Key Points

- Manuscript format is essential both when submitting work to a publisher and when publishing it.
- Clarity and consistency are key.
- Agents and editors will often have their own preferences, so it's important to read them before sending your work to them.

Commonalities

- 8.5"x11" page size, 1" margins all around, or sometimes 1.25" left and right (when publishing, Mirrored margins are good)
- Title on Title page around half the way down. Some ask for contact info in upper left corner. No Header or Footer.
- Title and chapter headings are **Bold** (only time to use Bold) and usually Aligned Center; these may be ALL CAPS or not.
- Chapter headings begin roughly a third of the way down with a couple of empty lines underneath (4–6 maximum). Some say use an em dash—between chapter number and chapter title if you have one.
- Handful of fonts preferred, size 12, such as Times New Roman, Arial, Courier New, etc. (You can use number sizes with decimals later)
- Paragraphs aligned Left (Justified when published)
- Use first-line indentation (usually 0.5) instead of tabs.
- First paragraphs in chapters and sections aren't usually indented.
- Section/scene changes usually marked with a Centered line, unintended, with three asterisks or number sign, with an empty line around them.
- No hyphenation (maybe when published)
- Double spaced for manuscript (smaller when published)
- One space after a sentence (used to be two)
- *Italics* and only used for specific reasons, such as direct internal thoughts.
- Include End or The End at the very end, usually a couple of lines down in ALL CAPS or SMALL CAPS.

- Page numbers can be inside the Footer. Sometimes it's in the Header, aligned Right, with last name and title separated by /.
- Headers sometimes include Last name and Book Title

<u>Personal Tips</u>

- Format Styles directly
- Turn off Widow/Orphan control.
- Mind "Linked to Previous" with Header/Footer
- Page breaks, and Odd Page and Next Page scene breaks

<u>References</u>

1. https://www.writersinfo.info/smf.html
2. https://www.dailywritingtips.com/16-manuscript-format-guidelines/
3. https://kayedacus.com/2007/05/23/manuscript-101-introduction-basic-manuscript-format/
4. http://theeditorsblog.net/2011/01/05/format-your-novel-for-submission/
5. https://www.writersdigest.com/getting-published/what-are-the-guidelines-for-formating-a-manuscript