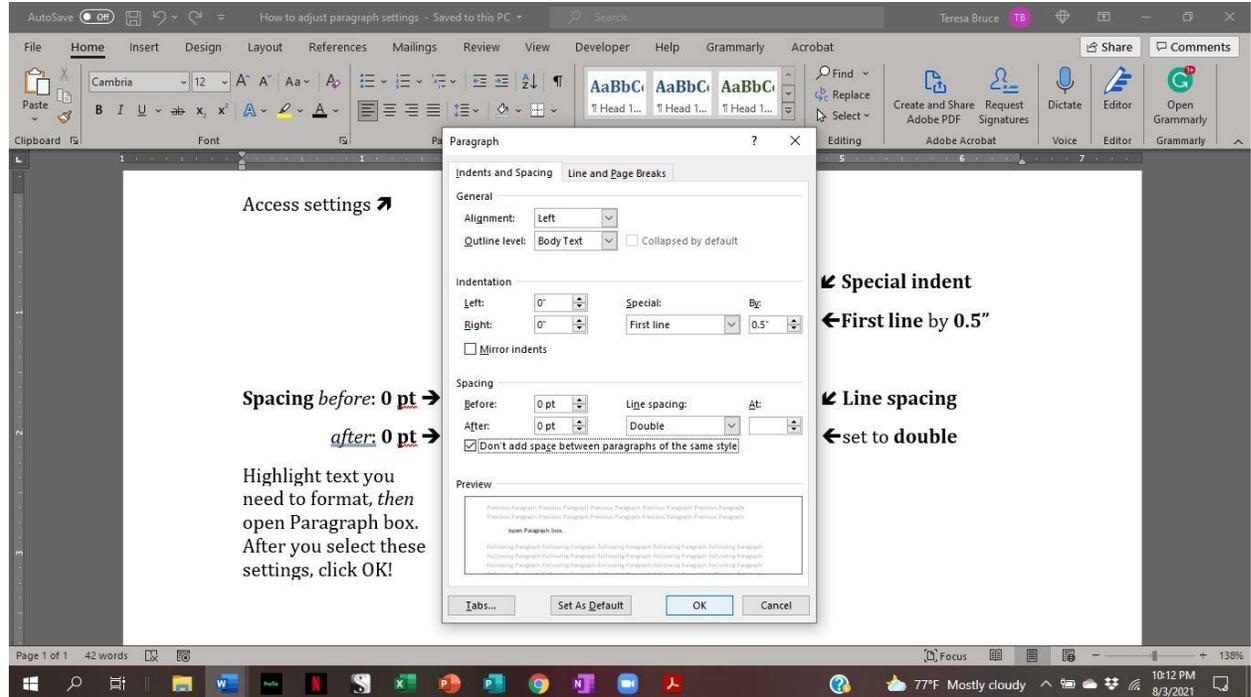


Story Notes based on Barbara Gardner's story, "Water, Water Everywhere and Not a Drop to Drink":

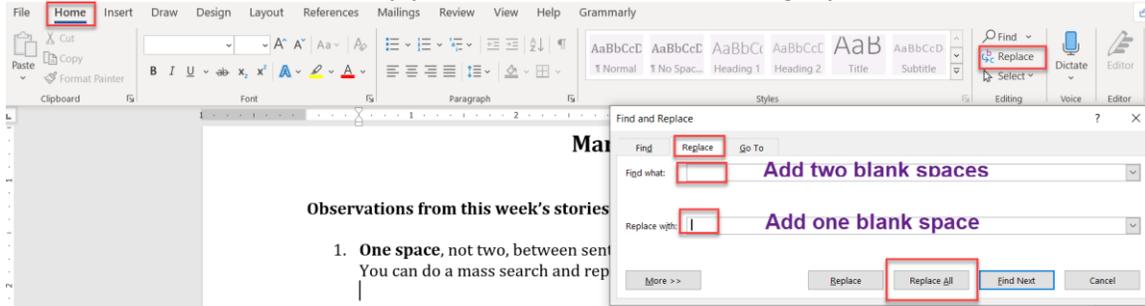
1. **Create a personal editing checklist.** Use these story notes as a basis to build a personal editing checklist. Add other items you often overlook and use these sheets to check your future stories *before* submitting them for review. Included a blank editing checklist that you can fill in and add to.
2. **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.

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



Also, make sure to use a black or dark gray font color. *Experts* say a lighter gray is easier on the eyes online, but for people like us with older eyes, the more contrast the better.

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



- Page numbers.** Insert page numbers. It makes your story easier to discuss. (Use your word processor's toolbar to access the *insert* feature for placing page numbers in the document header or footer.)
- Interior monologue.** Italicize interior thought and put it in the present tense. *Why are they doing that? It looks so scary.*
- 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.*
- Adverbs.** Mark Twain's take on adverbs is, "If you see an adverb, kill it." Adverbs are valid and useful at times, but they are overused, mostly to prop up a weak verb. A strong, well-chosen verb tends to eliminate the need for an adverb. My rule is: reach for an adverb only *after* you've decided there isn't a better verb that does the job.
- Sentence structure.** Vary your sentence structure. Move away from your favorite. If you begin almost every sentence with the subject followed by a verb, add an opening or closing clause or phrase. *I went to the mall after lunch. After lunch, I went to the mall.*
- Sentence length.** Vary your sentence lengths as well as their structures. Too many long sentences in a row tire the reader, but too many short ones may become singsongy. Variety improves impact. *I went to the mall after lunch. I bought five new pairs of shoes. I went to the mall after lunch and bought five new pairs of shoes.*

10. **Time.** Use four digits to show time, *1:00 p.m.*, not *1 p.m.*

11. **a.m., p.m.** These designations use lowercase letters and periods.