

Chapter 12

SOME COMMON TYPING AND FORMAT PROBLEMS: A FINAL CHECKLIST

The graduate office will check for these problems (among others) and will require corrections of errors found.

Insufficient margins. The left margin must be at least one and a half inches; the others, at least one inch. A margin is a blank space around the text going out to the edge of the paper, in which nothing may appear, not even page numerals (see next item).

Page numerals that fall outside the margins. Arrange your pages so that the page numerals are not in the margin. When your page numerals are at the page's top, show the page numeral one-inch down and at or just within the right-hand margin, and then begin the first line of text one double-space below that. The same principle follows for page numerals at page bottom: place the last line of text one double-space above the margin, so the page numeral can fall at or just above the margin line. Format your page number "header" or "footer" carefully, paying attention to position on the page (within margins), consistent type size and style, and appropriate distance from text.

Page numerals that are not in sequence. We advise you to learn your word processor's method of automatic pagination. If your work was more than one file, be sure you set the page number sequencing correctly.

Page numbers listed on the table of contents, list of figures, or list of tables that do not match the text's actual page numbering. Additions or deletions to the text will shift where pages start and end. Because of this, unless your word processor uses

automatic pagination of the tables, prepare the pages that list page numbers after the text is entirely prepared.

More than one type style used. All textual pages, front-matter and back-matter pages, page numerals, and headings must use the same type style. All pages in the front (from title page until the start of the text) and the back pages such as those for bibliography and appendixes must use the same type style as the text.

Inadequate checking for spelling errors. (Be especially sure you have spelled and typed correctly all names on the signatory page!)

Inconsistent typographical format in chapter and section/subsection headings. Consistency includes type size, capital/small letters; underlining/italic/plain type; spacing with regard to the text; and placement on the page. All chapters and any appendixes should use the same formatting system.

Columns of words or numbers that are not lined up properly. Pay special attention to correct tabulation of the page number references that appear in the table of contents and lists of tables and figures (see 5.1.6). The same principle holds for information presented in tables: columns of words are lined up with a left-justified tab, while columns of numbers are properly lined up with a right-justified tab or decimal tab. Headings should have the same justification as the material in the columns below the headings. Correct examples are shown here:

| Left-justified | Right-justified | Decimal tab |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Philosophy | 8 | 31.10 |
| Phrenology | 9 | 900.00 |
| Poetry | 10 | 2.80 |
| Prestidigitation | 11 | 69.85 |

Learn the proper use of these different kinds of tabs. Never attempt to use the space-bar to line up your columns in word processing; spacing from the printer seldom reproduces exactly what the screen visualizes.

Inconsistent cross-references. Section and chapter headings as shown in the table of contents, and names of figures and tables on the list of figures and list of tables, should match the actual headings and names in the body of the paper. (The only exception is that quite long entries may be appropriately shortened in the table of contents or the lists, as explained in Chapter 5). Similarly, references in the text such as “see Fig. 3” should match what they are pointing to; for example, this citation is correct for “Fig. 3” but doubly incorrect for “Figure iii.”

Inadequate rereading for errors and inconsistencies in text and both front and back matter. Read through one more time; perhaps have an acquaintance read as well. In addition, check by pretending to use the thesis the way you might use an actual publication: look up some chapters from the table of contents, and some figures or tables from the lists of figures and tables, to see that their titles are correct and that page numbers are indicated correctly; while reading the text, look up some of the citations in your bibliography or footnotes/endnotes to see that names are exact and numbers and dates match; follow some of your cross references to see that they indicate what they should correctly; and so forth. These are some of the checks that the graduate office will perform!

And the biggest “error” of all . . .

Preparing the final copies prematurely.

All the way from final drafts and committee/college approvals through to the reading by the graduate office, changes will be required. Do not waste a lot of time in extensive formatting before your text is close to final form. Above all, do not print it on the thesis paper before all approvals have been given. If you prepare final copies too soon, you’ll most likely just throw away the expensive paper and waste the printing and photocopying.