



11. Use a header on each page including your name and the title of your novel. Use Insert Header so it can be easily removed prior to printing.
12. Pictures or diagrams should be submitted separately. You may use a notation in the manuscript such as [Insert picture one here].
13. Do NOT use any formatting other than standard bullets, italics, or bold type.
14. **IMPORTANT: Check your document prior to submission for any extra spaces, paragraphs, line spaces, etc., by going to File, Options, Display, Show All Formatting Marks. Delete any “extras.” For example, there should be no tab characters in the document or spaces after a sentence ending a paragraph. If you do not do this, your document will have errors in formatting. If you use a Mac, go to Word, Preferences, View, Show All Non-printing Characters.**

## **PUNCTUATION:**

1. ELPI uses the serial comma. (Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) 6:19: When a conjunction joins the last two elements in a series of three or more, a comma—known as the serial or series comma or the Oxford comma—should appear before the conjunction.)  
  
**Example:** James brought his computer, lunch, and jacket to the conference.
2. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when the conjunction joins independent clauses, except when the sentence is fairly short. (See CMOS 6:22.) As a writer/editor, you will have to make a judgment call on the length and flow of the sentence.
  - a. **Example:** Susie’s book was published, but she still felt she had much more to learn.
  - b. **Example:** Susie was published but felt she had much to learn.
  - c. **Example:** John went on a hunting trip last weekend, and he forgot his gun.
  - d. **Example:** John went hunting and forgot his gun.
3. Limit comma splices (except in very rare instances: “I rose, I ran, I recovered.”) Change to two sentences, add a conjunction, or use a semicolon.
4. ELPI prefers the em dash (—) as opposed to the en dash (–). According to CMOS, no spaces should be added on either side of the em dash.

**Example:** Susie went on a shopping spree—an event she regretted.





3. Writers/editors should have access to Bible software such as Biblesoft or BibleGateway.com.

## COMMON ERRORS:

1. World Wide Web and Scripture(s) are always capitalized (www in a web address is not). Internet is no longer capitalized when used within a sentence.
2. Most “e” material is hyphenated: e-book, e-zine, e-mag. Email (email) is not.
3. Catch your “that” usage. Many times, the word *that* can be omitted (See #4).
4. Be careful of using *it*. Construct your sentences so ~~that~~ you can use a synonym for the word *it* is replacing.
  - a. **Example:** We went to a celebratory gala last night. ~~The~~ party was fantastic.
  - b. **Example:** “It’s a beautiful day, isn’t it? I’m glad we came here.” Instead, “What a beautiful day for us to come to the park.
5. Numbers and times of day should be spelled out in most cases. (See CMOS 9.2ff for numbers and CMOS 9.37ff for time.)
  - a. **Example:** She went to the doctor at 3:00 for her 7th visit.
  - b. **Better:** She went to the doctor at three o'clock for her seventh visit. Note: Odd times such as 3:27 are not spelled out.
6. Be careful to show and not tell. Be careful not to include too much minutiae in descriptions, thereby telling and not showing.
  - a. **Example:** Jane woke up, rolled over to the edge of the bed, stood up, put her robe on, buttoned the buttons, and then went to answer the door.
  - b. **Better:** “Just hold on!” Jane shouted. “I hear you!” Muttering to herself that some people were just too inconsiderate of the hour, she threw on her robe as she stomped over to answer the door.

## **GENERAL TIPS:**

1. When you've read your manuscript checking for errors many times, put the book away for a day or two before you look at your work again.
2. Read your book aloud—you'll hear awkward phrases.
3. Have several beta readers—they'll pick up on things you've missed because you're too close to the story.

## **SUGGESTED MANUSCRIPT WORD COUNT\*\*:**

Contemporary romance: 55,000 to 65,000

Women's contemporary fiction: 65,000-75,000

Romantic suspense: 75,000 to 85,000

Historical romance: 65,000 to 75,000

Historical: 75,000 to 90,000

Thriller, mystery, speculative (non YA): 75,000 to 90,000

YA most genres: 50,000-60,000; speculative: no more than 75,000

Epics and Sagas: 90,000-100,000

Nonfiction: 35,000-50,000

\*\*Although these word counts may be exceeded, ELPI prefers them to be as close as possible.

