Formatting Text Files in Microsoft Word

For an explanation of why you do these steps, or for more about macros, see the "formatting" page.

Copy the text you want and paste it into Word. (You can skip the legal info in the Gutenberg texts. It's perfectly legal to do it, as long as you remove all of it, which is easy to do.)

Tip: An easy way to select large blocks of text is to click just before where you want to begin highlighting but DO NOT hold down the mouse button. Next, scroll down to where you want to end highlighting. While holding down the Shift key, click just after where you want to highlight to. Now everything between your two clicks is highlighted. This is much faster than holding the mouse and scrolling down to highlight, when doing a large bit of text.

Select the page layout. Set margins at 0.5", leave a binding allowance, and if you're planning to print half-size, be sure you've selected the correct paper size. (It's often called "statement", or you can define your own size that is 5.5" wide and 8.5" high.)

[If you are **making a macro**, begin recording here. To find macros, click *Tools/Macro*, then record.
If you've already done this step and **want to play your macro**, skip down to "To play a macro later".]

1. Select all text (Click Edit/Select all), and make sure it stays selected through the following steps. You can always select it all again if it comes un-highlighted.

2. Fix Font. (Click Format/Font). I like Times New Roman, 11 point. Also 1.1 line spacing, but I'm not sure if you can do that in Word. If not, regular line spacing is fine, too.

3. Fix Text Alignment. (Click Format/Paragraph). In "General/Alignment" box, select "Justified". This evens up both edges of the text. Leave this box open for the next step.

4. Fix Paragraph Indentation. (Click Format/Paragraph). In "Indentation/Special" box, select "First Line". In the "By" box, type in either 0.125 (1/8"), or 0.25 (1/4"). Click ok.

To Remove Extra Hard Returns:

5. Click "Edit/Replace". In this box, click the "more" button (this expands the box, unless it's already been done.)

6. Click in the "Find what" box, so the cursor is there. Then click the "special" button and select "Paragraph mark" twice. The "Find what" box now says "^p^p".

7. Click in the "Replace with" box, so the cursor is there. Then click the "special" button and select "Tab character". The "Replace with" box now says "^t". Next click "Replace all".
    [Each time you click "Replace all", 2 boxes will pop up. In these click 'yes' and 'ok'.]

8. In the "Find what" box, change it to only one paragraph mark, so it now says "^p". In the "Replace with" box, delete what it says and instead type in one space with the spacebar. Next click "Replace all".

9. In the "Find what" box, delete what it says and select "Tab character" so it now says "^t". In the "Replace with" box, delete the space (don't forget that step!) and then select "Paragraph mark" so it now says "^p". Next click "Replace all". Now you can close the Replace box.

[If you were making a macro, stop recording now.
To play a macro later, place cursor at beginning of text, then click *Tools/Macro/Run*, and find your macro.]

    Finishing touches - Many of these are ***optional***, but doing them can make your book look just that much neater. (This order works well, so you won't have to go back and redo anything.)

    * Arrange the title page: Larger font, centered, remove indentation from this page (select the text on that page and change the amount of indentation to "0").

    * Add page numbers: Click "Insert/Page Numbers". You can uncheck the box "show numbers on first page" so there's not one on the title page. Select top or bottom of page, then center or outside. (Outside will make them alternate for each page. So evens are on the left and odds are on the right.)

    * Arrange a table of contents: I usually skip this step, unless I am putting more than one book into a volume (like putting four Bobbsey Twins stories into the same book). I put the title of each book within that volume and which page it begins on. Arrange this page, minus the page numbers, arrange the rest of the book, then come back and enter the page numbers last.

    * Fix italics: Click "Edit/Find" to search for underscores (_these thingies_). Anything _inside_ the underscore can be italicized, then the underscores can be deleted.

    * **Add any pictures:** Usually I don't do this, but occasionally it is a good idea. For instance, if you want to add a map, or a graphic from a science text, (or if you just really like the pictures).

    * Make chapter titles bold/centered: Can often use "Edit/Find" to search for the word "chapter" to find them easily. I highlight them, then do the following: make bold, center, and un-indent (change indentation to "0"). You can make another macro to do these steps for you.

    * Arrange chapters: You don't need to make them begin on a new page (many real books don't). Just leave 2 blank lines after end of last chapter. One blank line after each chapter title also looks nice. Arrange them so that a chapter doesn't begin at the very bottom of a page. I try to make sure that there are at least 3 or 4 lines of the new chapter on a page (besides the title and blank line). If there isn't that much, I move it to the next page. ***Hint*** - If you're binding more than one book together, make sure that each new book begins on a right hand (odd numbered) page.

    * Go back to the table of contents: (if you have one) and enter the page numbers.

    You're now ready to print!