by the words *Merriam* and *Webster* to see the current status of such words or phrases. The way you learned to spell certain words may not be the way they are currently spelled.