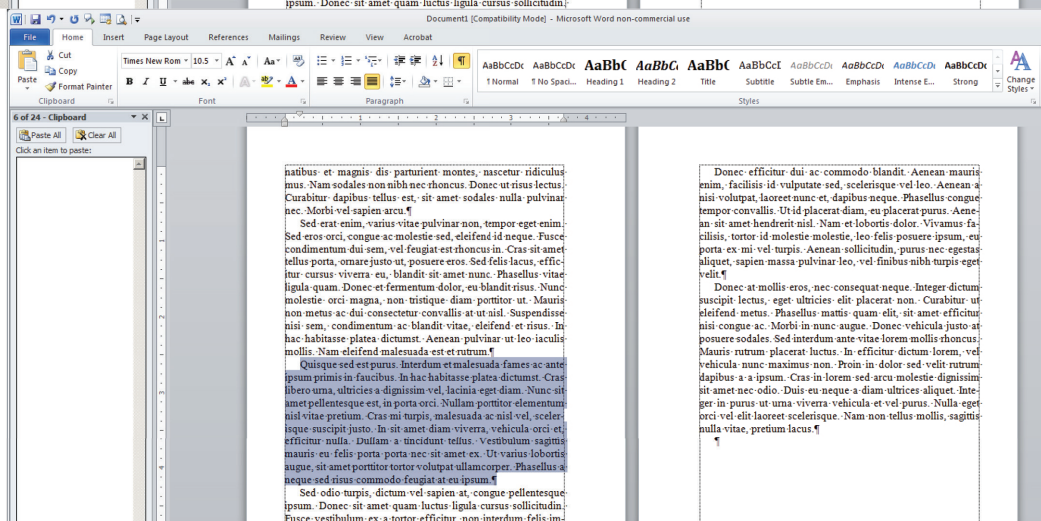
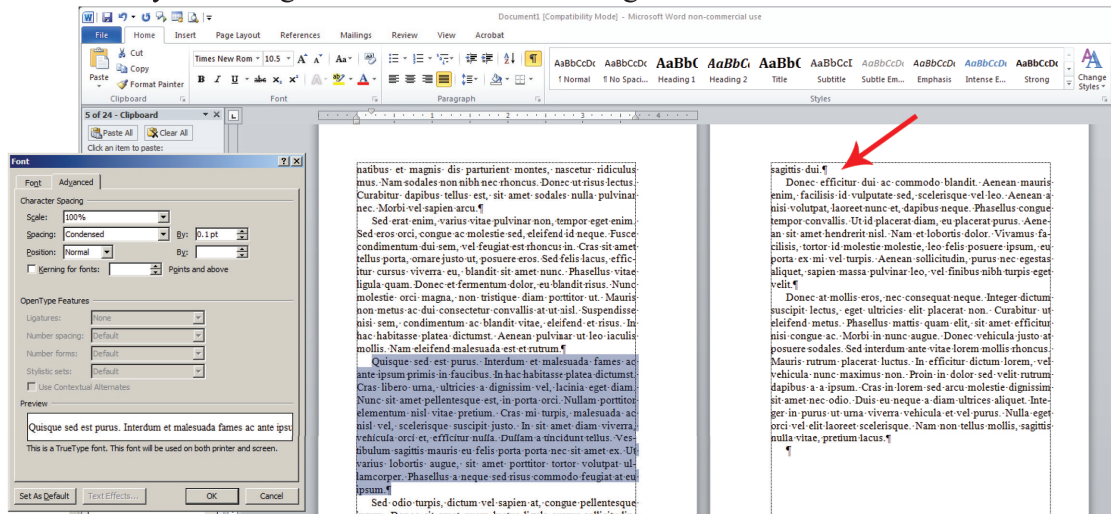


12/14

Widows & Orphans & Hyphens—Oh My!

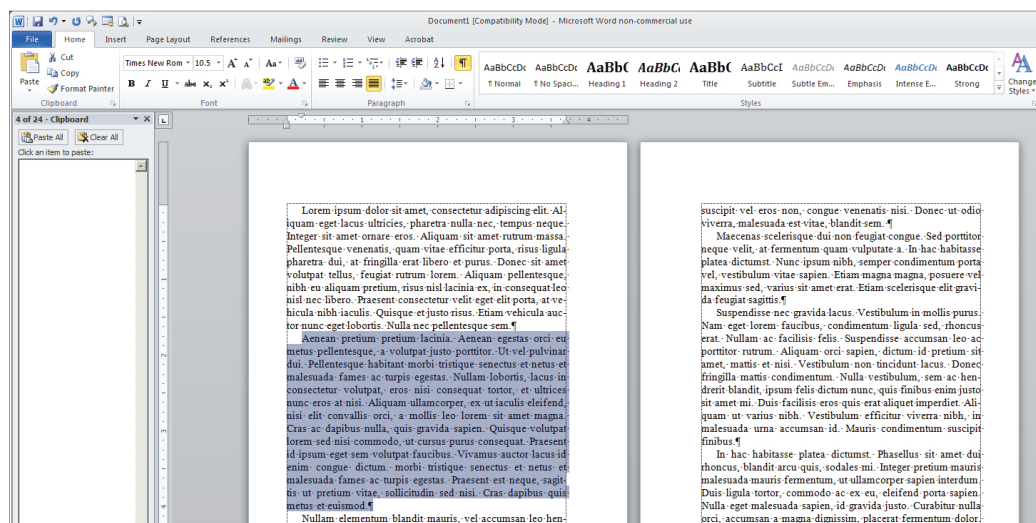
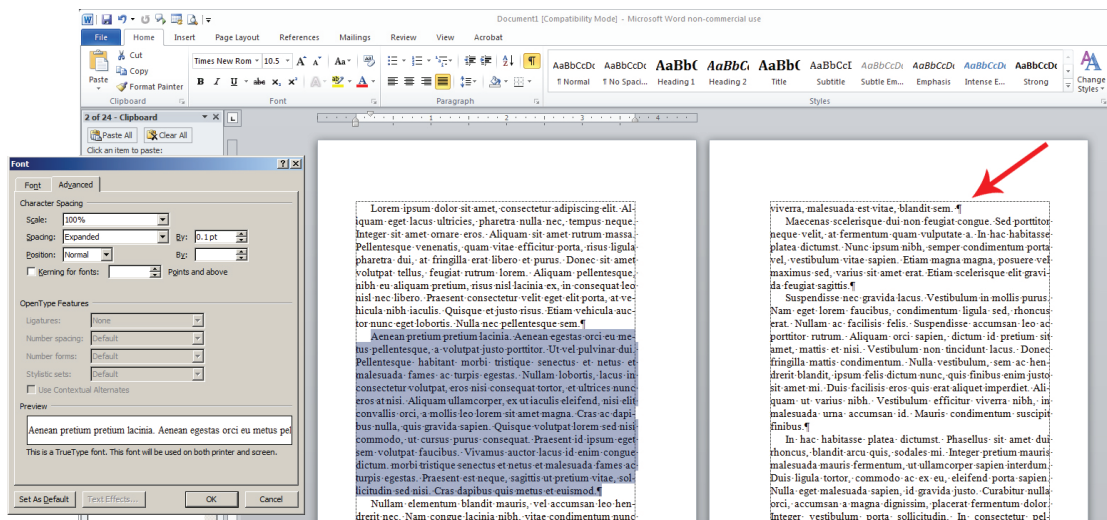
Removing widows and orphans—widows—should be done, manually. Word's Widow and Orphan Control will lengthen or shorten the line count to eliminate them. While there are designers today who have no problem with longer or shorter pages—uneven vertical alignment—within the more traditional aesthetics of book design it is considered vulgar, as is scaling, which is also used to control both widows and orphans, and end-of-line hyphenation.

Somewhere before the widow, you can either remove a line to pull the widow back to the bottom of the page, or add a line to push another line of text from the bottom of one page to the top of the next. Sometimes you may have to go back quite a few pages, and sometimes you might create a widow somewhere after the widow you've fixed. This can be done by increasing or decreasing tracking or letter spacing: depending on the program you are working in, this could be done to a word, a line or an entire paragraph. Or you can place the cursor in front of or within the last word of a line and hit [shift] [enter]: this is called a soft return. A soft return is also handy for fixing lines that are either too tight or too loose.



Pulling back the widow

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Pushing down the widow

These are fairly simple examples, and Word doesn't offer as many adjustments as a desktop publishing program. However, very good work can be done in Word, arguably better than with cold metal type.

Using hyphens and soft returns is fairly straightforward. To add a little space between the words of the first line and at the same time close up the wide spaces in the second line, I used a soft return:

window towards the back of the entry, you at last
come to the conclusion that such an idea, however
wild, might not be altogether unwarranted.

But what most puzzled and confounded you was a
long, limber, portentous, black mass of something
hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue,
dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast.

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The cursor was placed before the final *a*, hold the shift key down and hit enter. This forces the line to break before the *a*.

tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in December. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet for Nantucket had already sailed, and that no way of reaching that place would offer, till the following

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Above, the first line is too open and the second line is tiny bit tighter. The cursor was placed between the to *p*'s in *disappointed* and I typed in a hyphen. Word accepted the adjustment, but sometimes it doesn't: then you can adjust the letter spacing to make it fit:

representing a tall straight jet of misty spray, and these words underneath—"The Spouter Inn:—Peter Coffin."

Coffin?—Spouter?—Rather ominous in that particular connexion, thought I. But it is a common name in Nantucket, they say, and I suppose this Peter here is an emigrant from there. As the light looked so

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Top left—the first line is too widely spaced. Inserting a hyphen into *particular* did not cause Word to hyphenate the word as it did in the previous example, top right. Bottom left, I selected the letters before the hyphen, and condensed the spacing by 0.1 pt (see illustration on first page). Lower right—the compression is not too bad, and the words are better spaced.

harpooneer to-night; he's come to anchor somewhere—come along then; *do* come; *won't* ye come?"

I considered the matter a moment, and then up stairs we went, and I was ushered into a small room, cold as a clam, and furnished, sure enough, with a prodigious bed, almost big enough indeed for any four harpooneers to sleep abreast.

"There," said the landlord, placing the candle on a crazy old sea chest that did double duty as a wash-stand and centre table; "there, make yourself comfortable now, and good night to ye." I turned round from eyeing the bed, but he had disappeared.

exclaimed "I vum it's Sunday—you won't see that harpooneer to-night; he's come to anchor somewhere—come along then; *do* come; *won't* ye come?"

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Only rarely is no hyphenation used. As shown on the left, it produces very uneven word spacing. Applying hyphenation to the document—in Word it is a global effect—the word spacing is much more even, example on right.

There are some traditional do's, don'ts, and considerations: Do hyphenate justified text. Don't have more than two consecutive end-of-line hyphens. Don't hyphenate the last word of a page, especially before a page turn. Consider hyphenating text set ragged right. Consider hyphenating capitalized names. Divide words between syllables; preference to prefixes and suffixes make good divisions. Divide hyphenated words at the existing hyphen. The hyphen belongs with the first part of the word.

Workflow: generally permit hyphenation (most programs let you define some settings, e.g. the number of consecutive hyphens—choosing settings that produce fewer hyphens is a good place to start), then look for widows. Go back through the book looking for lines that are too tight or too loose. Check for hyphens at the end of pages. Double check for widows.

This must seem excessive if you've never done any of this before. Remember, anyone reading your book has read at least one book before. Your reader has a sense of what a book looks like, whether he or she could put it in words or not. Therefore, the reader will be judging your book not just on the writing, but also the appearance.

Each method above takes a few seconds, perhaps a minute or two, so if one doesn't work another might. A complaint might be made that could be automated, and in InDesign much of it can be using GREP and scripting. However, that is often suggested to the professional who, presumably gets professionally written and edited copy to set. Most of work with text that is not the professional. Going through the book several times, looking for tight or loose lines, bad end-of-line hyphenation, and fixing widows, gives the formatter/typesetter (aka you) the opportunity to find mistakes. The also explains why good formatting takes more than ten minutes—as one CS member insisted on a forum post.

I find that working on problems should be done in waves. Don't try to find everything in one pass. If, as you are looking for newspaper names to italicize, for example, you find that you have a final period outside a closing quote, correct it, but also write down the kind of error, and look for it in a separate wave. It is too easy to get distracted and forget what you were looking for—leaving it for the reader to find!

Unless you are fighting a deadline, I would suggest giving yourself several days away from your book after you've formatted it. Come back to it with fresh eyes, and look at it as a PDF, not in the program you used to format it. With a different desktop, you will see things differently and you are more likely to catch things you missed. And you'll see things differently and with better comprehension when you review the printed proof.

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