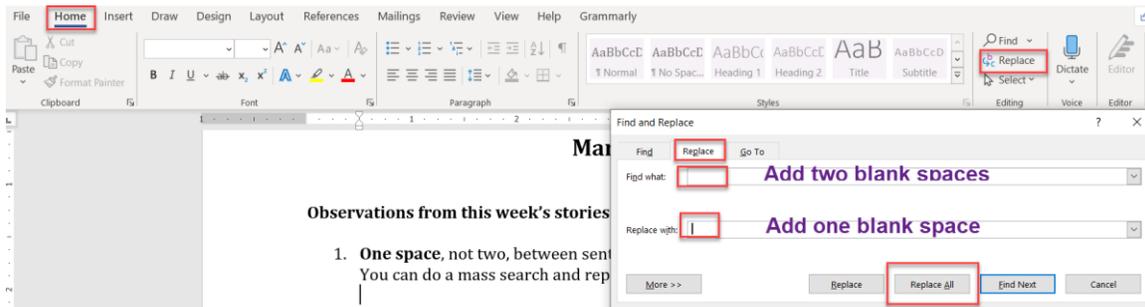


Story Notes based on Dar Lamb's story, "Never Too Old to Compete in the Olympics"

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. **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 also applies to a colon, only one space after the colon.



3. **All capital letters.** Do *not* use all capital letters for titles, sentences, emphasis, and other reasons. It should not be used as a design feature of your stories. All capital letters equate to shouting on the page. It may call attention to your writing, but it's often for the wrong reason. The exceptions include abbreviations in all caps or the rare occurrence when you briefly shout in dialogue, such as "SNAKE" or "LOOK OUT." You do not often see all caps in regular books. If you have to have it, use it sparingly.
4. **Title length.** Be careful with the length of your titles. Generally, titles should be about five words or fewer and contain strong nouns and verbs. Sometimes, if your title is too long, it tells too much of your story. Don't allow your title to give away the story's punchline, so to speak.
5. **Interior monologue.** Italicize interior thought and put it in the present tense. *Why are they doing that?* Save quotation marks for actual speech.
6. **a.m., p.m.** These designations use lowercase letters and periods.

- 7. Italics for emphasis.** Use italics for emphasis rather than quotation marks or underlining. I want to go, *now*. It's not incorrect to use quotation marks, but it's old-fashioned, as is underlining, which was done for manuscripts written with typewriters to indicate that typesetters should use italics.
- 8. Compound words.** Check compound words to see if they are two separate words, hyphenated, or one word—*backyard, front yard, red-light*. You can type the word(s) in question into an online search engine followed by the words *Merriam-Webster* to see the current status of such words or phrases.
- 9. 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.*

- 10. Conjunctive adverbs.** Words such as *however, therefore, moreover, nevertheless, consequently,* and *furthermore* are conjunctive adverbs, meaning they link two independent sentences or clauses together. It's not important to know what they are called, but you need to know how to correctly punctuate them.

If you are connecting two complete sentences, a semicolon is used before the conjunctive adverb, and a comma is used afterward. If the conjunctive adverb is at the beginning of the sentence, it should be followed by a comma. If it's in the middle of a single sentence and not connecting two independent clauses, set it off with commas.

*I was exhausted; however, I stayed up late watching television.
Therefore, I slept through my alarm and missed the meeting.
My boss didn't say anything, however, about my absence.*