Vertical Spacing in Word

Microsoft has a feature that allows you to add additional space before and/or after paragraphs. This additional space gets added every time you hit the Enter key. Word defaults to having additional spacing. The Thesis Guidelines specify that all manuscripts must consistently be in 2.0 spacing.

This handout demonstrates how to set your line spacing and how to change the default paragraph settings to remove extra space. It is suggested that you set these properties early in the writing process; otherwise, you may need to set them for every paragraph.

Step 1: Select All Text

1. Open your manuscript in Word.
2. Press **Ctrl + A** (Windows) or **Cmd + A** (Mac) to select all the text in the document.

Step 2: Open Paragraph Settings

You have two ways to do this:

Option 1: Right-click Method

1. Right-click on the selected text.
2. Click **"Paragraph…"** from the menu.

Option 2: Ribbon Method

1. Go to the **"Home"** tab on the Ribbon.
2. In the **Paragraph** group, click the small **arrow icon** in the bottom-right corner (this opens the Paragraph dialog box).

Step 3: Set Line Spacing to Double

1. In the **Paragraph** dialog box, look for the section labeled **“Spacing.”**
2. Set:
    - Before: 0 pt
    - After: 0 pt
3. Then, look for the **“Line spacing”** dropdown menu and choose:
    - “Double”
4. (Optional but recommended): Check the box labeled **“Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style”** to prevent Word from inserting extra space between paragraphs.

Step 4: Apply and Confirm

1. Click **OK** to apply the changes.
2. Review a few pages of your manuscript to make sure:
    - Lines are clearly double spaced (not 1.5, not uneven).
    - There’s no extra space before or after paragraphs.
    - Paragraph indents (if required) are consistent.

Optional:

You can verify spacing by using the **line spacing measurement tool**:

1. Turn on the **Ruler**:
    - Go to **View** tab → Check **“Ruler”**
2. Insert your cursor in any line.
3. Use the vertical ruler on the left to estimate spacing (double spacing is about **24 points** per line for 12-point font).