

### Story Notes based on Norma Beasley's story, "The Starfish Rule"

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. I included a blank editing checklist you can fill in and add to.
2. **Quotation Marks with Long Quotations.** - When you have large amounts of quoted material or lengthy dialogue from one speaker extending beyond one paragraph, open the quotation marks before the first word but do not close the quotation at the end.

Place open quotation marks before the first word of all subsequent paragraphs.

When you reach the last paragraph of the quote, place closed quotations after the final word/punctuation mark.

This can be confusing. Maybe seeing an example will help.

Here is what a portion of a story I wrote called "Bolting Toward the Edge" would look like when quoted in a document:

"At one point, there's a lull when the medical team isn't rushing around. The noise around me dims, and a blanket of silence falls over me. I feel quiet inside. Why, I'm not sure, but I feel calm.

"I see everything around me from a distance, but I'm not afraid. I wonder, *Am I going to live, or am I going to die?* I don't know the answer, but I am okay either way. I am more curious about how this will turn out for me.

"The moment is interrupted by another trip to somewhere to have some other test done. That perspective doesn't return, but the feeling stays with me."

You see the open quote at the beginning of the text and others at the start of each paragraph. There are no closed quotation marks until the end of the last paragraph.

3. **Block quotations** – Another way to handle large sections of quoted material or dialogue is to use *block quotations*. When using this option, single space, indent the entire section of text, and use quotation marks *only* when dialogue is involved.

Here is what a portion of a story I wrote called “Bolting Toward the Edge” would look like when being quoted in block form:

I still feel tight, on edge, but I breathe deeply, taking in the comingled scents of horse, grass, and manure, telling myself, *You’re okay. Relax.*

Ed comes back, hoists me onto PK, and I begin to cry.

“Aw, you’re good,” he says, patting my leg. “Just walk PK, cool him off, and we’ll go for a nice ride, okay?” With that, he speeds off on Flash.

PK breathes hard, snorts, and refuses to walk. He takes two steps, stops, shakes his head.

I cry harder, feeling alone and scared without Mark.

PK begins trotting, bouncing me in the saddle. I try to stop him, but he picks up speed. I yell for Ed, pull on the reins, but PK runs even faster. I scream and sob, try to hold on but soon lose the reins, and grab his mane as he bolts toward the barn.

There are no quotation marks except for those needed to offset the dialogue. This is a good method to use if you are quoting a large portion of text.

4. **Ordinal numbers** – An ordinal is a number that represents an item’s position in a sequence, such as *second, nineteenth, or fiftieth*. When the number represented is less than 101, use words to write these ordinal numbers.

When the number exceeds one hundred, use a numeral followed by *st, nd, rd, or th* in lowercase letters. For example:

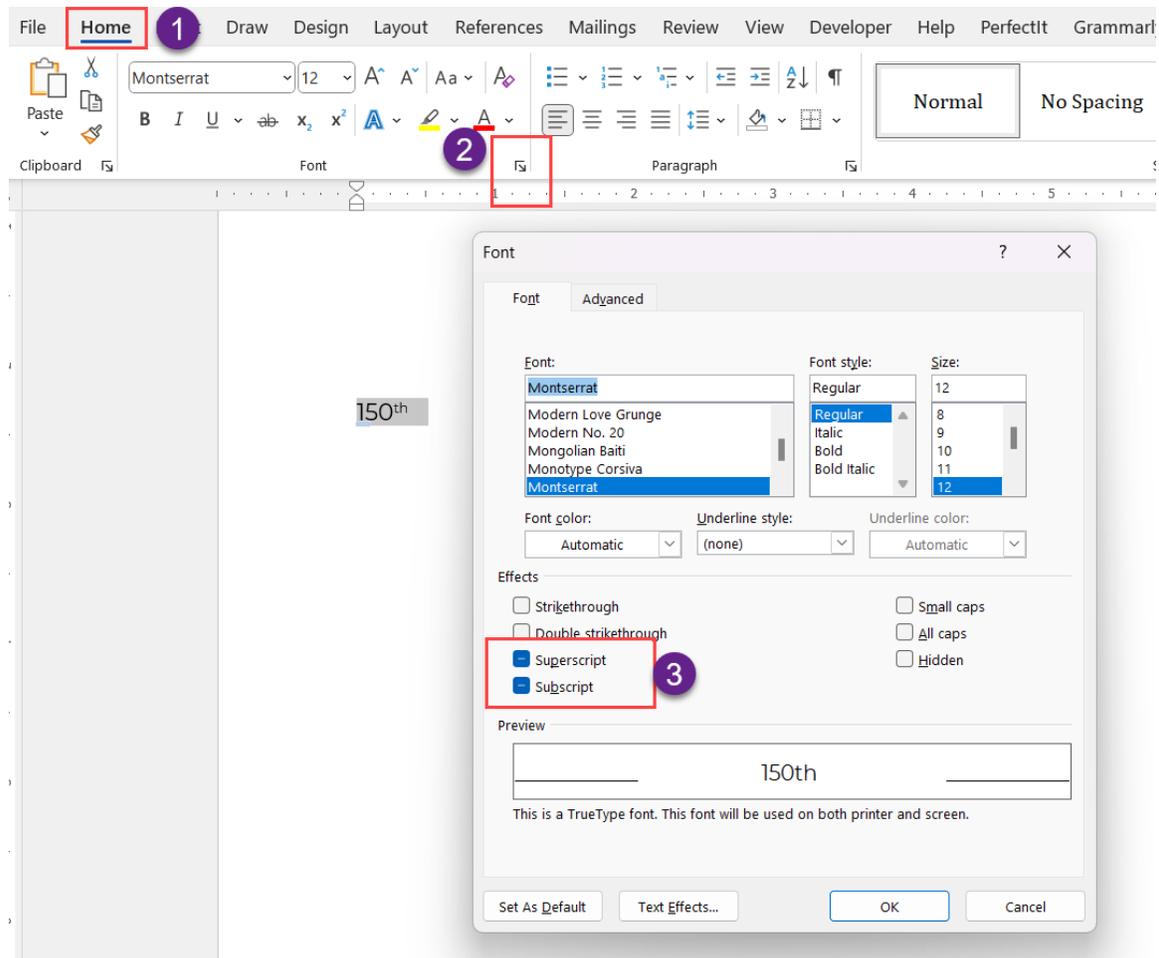
*the second grade*  
*the 121st race*  
*the 499th customer*

Microsoft Word's default is the superscript the *st*, *nd*, *rd*, and *th*, meaning these two letters are raised in a much smaller font, contrary to the *Chicago Manual of Style's* recommendation.

*the 121<sup>st</sup> race*  
*the 505<sup>th</sup> customer*

To remove the superscript, highlight the number and expand the Font section on the toolbar using the downward-facing arrow at the bottom right of each section, which is officially called the Dialog Box Launcher.

When the font block opens, uncheck the superscript and subscript options. You can also change the default in Word through the Options → Proofing section, but this default is useful when creating footnotes.



5. **Italicize letters when used as letters.** – When you're using letters of the alphabet as letters, use italics rather than quotation marks.

the letter *z*

*tattletale* has four *t*'s

a capital *W*

make sure to dot your *i*'s and cross your *t*'s