

Chapter openings: drop caps and lead-ins

The first page of a chapter is where a book shows a little ceremony: the chapter starts partway down the page, the title sits just so, and the first paragraph often opens with a large capital letter and a few words in small capitals. This page covers those touches.

Screenshot: a chapter opening with a dropped capital and a small-caps lead-in *Screenshot: the "As it prints" preview of a chapter's first page, with a three-line dropped capital and the first words in small caps.*

The initial and the lead-in

On the **Fonts** tab of **Page setup** (in the **Book** menu), the **Chapter opening** card sets how a chapter's first paragraph begins.

- **Initial** — the first letter of the chapter:
 - **None** — an ordinary first letter.
 - **Dropped** — a large capital set down into the first few lines of the paragraph, the text wrapping around it.
 - **Raised** — a large capital standing on the first line and rising above it.
- **Lines** — how many lines the initial spans. Three is the classic.
- **Initial font** — a font for the big letter alone. A display face can carry a single large letter beautifully where the body font can't; leave it on the body font for something quieter.
- **Lead-in** — the first few words in **Small caps** or **Capitals**, easing the reader from the big letter into the text.
- **Words** — how many words the lead-in runs to. Three or four is usual. If you'd like it to end at a natural place, a line break in the text ends it early.
- **Lead-in font** — a font for the lead-in alone. Small caps look best in a font that has real ones; where it doesn't, Write makes them from capitals.
- **Also after every scene break** — opens the first paragraph after each scene break the same way.

Screenshot: the Chapter opening card *Screenshot: the Chapter opening card on the Fonts tab of Page setup, showing Initial, Lines, Initial font, Lead-in, Words, Lead-in font and the Also after every scene break box.*

The initial can also have its own color, under **Colours** on the same tab.

Where the chapter starts on the page

On the **Layout** tab:

- **Opener drop** (in the **Text** card) — how many lines of space sit above the chapter title, so the chapter begins partway down the page. Six to ten is typical.
- **Chapters open on a right-hand page** (in the **Headers and footers** card) — the way most novels do it, with a blank left-hand page added when needed. Untick it to let chapters start on whichever page comes next, which saves paper.

The title itself

Also on the **Layout** tab, the **Chapter title and headers** card sets:

- **Title** — the chapter title against the left margin, centered, or against the right.
- **Header rows** — where the rows under the title sit (a date, a place, a point of view).
- **Title case** — **As typed**, **Capitals** or **Small caps**. The contents page always keeps titles as you typed them.
- **Spacing** — a little extra space between the letters, which capitals and small caps want: 0.05 is a touch, 0.1 is airy.
- **Title size** and **Header size**, in points.

How chapter numbers read—*Chapter Four*, *4*, *IV*—and what goes in the rows under the title are set in the chapter header setup; see [Set up your chapter headers](#). Pictures and ornaments for the opening are in [Pictures in a chapter opening](#).

Revision #5

Created 2026-10-14 21:40:04 UTC by AuthorTools Write

Updated 2026-10-14 22:54:35 UTC by AuthorTools Write