# Letter Transcription: Preliminary Formatting

When beginning letter transcription there are two areas of formatting that need to be addressed: the initial setup of the blank MS Word document before transcription begins; and the layout of the text of the transcribed document created.
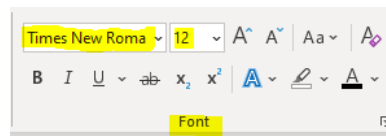
## Part 1: Setting up the Word Document Prior to Starting Transcription

\*\*\* To ensure that your changes apply to the entire document you must use the "Ctrl+**A**" keys to "select-all" before changing settings. \*\*\*
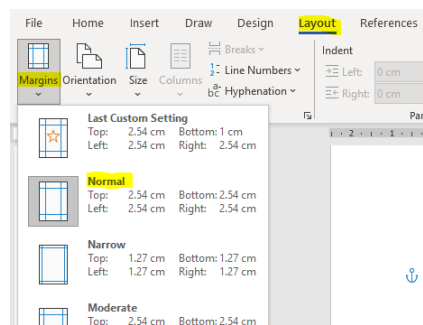
**Font:**
Command Location: *Home tab/Font*
- Type: Times New Roman
- Size: 12 pt.

**Margins:**
Command Location: *Layout tab/Margins*
- Normal (2.54cm on all sides)

**Paragraphs:**
Command Location: *Home tab/Paragraph (*by selecting the corner button – see highlight in picture to right) */Indents and Spacing*
- General -  Alignment: Left
      Outline level: Body Text

- Indentation –  Left: 0cm
        Right: 0cm
        Special: none
        Mirror indents: unchecked

- Spacing - Before: 0 pt.
      After: Auto
      Line spacing: Single
      "Don't add space...": unchecked
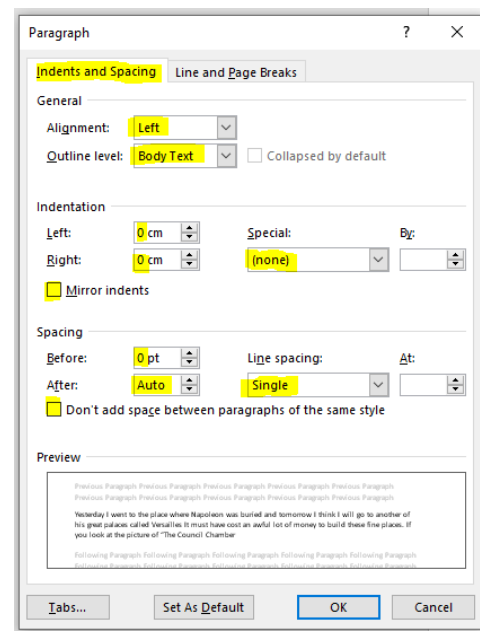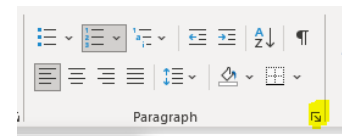
## Part 2: Layout/Formatting of the Transcripted Letter

Below is an example of a letter transcription showing the overall layout and spacing between sections. Please use this to check against the layout of your transcribed letter once it's completed.

Heading
Date
    *paragraph break*

Salutation
    *paragraph break*

Body paragraph
    *paragraph break*
Body paragraph
    *paragraph break*

Closing
Signature/name
    *paragraph break*

Postscript
    *paragraph break*

Other additions

> 23rd Battalion,
> Shorncliffe.
> June 29th, 1915.
>
> Dearest Mother:
>
> I shall not have time to write you more than a few lines, but there is a Canadian mail tomorrow morning and I just wanted to let you know as soon as possible that I have your letters. Mrs. Smith arrived on Saturday afternoon late and is staying about a mile from here on the seashore. The Major got leave for a week-end, returning last night with my "packet". I was wonderfully cheered to hear from you all again. It does seem to take such an unconsciously long time to get anything across the ocean nowadays. Such a big packet of letters! I spent most of the morning reading and re-reading them and almost imagined that I was with you all again.
>
> This week we are having night operations every night. We leave the camp about 8.00, march for a couple of hours, and when it is dark take up a line of prepared trenches or dig ourselves in. Last night we took up trenches and were attacked by another company quite unexpectedly. We just happened to see one of their scouts crawling forward in the dark; crawled out and took him prisoner much to his surprise. We arrived back about 1.00 a.m. very tired. I should have written at more length, but had some work to do this morning, but will have another try tomorrow for the next mail.
>
> Yours with love to all,
> Errol.
>
> P.S. Don't forget to give Auntie my new address as below. She worries so if it seems to be taking longer than expected for me to receive her letters.
>
> Pte. Errol Smythe
> 23rd Battalion O.S. C.E.F.
> Dibgate Camp, Shorncliffe
> England

**All text is left justified** regardless of its placement in the original document.
The first lines of body paragraphs are not indented regardless of letter writers use of indenting.

Note that there is no paragraph break between the heading and the date, or between the closing and the signature/name.

The date is as a single line regardless of how it was spaced when written.
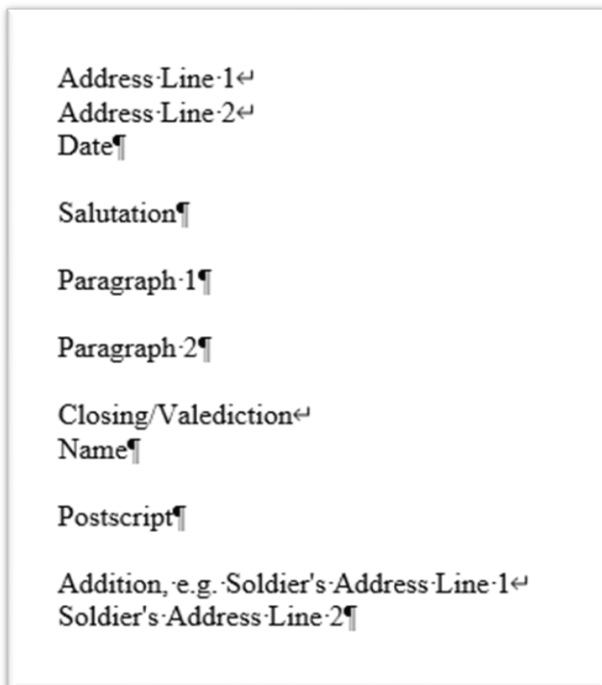
## Line Breaks: Hard vs. Soft Returns

It's important to be familiar with the difference between the two types of line breaks:

1) The **hard-return** or paragraph-break, made by pressing the **Enter** key.
2) The **soft-return** or line-break, made by pressing the **Shift**+**Enter** keys.

While they may look quite similar in the Word document (e.g. using two soft-returns will create spacing similar to one hard-return) mixing these up will cause problems when they are translated into HTML code when posted up to the website.

Use the Show/Hide formatting ¶ (command location: *Home/Paragraph*) to see what types of returns have been used in a document. Hard-returns show as ¶ soft-returns show as ↵ .

With "Show-formatting" turned on a typical letter would have line breaks as below:

```
Address·Line·1↵
Address·Line·2↵
Date¶

Salutation¶

Paragraph·1¶

Paragraph·2¶

Closing/Valediction↵
Name¶

Postscript¶

Addition,·e.g.·Soldier's·Address·Line·1↵
Soldier's·Address·Line·2¶
```