

Writing: The Final Step

*Creating an Attractive  
Presentation*

Virginia Pong

Also by Virginia Pong

***Writing: A Sixth Grade Program***

***Times and Time Again***

A program that eliminates student calculation errors of multiplication facts in numerical operations.

***Waiting for Waif, Educational Supplement***

Instructional material and suggestions for use when reading the children's novel *Waiting for Waif* in the classroom.

By A.V. Pong

***Waiting for Waif***  
***Overnight Delivery***  
***Daily Driver***



Cover photo taken by the author at the Pacific County Courthouse, South Bend WA.

*Proper Manuscript Format* by William Shunn, reprinted by permission of William Shunn.

Writing: The Final Step, Creating an Attractive Presentation  
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Presented at the 51st California Association for the Gifted annual conference, 2013.

ISBN-13: 978-1482053784

ISBN-10: 1482053780

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## *Writing: The Final Step*

Producing a respectable final presentation is still a needed skill. A neat, clear, and well presented document makes everyone look good—student, teacher, parent, company or employer. The days of real carbon copies are long gone and electronic wizardry has removed the scissors, glue and tape from the term “cut and paste,” so take the challenge and use computer technology to transform your written work into a great looking book, booklet or flyer.

Some say the longest journey starts with a single step, others, that the hardest step to exercising is the one out the front door. Truly, getting started is hard enough, but finishing something already started can be even harder.

Design and layout of a final product takes time, but before dismissing it as not worth the effort consider the following. How much nicer is a gift when it is wrapped in beautiful paper and lovely ribbon. How much of fine dining is white table cloths and linen napkins, fine china, silver and crystal place settings, and finally the artistic presentation of the food on its plate. Even photographs as they hang for judging are considered on the basis of originality, execution, and presentation—presentation including such factors as size, matting and frame.

On a personal note, an individual can spend an enormous amount of time “wrapping” up in the right clothes, the right hairdo, the right accessories, the right fragrance all with the intent of making a good appearance. So often a lady’s, and perhaps a gentleman’s, first question in response to an invitation or interview is, “What will I wear?”

On a larger note, industry spends many hours and millions of dollars every year in determining the best wrapping for its products, otherwise called packaging. Bottle or box, size and shape, material, color, text...they all affect a potential customer’s interest and ultimate decision to purchase and purchase again. Products are recognized by their packaging. For example, Campbell’s soup cans are well known for their red and white label. It’s what one expects.

Now, before going any further, a few words about practical writing and the ability to produce an attractive and well put together final document. Without it, you may well miss out on something good. A long time county sheriff told me more candidates are dropped from the sheriff’s academy for inability to write a clear and concise report that will stand up in court than for any other reason. A senior English major at a California State University was in panic mode after enrolling in the required English “formula class” (that’s diagramming and grammar) because it had a fail rate of 40% and she was not doing well. The University of Washington has specifically created a student service to help them write acceptable papers.

Although many employment and university applications are now on line, even there 100 to 250 word essay type answers are required. A recent medical student applicant had many such answers to complete, and knowing these writings stood between her and medical school, she took the time to write, rewrite and rewrite again.

Resumes are still requested both in printed or electronic attachment format. Self employed individuals and small businesses are asked to submit a summary of expertise and services to achieve placement on approved contractor lists of government agencies and other businesses.

But beyond all that, the difference between a manuscript printed on 8½” x 11” paper and a truly finished presentation is immeasurable. It is satisfying, it looks great, it’s impressive, it speaks well for its creator, and it’s an achievement in itself that lends a purpose and an end to the original idea. Only then can one truly say, “It is finished.”

Although there are certain layout guidelines to be followed, at some point the final decisions become a matter of personal preference, but whatever the chosen style, the layout should complement the content and subject matter of the text.

*Writing: The Final Step* is about the final product, about taking a piece of writing already in edited manuscript form and turning it into an attractive creative publication. It is an overview of three types of finished work that are applicable in school, business, personal and community work and therefore does not give detailed step by step instructions in the use of software programs. It’s publication arose from the author’s presentation at the 51st annual state conference of the California Association for the Gifted in 2013.

Originally planned for printing in a smaller size, this book was increased to its present size in order that *Proper Manuscript Format* could be reprinted at the end of the reference section. With the larger page size, margins were increased, lines were justified only on the left and a space was added between paragraphs for easier reading.



## *Equipment*

A wide variety of computer hardware and software is available in brand and type. You will need the use of a computer with appropriate software to set up the digital files and a printer or other method of printing. Add a camera or cell phone if you want your own pictures and for safety, a backup device such as a flash drive. The equipment may be yours or belong to someone else, perhaps a friend, business, school, library or combination thereof.

### Hardware

Computer: desktop, laptop, library, computer lab...

Printer (not a copier): Monochrome or color, Laser or inkjet, Simplex or duplex

Monochrome prints in black only.

Laser print doesn't run when wet.

Simplex prints on one side only.

Camera or cell phone with ability to transfer photographs to computer

Flash drive (thumb drive) for back up or transfer of files. With internet connection you can attach the document to an email and send it to yourself.

Sewing machine, straight stitch. Used only for "Do It Yourself" books.

### Software

Word processing program

Publishing program

Photo editing program if using photographs

PDF writer, convenient at times but not usually necessary

*Word processing program.* Use a word processing program for writing anything longer than a sentence or two and for any major cut and paste revisions to long text. If you are starting major revisions in a publication program, start a second file for the changes so you can get back to where you started if necessary. You can also copy the text from the publication program back into a word processing program until it is reorganized. Much can be done with word processing software but I prefer to copy the text into a publishing program for the final layout.

*Publishing program.* Layout and changes, other than long text, are easier in a publishing program because:

It allows independent placement of separate sections of text or photo on a page.

Changing one section has no effect on the other sections.

Sections can be layered (one section placed on top or in front of another section) such as text over photo.

Sets up a "booklet" document which enables printing in booklet form. The software figures out which page to print where.

*Photo editing program.* If you use photographs, you will want at least a basic photo editing software program with the ability to crop, lighten/darken, and reverse images.

*PDF writer.* A PDF (portable document file) writer is nice but is often not necessary. Should you need one, you can transfer it to a flash drive and borrow someone's computer who has it. It gives you complete control over the page's final appearance. Some office supply stores prefer documents in PDF format but most can and will print from both PDF and word or publisher files.

I use Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher because they are on my computer. There is also a lot of online help for these programs. For photo editing, I use an older version of Microsoft Picture It! because it's quick and easy and I'm used to it. Sometimes I use Irfanview or Paint.net, and occasionally Photoshop. Adobe PDF writer is common but there are other pdf reader/writers, some are free downloads such as the Foxit Software one which I am currently using. It was nice to be able to call their telephone help line.

If you are new to any of these programs, you may be able to find help from a friend or colleague. If your school has a computer lab or offers inservice opportunities, you can find help there. The "Dummies" books or other instructional books are another way of getting started but be sure you get the book for the same version of the software on your computer. Community colleges offer credit and non-credit classes in software. The print shop manager at my favored office supply store offered me many sixty second tips (usually one per visit) as he loaded my files for printing.

Some of the many available freeware (free software) are listed in the Resource section at the end of this book. If you are purchasing software, the previous version is usually considerably less expensive than the newest one.

### Understanding Pages and Sheets

Fold one sheet of standard sheet of 8½" x 11" copy paper in half both ways (the long way and the short way). Cut or tear the sheet along the fold lines to create four equal sheets. Stack these four sheets together and fold them in half along the short dimension. Staple or stitch the sheets together at the fold and you now have a sixteen page booklet. Use only three of the four sheets of paper and you will have a twelve page booklet.

*Book pages.* Write the number one in the center of the first page. Turn the page and number page two and three in the same manner. Continue to the last page which will be sixteen. These are considered book pages. Label the pages as follows:

Page one	Title page
Page two	Blank
Page three	First page of content—text, images, charts
Page fifteen	Last page of content
Page sixteen	Blank

Depending on the length of the text, an “about the author” can go on page sixteen or on a back cover. A simple cover printed on index/card stock makes an excellent cover.

*Sheets.* Book pages are printed on sheets which are then folded together into pages. Each sheet contains four book pages which are not necessarily in consecutive order. Take the booklet you have just made apart and lay out each sheet to see how the pages are laid out on the sheets.

## Booklet

Today's technology allows anyone with a computer and a certain amount of diligence to produce a quality professional looking booklet. Although wallpaper covered chipboard covers can be attractive, so much more is now possible. Once the computer files are set up, additional copies are simple and easy to produce.

### Booklet Assembly and Binding Options

There are several simple ways in which to put pages and cover together. Method of page set up, purpose and distribution of the final copy, and equipment available will influence the one you select.

*Saddle stitched.* The industry name for stapling. This is the simplest and quickest way but it does require a long reach stapler. Staple the pages and the cover together with two staples along the fold line and it's done. Requires document set up in booklet page or sheet page format.

*Spiral binding.* Looks like a spring but requires a coil and a special punch for the holes. It binds single pages and does not require folded sheets. Pages fold back on themselves but offset slightly in vertical direction when fully opened. Excellent binding for manuals or books that must lie flat, but considered "cheap" or unprofessional by many for a regular book. Set up in single page or booklet format.

*Comb binding.* Has thin flat "teeth" that curl in a circle. It requires a machine to punch rectangular holes and then spread the comb to allow insertion of pages. It binds single pages and does not require folded sheets. Pages do not lie flat and do not fold completely back on themselves. It is not used as much as it once was but is still common in school workrooms. Set up document in single page or booklet format.

*Sewn.* Use the longest available straight stitch on any standard sewing machine. Adjust the foot pressure and practice first to get the stitches even. Be sure to practice sewing on four sheets of scrap paper before stitching the finished copy. The stitched book signatures (booklets of sixteen pages) are then assembled into a book. Setting up the document in anything other than booklet page format will be a challenge.

*Duck tape.* Duck brand offers small rolls in a wide variety of colors and designs. Use it for fun to decorate or reinforce the outer spine of stitching or staples.

*The Tree that Never Was: The Odyssey of White Fir* was originally done with twelve pages and a cover. It included a title page, eight text pages containing approximately 1,700 words, and several photographs. It has since been reformatted with color photographs on every page turn of its twenty-eight page full color children's book and emphasizes once again the amazing difference a change in layout can make.

## Methods for Page Set Up

The digital document from which the actual pages of the book will be printed can be set up as either book pages or as the actual sheets that will exit the printer. Both have advantages. In book page format (booklet), the software figures out which book page to print where on which sheet of paper. Sheet format works better if only one page is to be in color.

### *Set up in Publisher—Booklet Page Size in Booklet Format (Pages in Portrait Layout)*

Displays pages in book order. 1, 2, 3...

Page size 5½ x 8½ or smaller will print nicely on 8½ x 11 paper.

### *Set up in Publisher—Sheet Size 8½" x 11" for same result as above (Landscape Layout)*

This layout will look exactly like the printed sheet as it comes from the printer.

Lay them out in the same manner as the booklet sample made earlier.

Convenient for printing only the title page, single sheet, or cover.

### *Set up in Word—Sheet size in landscape, two columns, or text boxes*

Lay them out in the same manner as the booklet sample made earlier.

## Methods for Page Printing

The quickest and simplest way to print is to print from your own computer to your own printer. The only challenge then is to learn how the "Print" window works so as to correctly instruct the printer. Print multiple copies from the digital file or print one copy and then use a copy machine for additional copies.

### *From a publisher program*

Printing as a booklet requires a duplex printer as the pages must be sorted out to print in the correct order.

Print in sheet size either duplex or simplex. If printing one side at a time, re-feed the paper for the second side

(note: some printers do not like to take paper a second time)

### *From a word processing program*

Print in sheet size as duplex or simplex.

### *By someone else*

Email, upload online, or take file on flash drive to an office supply store. Office Max, Office Depot, and Staples all have print/copy departments. Be sure to include printing instructions. Specify type of paper, number of copies, simplex or duplex.

Printing to a pdf file makes the file accessible for printing without the software used to create document.

## Methods for A 5½ x 8½ Booklet Cover

“Don’t judge a book by its cover” is often said but not often done. Like it or not, covers make a tremendous difference and people respond to them by turning the book over to look at the back cover, opening the book to look inside, or putting it down and going on to something else. If you want color or design to extend to the edge of the cover, set it up on paper larger than the desired finished size and then trim away the excess after it is printed. You can save money by proofing your cover in black and white before having it laser printed at an office supply store on heavy paper.

### *8½” x 11” Cover Paper*

Falls slightly short of page edges when folded over the same size paper.

Cannot be printed to the edge of the paper.

Printers print to ¼” to ½” from the edge, therefore design cannot extend to edge of the paper.

### *11” x 17” Cover Paper*

Allows the set up of a 8½” x 11” cover with 1/8” extra on all outer edges.

Color or design can then extend to the edge of finished cover (called bleed).

Use the extra space on the paper for book marks, business cards or publicity handouts (printing price at an office supply store is by sheet, not by content).

### *Type of Cover Paper*

Cover or card stock.

Gloss or matte finish. Be sure gloss gets printed on the glossy side.

All whites are not the same. Use the whitest white if printing photographs as the white in the photographs will only be as white as the paper.

Paper varies from one manufacturer to another.

## Limitations

No more than 5 sheets of inside paper for a total 20 book pages.

## Application

The booklet format is excellent for individual work. When used with a group, keep maximum length, as in number of pages, in mind. Use content driven photos, tables, diagrams as appropriate.

Essay

Story

Poetry collection

Illustrated content area report or experiment

How-to instructions

Artwork or photographs

Product information or description

# Book, Paperback

Producing your own paperback book is no longer impossible or even tremendously difficult. As with a booklet, it does take a certain amount of diligence and determination. A book is essentially an overgrown booklet. Once the digital files are set up, you can print and assemble it yourself or you can have someone else print and assemble it for you.

## DIY (Do It Yourself)

The do it yourself book is truly impressive. Not only does it look great but, unlike commercial paperbacks, the pages will lie flat when open. The secret is the sewn signatures. (I set up a first edition of a 300 page novel this way.) People will think you are exceedingly clever, so much so that it may take them a while to understand that you actually made the book yourself, not just write the content contained within its pages. The following is an abbreviated sequence of the process.

Print pages in 16 page signatures (1-16, 17-32, 33-48...)

Sew each signature together, fold, and pull thread ends to the outside of fold

Assemble signatures in order checking page sequence with great care

Clamp signatures together and glue spine of signatures using bookmaking glue and super

Remove signatures from clamp, fold edges of super over front and back, and glue in place

Measure the thickness of the spine and adjust cover document accordingly

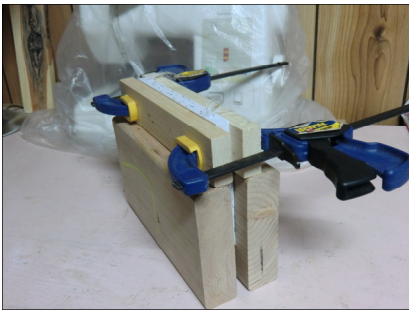
Rough cut cover to size, pre fold one side of spine. Cover the super with glue.

Set text block in fold so it makes contact on the spine and one cover.

Fold the new cover over the rest of the text block.

Set under a weight overnight

Trim cover to final size



Options for clamping signatures together for gluing:  
Left: Quick clamps, 1"x 2" and 2"x 6" pieces of wood. Quick clamps tend to tip over and C-clamps wiggle and shift when tightened, wood pieces warp.



Right: Anodized aluminum bars (reduces glue sticking to them) with threaded bolts rest on blocks and base made from recycled crates.



Left: Bookbinding "super" is a stiff reinforced mesh used to strengthen the binding of a book.

## CreateSpace.com

CreateSpace is part of Amazon.com. It is a relatively new print on demand (POD) publisher which makes it possible for an individual to set up his own book free of charge and to pay for as few as one professionally made copy of the finished book. Prices are remarkably low and because they are digitally printed instead of offset printed, there is no thousand copy minimum order. The writer chooses whether or not to make the book available through Amazon.com where it will be eligible for free shipping if over their minimum order amount. There is also an option, again no charge, to set up an eBook. Yes, they do offer professional set up and design services for a fee, but you don't have to go that route. There are now other print on demand companies. Which ever one you choose, be sure to thoroughly investigate their method of operation before committing.

Some things to know about publishing with CreateSpace:

24 page (book pages) minimum

18 years or over required to set up an account

Assignment of royalties requires either an SS or EIN number

Sales channels can be set to either on or off

Real people and help are available by phone

Page size can be any size but some sales channels only allow standard sizes

CLEAR EVERYTHING you plan to do with Create Space through your school administration *before* starting. Many schools have a booster or parent association with an EIN number you would be expected to use if books are to be sold.

## Application

Journal/diary (set rules for personal content)

Senior project

Chemistry/physics/biology experiments

Writing collections

US Presidents

Poems

Photos/artwork: scan or photograph art

Student's work for the year

Open house class collection

(include something from every student)

Year book of class work, candid photos

Book reports/movie reviews

Music, for the songwriter

How-to books

*Fret Not*

Zechariah 4:6; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 7:25 Virginia Pong

Do not fret, not be anxious, but in every thing make known to the  
Walk by faith, not by sight... full of hope and confidence... in his

*Chorus*

Lord with thanksgiving and with praises to His name. Not by might  
Son... ever living for his saints to intercede.

nor by power, but by my Spirit with the Lord of hosts.

And God's peace shall be yours  
To garrison and guard  
Over your heart and over your mind  
Through (in) Jesus Christ the son of God.

©Virginia Pong

Sheet music image sample reduced from 7½" x 10"



## *One Page Flyer/Report*

Combining text, photos and design into a single page is not as easy as it might seem. Brevity can be more difficult than longer assignments because pertinent and concise information must be extracted, written and then arranged around photographs, charts or other images. Use a class collection for a book.

Real life examples are a single sheet “bio” for an art gallery or music recital, a 250 word summary of a student’s life for acceptance for graduate degree work, and a business summary when applying for contract work.

### Application

Advertisement

Work wanted, may have tear off tags with contact information

(use a sewing machine with no thread to perforate the tear off contact info)

Help wanted

Event

Fundraiser

Poster

Poetry

Autobiography

Biography

Historical/current person

Scientist

Reformer

President

Political leader

Informational or persuasive essay

Critique of book, movie or play

Open house displays

### Trifold Brochure

Trifold brochures are really two sheet brochures (a single sheet printed on both sides) with data divided into six pages including a cover. Be sure to pay attention to proper page sequence when working on the layout. Photos, cartoons, and sketches add interest. Jews for Jesus broadsides are an excellent example of a trifold brochure. Find them at [www.jewsforjesus.org/broadsides](http://www.jewsforjesus.org/broadsides)

## Basic Building Blocks

Booklets, books and flyers all use the same basic building blocks. They are:

Text including titles and headings

Photographs

Charts, graphs or tables.

Move them around as if rearranging a room, closet, or drawer. Redress them in different colors, frames, borders and backgrounds. Resize them and restack them. Restacking them changes their order on the page by placing one on top of another such as text over a photograph. Partially overlapping photographs gives an interesting effect.

## Layout Factors

A friendly page encourages a reader to look further. A page in which the type is too small, too crowded or difficult to see discourages the reader. This section contains a number of factors that contribute to the overall layout of a page along with notes to consider for each factor. They require a number of choices, but the decisions do not all have to be made at the same time. As you experiment with changes insert a duplicate page (in publisher) or save to a new file (add a letter or number to its name in text files). This way you can always get back to where you were. Printing out one page and trimming it to size gives a better idea of how it will look.

### Fonts

What style

What size (a 12 in one style can be different from a 12 in another font)

How many different fonts (too many fonts distract)

How easy/difficult is the font to read (stay with standard fonts for longer text)

What color for font

Justification

Text is normally justified on the left. In books, magazines and newspapers text is often justified on both sides. When this is done the spacing between words can become erratic, more so as the length of the line shortens. Notice the wide spaces between words in some of the lines in the example taken from a local newspaper. Hyphenating some of the words would make a considerable improvement in the spacing.

Mouth" campaign to raise awareness about dry mouth and ways to manage it. The campaign is supported by AARP Washington and Olympic Area Agency on Aging.

"If you're not producing enough saliva to buffer acids and dilute bacteria's negative effects in your mouth you are more likely to develop dental decay and other oral issues," says Dr. David Branch, a WDS Foundation trustee.

The Foundation is enlisting help with the campaign from physicians and other medical professionals because medications are the most common cause

the natural sweetener xylitol, which protects teeth from decay.

Sip water frequently during the day and limit drinks with caffeine and alcohol, which can dry out the mouth.

Get regular dental checkups and cleanings.

Floss daily and brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

For more tips as well as information on reduced-cost dental care in your community, visit the campaign website at [www.seniorsoralhealth.org](http://www.seniorsoralhealth.org) or call Dave Aldrich at 360-538-2444.

Washington Dental Service (WDS) Foundation – a non-profit organization

training was developed through Stanford University's Chronic Disease program. The Olympic Area Agency on Aging and other partner agencies invite your participation in a free 4-day training to become a facilitator of this life-changing curriculum Nov. 8/9 and 15/16, 2012 at the Grays Harbor County Health Department, 2109 Sumner Ave., Aberdeen, WA. A minimum requirement is that you must attend all four days of training to become accredited, and that you agree to help facilitate a minimum of two 6-week workshops a year. Facilitators work as a team of two, so you may want to bring a friend. For more information

### Line spacing

Between lines  
Between paragraphs

### Page

Background for text, what color (white font on pink background is hard to read)  
A transparent background is default and will show as white if on white paper.  
Color for text, backgrounds, frames, photos, and paper  
Page size  
Page orientation (portrait or landscape)  
Binding at left or top  
Page numbers  
Page headings

### Frames around text or photo

Sometimes yes, sometimes no  
A narrow line or frame around a photo helps to define it and look complete  
Choice of color, width, and style of line  
Other effects are shadow, torn or faded edge

### Spacing and Placement or what goes where

Eyes naturally track from right to left and top to bottom  
Margins around text or photos  
All four margins the same, or  
Top and bottom margins equal to or wider than side margins  
Page margins  
Inside margins (binding) in a book need to be wider than outside margins  
The longer or thicker the book, the wider the inside margin  
Printer margins are typically ¼” to ½,” beyond which they will not print  
Integration of parts: relationship of color, size, content, shape  
Photos with directional content as in a person pointing or looking in one direction  
are better if a person is looking toward the center of the page instead of toward a  
nearby edge and off the page. Remember, text such as signs will read backwards  
if the photo is reversed.

### Paper

All white paper is not the same. The whiter the white, the brighter the photographs  
will look.  
Colored or textured  
Weight: 20# or 24# Use 24# for color  
Cover paper is sometimes called cover, index or card stock and comes in glossy or  
Matte finish.

### Proofreading

Courier font facilitates proofreading because it is a monospaced font meaning every letter uses the same amount of space which makes mistakes easier to see.

Proofread three or more times, once each for

Format: headings, titles, table of contents

Images, captions and placement

Text, typos, and grammar

### Hints

Print color pages in black and white to proof,

Print samples and trim to size to better see what they will look like,

Photo: to convert color to B&W, try grayscale instead of black and white,

Trial and Error still works. Try different arrangements until you get one you like.

Insert “Duplicate Page” or save to another file to try a different design without losing the first one.

Don’t allow yourself to be overwhelmed,

### Dummy text

Lorem Ipsum (Latin) filler or placeholder text. The text in the examples shown below is lorem ipsum which is a Latin based scrambled so as to make no sense. It is used in layout work to fill in text when the actual text is not yet available.

### Before and After Example

The simulation on the next page is representative of an actual final copy of a seventh grade student’s work. The student was scheduled to present this document to a writing group for review the coming weekend. In this situation we were limited to forty minutes during which we entered the text into a new file (the student did not have the digital file available) and made the following changes to the document.

Correct paragraphing, including treatment of dialogue

Correct punctuation

Change of fonts

Change of line spacing

Change of page size

Added a title page

Added page headings

Added page numbers

One page went to three pages

Placed pages in same size folder

Left: The “before” page  
Right: The “after” page one

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**Sed Eget Leo**

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“Phasellus tincidunt urna eget orci condimentum id com modo,” dui Pharetra.

Vestibulum ante ipsum primi, “ In faucibus orci luctus.”

“Ultrices,” posuere cubilia Curae.

## General Issues

A number of general issues or roadblocks will try to stop the completion of a project. One is the “I can’t do it, I’m not creative” objection. Yes, you can and yes, you are. Step by step, one photo, one word or section at a time shuffle them around as if you were rearranging your room, backpack or desk. Use “Insert Duplicate Page” and make changes, even changes you think might not look good, on the new page, thereby saving the previous one in case you like the earlier version better. If you don’t like it you can always insert another page and try something else. When you get one you like, delete the others. No one will know unless you tell them.

Do a good job and do your best is a great attitude but perfectionism can be another road block and prevent the completion of a project. Sometimes, as a video editing instructor once told me, “Done is better than perfect.” *Writing: The Final Step* is an example... not quite perfect, but done.

Copyrights, internet, and proper credits are always an issue but they are not difficult to document. If you decide to copyright your work, then giving credit to whom credit is due and excluding their work from your copyright does become an issue. Creative Commons licensing is becoming more frequent on the internet and is worth investigating. Wikipedia operates under one of these licenses.

The level of keyboarding skills translates into time especially for teachers of younger students. The longer the text, the more time is involved. Although many students have computers, some still do not and arrangements need to be made. One of the districts where I live settles this issue by giving a laptop computer to every incoming ninth grade student.

Teachers need to clear any publication work with administration before embarking on a project. Posting a student’s work in the classroom is one thing. Taking a student’s work and making it available to other parents, students and adults via gift, sales or internet is another thing. Be aware of any district requirements and procedures for disclosing personal student information and photographs and abide by those guidelines. School districts choose to either “opt in” or “opt out” for parent permission. Find out what parents need to sign and get it done.

Photographing places and subjects in publicly owned property is not generally a problem. Photographs taken on privately owned property including places of business need permission. Some photographers carry written consent forms with them when they are out taking pictures.

## *A Word of Encouragement*

Be persistent, be diligent, be expectant, and stay positive. Take a break when you need one but don't quit. A long time friend with years in international military special forces training tells me of watching men quit on literally the last two or three steps of the final exercise of their training, thereby failing completion and subsequent graduation. So don't give up. Be assured a finished printed booklet or book looks nothing like the manuscript from which it came. The self satisfaction, self esteem, and the favorable response of others will make it worth all the effort...and besides, the next project will be easier. You might even look forward to it.

## Resources

*English Simplified* by Blanche Ellsworth and John A. Higgins, currently in its 13<sup>th</sup> edition, 80 pages. [www.awl.com/ellsworth](http://www.awl.com/ellsworth) or search on line for best price. An excellent review of English grammar for middle/high school student, teacher or parent.

Photoshop Elements and Photoshop, both by Adobe. Photoshop Elements is a simplified version of Photoshop

Books on Digital Photography, Photoshop, and Photoshop Elements, all by Scott Kelby. Search internet for source. I have glanced through some of these but I have not yet used them; however, others have recommended them highly as easy and simple to understand.

Community College Classes (for credit or audit), Community Special Interest Classes (no grades, not for credit).

[www.HarcourtBindery.com](http://www.HarcourtBindery.com) ~ One of the oldest hand book binderies in the United States makes available the binding supplies used in its shop. Two book binding videos available.

[www.talas.com](http://www.talas.com) ~ Wide variety of book binding and book making supplies

### For the Serious Writer, Middle - High School Student or Teacher

*Characters & Viewpoint* by Orson Scott Card. How to invent, construct and animate vivid, credible character and chose the eyes through which to view the events of your short story or novel. Easier to read and contains many excellent and entertaining examples. You'll enjoy getting to know the many facets of Pete and Nora. Published by Writer's Digest Books

*Story. Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting* by Robert McKee. A more academic and exacting presentation by a highly qualified and experienced writer in the field. While written for screenwriting, the principles and structure remain the same for any story. Published by it books, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers.



## Free Resources

[www.openoffice.us.com](http://www.openoffice.us.com) (word processing)

[www.gimp.us.com](http://www.gimp.us.com) (high level photo editing)

[www.getpaint.net](http://www.getpaint.net) (medium level photo editing)

[www.irfanview.com](http://www.irfanview.com) (easier level photo editing)

<http://picassa.google.com> (easier level photo editing)

[www.foxitsoftware.com](http://www.foxitsoftware.com) (pdf reader and writer)

Microsoft Windows Photo Gallery (easier level photo editing)

There are many photo editing apps for cell phones. (My 22 year old granddaughter likes Picsay pro but I have not used it and cannot speak for it.)

*Proper Manuscript Format* for submitting manuscript for publication by William Shunn SFWA (Science Fiction Writers of America). Reprinted by permission at the end of this section. Free download on internet at <http://www.shunn.net/format/story.html>. This document is written in the manner it describes. It gives answers to the why's of some of the format requirements as well as some useful tips. It doesn't take long to read and is worth your time.

[www.CreateSpace.com](http://www.CreateSpace.com) ~ An Amazon.com related company for print on demand paperback books, also creates eBooks. Set up is free if you do it yourself but the printed books must be paid for. Choose to list or not list your book on Amazon.com. Real people are available for assistance on an immediate call back basis. I have always found them helpful.

<https://kdp.amazon.com/selfpublishing/signin> ~ Or search for kdp.amazon. With a certain amount diligence you can publish your own eBook. The instructions are reasonably clear and complete. Email help is available but I have not been able to speak with a real person.

<http://lipsum.com> ~ Lorem Ipsum generator. Creates filler text to place in a document such as Publisher until final text is ready. Looks like Latin but is sufficiently muddled so as to be meaningless text.

<http://creativecommons.com> ~ Describes six types of licenses commonly in use for sharing data and photos. Wikipedia operates under one of these.

[www.finalemusic.com](http://www.finalemusic.com) ~ Music notation software designed to write and print sheet music. Finale Note Pad (free download) and Finale SongWriter (next level up, does a lot more, not free) Try the freeware first. The help section is well laid out and easy to use. It's quite basic but gives a good introduction of how it works and it's valid for thirty days at which time you may be offered a discount option to upgrade (which you will probably want to do)...or search the internet for price. To place sheet music from Finale in a book:

*Spiral binding.* Print sheet music from software and spiral bind  
(a spiral binding allows the pages to lie flat)

*Booklet or book.*

Print sheet music from Songwriter

Scan sheet music into a .jpg image

Adjust the brightness, contrast, or auto edit to obtain the clearest image

Place image on page and size correctly in Word or Publisher

Sizing image smaller than original will make it hard to read

Print directly from Songwriter to pdf format (pdf format allows printing anywhere)

Foxit Software has a pdf file reader/printer software for free download

## *Proper Manuscript Format*

by William Shunn

*Proper Manuscript Format* by William Shunn is reprinted by permission starting on the following page. It is printed single sided because that is the correct format for submission. *Proper Manuscript Format* can be found on the internet at <http://www.shunn.net/format/story.html> or search the internet by title and author for the link.

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about 1,500 words

Active member, SFWA

## Proper Manuscript Format

by William Shunn

No one knows for certain how many good short stories are passed over because the manuscripts containing them are formatted poorly, but it is certain that a properly formatted manuscript will be more eagerly read by an editor than a poorly formatted one. Here are a few suggestions.

First, use black type on white paper only. Other colors make your work difficult to read, not to mention calling too much attention to the manuscript itself. Print on only one side of the page.

For easy readability, limit your choice of font to either Courier or Times New Roman. Courier (my strong preference) is a monospaced font, which means that every character is exactly as



wide as every other. It's easier for an editor to detect spelling errors in a monospaced font than in a proportional font like Times New Roman (in which the "i" uses less horizontal space than the "m" does). With a monospaced font, there will also be fewer characters on each line, which can make your manuscript easier to scan. Still, many writers have come to prefer Times New Roman, and either is usually acceptable. (If in doubt, consult your intended market's submission guidelines.) Set your font size to 12 points.

Use nice wide margins all around your pages. There should be at least an inch to each side of the text--top, bottom, left, and right.

Always double-space between lines. Never submit a single-spaced manuscript. The editor needs room to make corrections and other typographical marks between lines--but not too much room, so don't triple-space either.

The guidelines I've offered so far will give you pages of about 250 to 300 words apiece. This may increase your page count, but don't fret about that. It's easier to read a lot of pages with fewer words on each than it is to read a few pages with lots of words on each, and as a result your story may feel as if it reads faster than otherwise.

Now, to the first page of your manuscript. Place your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address in the upper left corner. If you belong to a professional writing organization, you may list your membership beneath this information, but only



if it is relevant. If you belong to the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, for instance, you would want to mention that when submitting to Asimov's or Realms of Fantasy, but it probably wouldn't cut much ice with the editors at The New Yorker or Cat Fancy.

In the upper right corner of the first page, place an approximate word count. Round to the nearest hundred words unless you're edging up into novella length, at which point rounding to the nearest 500 would be appropriate. The point of a word count is not to tell the editor exactly how many words there are in the manuscript, but rather how much space your story will take up in print. If your word processing software doesn't give you a word count, you can estimate the total by counting the number of words on one page and multiplying by the number of pages in the manuscript.

Though many sources say you should, it is not necessary to place your Social Security number anywhere on your manuscript. If the publisher wants to know it, you'll be asked for it after your story is accepted. Otherwise, it's extraneous--and in fact presumptuous--information.

Place the title of your story one third to one half of the way down the first page. The editor needs all that empty space for writing notes to the typesetter and copy editor. Your title should be centered between the margins. Many writers type the title in all capitals, and you can too if you like, though it's not necessary.





One double space below your title, center your byline. This may seem like redundant information, since your name is already in the upper-left corner of the manuscript, but it's not. The name in the corner is the person to whom the publisher will make out the check. The byline is the name that receives credit for the story when it appears in print. These are not necessarily the same. Perhaps your name is J. Scott Bronson but you publish fiction under the pseudonym Everett Stone, or perhaps you are a married woman publishing fiction under your birth name. Whatever the case, even if the two names are the same, both must appear on your manuscript.

Begin the text of your manuscript two double spaces below your byline. The first line of every paragraph in your manuscript, including this first paragraph, should be indented one half inch from the left margin. (You can set tab stops or paragraph styles in your word processor to help with this.) Do not place extra line spaces between paragraphs, as is the common practice in blogs and other online writing. The first-line indentation is sufficient to indicate that a new paragraph has begun.

Place a page header in the upper right corner of every page of your manuscript except the first. This header consists of your real surname, one or two important words from the title of your story, and the current page number. Do not place the header in the upper left corner because the editorial staff will sometimes clip your manuscript in that corner as they work on it.



The surname and keyword are important because sometimes unbound manuscripts happen to fall off editors' desks and become mixed up with other manuscripts. The header helps the editorial staff reassemble yours in the proper order.

Except for paragraph indentations, the left margin of your manuscript should be ruler-straight. The right margin, however, should be ragged, not justified. Right justification messes up the spaces between words and sentences and makes the manuscript more of a chore to read.

In the days of typewriters, the usual practice was to put two spaces after the end of every sentence, and also to put two spaces after every colon. This helped make the separations between sentences more apparent, and helped editors more easily distinguish periods from commas and colons from semicolons. With the dominance of computers, that practice is changing, and it is more common now to see only one space between sentences. Ingrained habits die hard, though, so if you're used to hitting the spacebar twice after a period, you shouldn't stress out about it, particularly if you're using a Courier font.

If you intend a word or phrase to appear in italics, the convention has long been to indicate this in your manuscript by underlining. This practice, too, is beginning to change. In Courier you should continue to underline, since italics in monospaced fonts are easy to overlook. In Times New Roman, though, it's becoming more and more acceptable to use italics directly. (Again, consult submission guidelines when you're in



doubt.)

If you want to indicate an em dash--the punctuation that sets off a phrase like this one--use two hyphens to do so. Do not place spaces around the hyphens. (Many word processors are set by default to convert two hyphens to a real em dash. You'll want to turn that feature off if you're using a monospaced font, since the em dash and hyphen characters are easily confused by the eye. In proportional fonts, this isn't so important since the em dash is noticeably wider than a hyphen.)

"A lot of people ask me about dialog," I told an editor friend of mine recently. "Do you have any suggestions?"

"Dialog should be enclosed in quotation marks," she said. "Some writers get away with doing it differently, but they're rare exceptions."

"Isn't it also the usual practice to start a new paragraph when the speaker changes?" I asked.

"Yes, it is. That helps the reader keep track of who's speaking even when speech tags are omitted."

If you want a line break to appear in your story, then rather than leaving a blank line you should center the character "#" on a line by itself. Do this for every line break, not just for ones that fall at the top or bottom of a page. As you edit and revise your manuscript prior to submission, those breaks can move around, and word processors often hide blank lines that come at the start or end of a page. You don't want your scene breaks rendered invisible to your editor.



Finally, though you don't need to make any overt indication, some writers choose to center the word "END" after the last line of a story. This can help avoid ambiguity if your final words fall near the bottom of the page.

#

While you'll find certain variations in the way different writers format their manuscripts, no one departs very far from what I've outlined above. But always check a market's submission guidelines before sending your work. If their guidelines differ from mine, follow theirs.

At the very least, these suggestions will guarantee your work looks professional. How the story itself comes across is an entirely separate matter--and that part's all up to you. Best of luck!





## *About the Author*



First generation American Virginia Pong was born to immigrant parents in the shadow of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. While her mother was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate from its ivied halls, her father fled war torn China of the early twentieth century with only a grade school education. With a brash boldness that would show up in his daughter, he talked himself into his first job as an electrical engineer at General Electrical, as a tool designer in Detroit and finally as an engineer in aerospace. Raised the youngest of six children, two brothers and three English refugee cousins, Virginia learned to read and write before starting school. She is a graduate of Northwestern Michigan College, the University of Washington, and the University of California.

As a teacher in the vast California public school system, Virginia taught a wide range of students from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds ranging from the not so gifted to the brilliant and all of those in between. Nominated by her former students she was twice included in Who's Who among America's Teachers. In addition to teaching third grade through graduate school, her background includes consultant with Harcourt Brace Jovanovich text books, social services, and human resources administration. Virginia has competed in the international challenging event of racewalking and set a national record in masters competition, taken national titles, and won team gold at the World Veterans' Games. As a USA Track and Field certified official and coach, every racewalking athlete with whom she worked won either a national title, a national record, or both.

Parent, grandparent and great grandparent, Virginia currently resides in southwestern Washington State where she is applying the same educational management and developmental disciplines to a small technology and media company with roots stretching back more than a few decades.



## Other Books by Virginia Pong

### *Writing: A Sixth Grade Program*

*Writing: A Sixth Grade Program* was developed to meet an obvious lack of student ability to write clear, well-organized, and understandable assignments needed for school, college, career, and life; it is successful across a broad spectrum of student ability. Student writing resulting from assignments in this book won as many as five of the six district-wide awards given in the annual writing festival held each spring for the school district's fourteen elementary schools.

A sell-out at the California State Conference for Gifted and Talented Education, *Writing: A Sixth Grade Program* provides teachers and parents an excellent framework on which to build student grammar and writing development in both language arts and content areas.

Each writing assignment includes teaching notes, student guidelines, and real student samples. A yearlong strand of basic grammar instruction (and how to test) and a seventeen page student reference/study section are provided in this inclusive program.

### *Times and Time Again*

During her years as a teacher in the California public school system, Virginia watched as students struggled with math homework made unnecessarily difficult by insufficient mastery of the basic facts in multiplication and division. To address this wide spread and growing problem Virginia developed the *Times and Time Again* program based on her childhood timed practices with her siblings.

The flood of objection from the teaching community, schooled in more modern educational theory, was shrill and derogatory. They called it drill-and-kill. They said it was out of date and that it would never work because the students would hate it. However, *Times and Time Again* did work. *Times and Time Again* proved itself in greatly decreased homework time and a spectacular increase in accuracy. Not only did the students not hate it, but they complained when an occasional school wide schedule required skipping their "times facts" practice. Year after year every student, no matter what the beginning score, always made dramatic improvement in her *Times and Time Again* program.

### *Waiting for Waif, Educational Supplement*

*Waiting for Waif* by A.V. Pong is both a delightfully simple and a deeply meaningful children's novel. Read it for personal pleasure and entertainment, or use it as a basis for developing student skills in the language arts or encouraging investigation into other related subject areas.

Its companion book, *Waiting for Waif Educational Supplement*, is filled with instructional material and suggestions to use along with a more in depth reading of *Waiting for Waif*. It includes vocabulary/spelling words and activities, chapter summaries, comprehension questions, testing methods, multiple choice questions, and numerous topics for extension into content area subjects as well as for discussion, research, writing prompt, written assignment, or report.

