



ESL Podcast 308 – Formatting a Document

GLOSSARY

to format – to change the appearance of a document; to change the way that a document looks when it is printed on paper; to change the style of a document

* Can you please format this report so that it fits on one page?

margin – the empty white space at the top, bottom, and sides of a page

* This document has 1-inch side margins and 1.25-inch top and bottom margins.

default – a computer program's normal settings; the way that a program will work if one does not change it

* By default, this new computer program saves your work every five minutes, but you can make it save the file more or less frequently by changing the settings.

to adjust – to change; to make a small change to make something better

* Maggie adjusted her meeting schedule so that she could leave early on Friday.

page break – an invisible line that is put in a document so that all the information below that line goes onto the next page

* I need to put a page break at the end of every chapter so that each chapter starts on a new page.

header / footer – the space where the same information or images appear at the top (header) or bottom (footer) of every page

* The ESL Podcast Learning Guides have a header with the logo and name of the podcast, and a footer with the page number and copyright information.

pull-down menu – a list of options in a computer program that appear when one clicks on a button

* In Microsoft Word, when you click on the zoom button, you can see a pull-down menu of all the viewing options, from 10% to 500%.

to select – to choose; to pick one item from a list or group of things

* I don't know anything about wine. Can you help me select one to serve with dinner tonight?

to insert – to add something; to put something on or into something else

* Please insert your credit card into this machine to make a payment.

font – the style of typed letters and words; the shape of typed letters

* Two of the most popular fonts are Times New Roman and Arial.



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toolbar – a group of related commands in a computer program, usually in a single row at the top of the page; a group of small images in a row at the top of the screen, so that one can click the images to give commands to the program
* In this program, the “standard” toolbar has buttons for opening, saving, and printing files.

orientation – the direction of a page, so that it is vertical (taller than wide) or horizontal (wider than tall)
* Our graph was very long and short, so we chose a horizontal orientation to fill the page.

portrait – a printed piece of paper that is taller than it is wide; the normal vertical direction for paper that is printed or written on
* The teacher wants all of our school essays printed in portrait.

landscape – a printed piece of paper that is wider than it is tall; the non-normal horizontal direction for paper that is printed or written on
* People would have more room to write their name, address, telephone number, and email address if this form were printed in landscape.

setup – the settings and controls for doing something; the things that must be prepared before something can be done
* The group needed two hours for setup before the concert began.

to get stuck – to not be able to continue doing something; to not know how to continue doing something
* If you get stuck on the math homework, ask another student for help.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where will Franz insert the page number?
 - a) In the margins.
 - b) In the page break.
 - c) In the header or footer.
2. How does Franz want to change the orientation?
 - a) He wants the page to be portrait.
 - b) He wants the page to be landscape.
 - c) He wants to change the page setup.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

margin

The word “margin,” in this podcast, means the empty white space at the top, bottom, or side of a page: “This report is 20 pages long, but it has large margins, so there isn’t very much text to read.” A “margin” is also the number of votes or the amount of time that someone wins by: “The president won the election by a 35% margin.” In business, a “profit margin” is how much money a business has made after it pays all of its expenses: “In its first year, the restaurant had a 15% profit margin, but next year, it should be higher.” Finally, a “margin” can be the amount of space or time that one has to be able to do something: “Our flight lands in Chicago at 4:20, but then we have to catch another flight at 4:45, leaving us a very small margin for delays.”

landscape

In this podcast, the word “landscape” means a printed piece of paper that is wider than it is tall: “The text is too wide for the page, so I’m going to change the paper so it’s landscape.” A “landscape” is also a wide view, or everything that one can see outside: “The landscape from the top of Mount Jefferson is absolutely beautiful!” When we talk about art, “landscapes” are paintings of nature: “Do you like landscapes, or do you prefer paintings of historic events?” The word “landscaping” refers to one’s yard, or the way that plants are used for decoration around a building: “The Azuma family hired someone to do their landscaping, and now their yard is full of beautiful flowers, plants, and trees.”



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CULTURE NOTE

When Americans write formally, they need to follow “formatting and style guides,” or rules about how things should be written. This is especially true for “academic writing” (writing in a university) and for “publications” (newspapers, magazines, and other materials that are shared with the public). Some of the most common formatting and style guides are APA, MLA, Chicago, and AP, although many businesses and organizations have their own formatting and style guides, too.

Most university students are familiar with APA and MLA styles. The American Psychological Association (APA) developed the APA style, which is used for many research papers and scientific writing. The Modern Language Association (MLA) created the “MLA Style Guide,” which is used for most other academic writing.

The Chicago Manual of Style is published by the University of Chicago Press. It “covers” (discusses) correct English grammar and presents many “guidelines” (suggested rules) for formatting and style. Many businesses ask their employees to follow the Chicago style in their writing.

Finally, the Associated Press, which is the largest “news agency” (an organization that writes news stories) in the United States, prints the AP Stylebook, which is followed by many American newspapers and journalists.

There are many differences between these four formatting and style guides, but the biggest difference is probably in their “bibliography” or “list of works cited,” which is a list that shows where the author found his or her information. It is important that this information be listed “consistently” (in the same way each time) so that readers can easily understand where the information is coming from. The formatting and style guides also have “strict” (always the same, without changing) rules for how quotations should be “cited” (how one lets the reader know who said something that is quoted) in the text.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 308: Formatting a Document.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 308. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Be sure to visit our website at eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode. Our Learning Guides contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions not found on the podcast, cultural notes, comprehension questions, and a complete transcript of this episode.

This episode is called "Formatting a Document." It's about making a document on your computer with something like Microsoft Word. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Franz: I've just switched over to this program and I can't figure out how to format my document. Can you help me?

Helen: I can try. Let's take a look. What do you want to do?

Franz: I want to change the margins so I can fit more on a page. I don't know how to change the default settings. I also want to put this section on a separate page.

Helen: Okay, you can adjust the margins by moving this up and down, and from side to side. If you want this section on a separate page, just add a page break.

Franz: Oh, I see. What if I want to add a header or a footer?

Helen: You go to this pull-down menu and select the header and footer option. Then, you can type in the text you want. If you want to add a page number, just insert one by selecting it from this menu.

Franz: That seems easy. What if I want to change the font?

Helen: You can change the font style or size by selecting the text and then making the change on the toolbar. See?



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Franz: Yeah, that seems simple enough. I also want to change the orientation of the page. How do I do that?

Helen: Right now your document is portrait. To make it landscape, you just go to the “Page Setup” and change it.

Franz: That all seems pretty easy. I think I’ve got it.

Helen: Good. Give it a try. If you get stuck, I can try to help.

Franz: Okay, great! Now, can you go over again how to change the margins, insert a page number, change the page orientation, and add a footer?

[end of dialogue]

The dialogue is between Franz and Helen. Franz begins by saying, “I’ve just switched over (or changed over) to this program (software program) and I can’t figure out how to format my document.” The verb to “format” here means to change the appearance of your document, to change the way the document looks when you print it on a piece of paper – to change its style. To make, for example, certain things bigger or certain things smaller; that would be part of “formatting.”

Franz says, “Can you help me?” to Helen. Helen says, “I can try. Let’s take a look” – let’s look at it. “What do you want to do?” she asks. Franz says, “I want to change the margins so that I can fit more on a page” – so that I can put more on a page. The “margins” are the white spaces on the top, the bottom, and the sides of the page. There’s normally nothing in the margins; it’s empty, white space. “Margin” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Franz says that “I don’t know how to change the default settings.” “Default” (default) are the normal settings of something on a computer. The “settings” are the way that the program is set up – what you get when you open the program and you don’t change anything, those would be the “default settings.”

Franz says, “I also want to put this section on a separate page. Helen says, “Okay, you can adjust the margins by moving this up and down.” To “adjust” means to change, usually to make a small change in something. “I need to adjust my schedule this morning” – I need to make a change in it this morning. Helen says, “you can adjust the margins by moving this up or down,” pointing to something on the computer screen, “or from side to side. If you want this section



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on a separate page,” she says, “just add a page break.” When you’re working in Microsoft Word or other computer programs and you want a new page to start, you “insert,” or put in, a “page break” that makes the document start a new page somewhere.

Franz says, “Oh, I see. What if I want to add a footer or a header?” In a word processing, or typing documents like Microsoft Word, the “header” is the space at the very top of the page, the head is at the top of your body; the “footer” is at the bottom of this page, just like your feet are at the bottom of your body. They call those the “header” and the “footer.” These are usually the places where you put the page number, for example, and perhaps some other information.

Helen says, to answer Franz’s question, “You go to this pull-down menu and select the header and footer option.” A “pull-down menu” is when you click on something on a computer program or on a web page and you get a list, and you go through the list and you pick, or select, one of the things on the list. A “menu” is a list of options. Helen says, “Then, you can type in the text you want. If you want to add a page number, just insert (or put in) one by selecting it from this menu.”

Franz says, “That seems easy (that appears to be easy). What if I want to change the font?” The “font” (font) is the style of letters – it’s the style that the letters are made in, the shape of the individual letters. For example, in many computer programs you can select Times Roman, or Times New Roman. That’s the name of the font; that’s the way that the letters look. Another popular font would be Arial (Arial); another popular font would be Helvetica. All of these are fonts that you find on a computer program and on a web page.

Helen answers Franz’s question by saying, “You can change the font style or size (how big the letters are) by selecting the text and then making the change on the toolbar. See?” She’s indicating how to do it on his computer. A “toolbar” (toolbar – one word) is a group related commands – related options – on a computer program. Usually the toolbar is at the top of the page. You’ll often see little pictures – little images – that you can click on to do certain things. For example on Microsoft Word, you can cut, you can delete, you can paste – to put something in a document is to “paste” it – and these all have little images – little icons, we might call them – in the toolbar. So, the toolbar is the place where you can go to make changes in your document.

Franz says, “that seems simple enough,” meaning that seems easy. “I also want to change the orientation of the page. How do I do that?” he asks. The “orientation” is the direction of page. It could be vertical, like most pages that you



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print; we would call that “portrait orientation” (portrait). A vertical or a portrait orientation is when it is taller than it is wide; it is higher than it is wide. The opposite of that would be a “landscape orientation.” “Landscape” (landscape – one word) is when the piece of paper is wider than it is tall – wider than it is high. This is a horizontal orientation. That is less common, the landscape orientation. The most common orientation is vertical or portrait. “Landscape” has a couple of meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Helen says to Franz, “Right now your document is portrait. To make it landscape, you need to go to the “Page Setup” and change it.” The “setup” (setup – one word) are the settings and controls for doing something, the things you have to do, the things you have to prepare before something else can be done. “Page Setup” is where you go and change thing for that page – the margins, the orientation, and so forth.

Franz, again, says, “That seems pretty easy. I think I’ve got it.” Helen says, “Good. Give it a try,” meaning try it yourself without me. “If you get stuck, I can help.” To “get stuck” (stuck) is a two-word, or phrasal, verb meaning not to be able to continue to do something. You start doing something, and then you forget how to do it, or you don’t know how to continue. That’s to “get stuck.” You can get stuck on your homework; you start your homework, if you are a student, you do the first page, and then you’re confused. You’re lost – you “get stuck.”

Franz says, “Okay, great! Now, can you go over again (can you review) how to change margins, insert a page break, change the page orientation, and add a footer?” Franz, of course, is asking Helen to explain everything to him again. Franz is what we call “not too bright” – not too smart.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Franz: I’ve just switched over to this program and I can’t figure out how to format my document. Can you help me?

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Helen: Good. Give it a try. If you get stuck, I can try to help.

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[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was by Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. We’ll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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