

How to Format Pesterlogs: A Satirical Guide

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/5391818) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/5391818>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Homestuck
Relationships:	Narrator/Reader , Dave Strider/Karkat Vantas , John Egbert/Dave Strider
Characters:	You (Intrepid Fanfic Author) , Sarcastic Narrator - Character , Dave Strider (mentioned) , Karkat Vantas (Mentioned) , John Egbert (mentioned)
Additional Tags:	Silly , ao3 - Freeform , Formatting Pesterlogs , Sort of in the style of Andrew Hussie , Meta Humor
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2015-12-10 Completed: 2015-12-15 Words: 3,227 Chapters: 3/3

How to Format Pesterlogs: A Satirical Guide

by [sburbanite](#)

Summary

This guide will help you with formatting pesterlogs using the Homestuck Work Skin. It is also very silly.

Now featuring the **Almighty Cheat Sheet of Doom** - a special cut-out-and-keep sheet with every HTML code you'll ever need to be a Pestering Master.

Pesterlogs for Dummies

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

==> Homestuck Fan: Finish your masterpiece.

Sweet. You put the finishing touches on your latest fanfic, uploading it into Ao3 so that your adoring fans can bask in its greatness. Or, you know, the three people that follow you. Shut up.

There's only one problem, and that's your prized pesterlog section. There are literally pages of solid gold rants from your favourite characters, but you can't get them to look right. You're particulalry proud of the argument between Karkat and Dave, but it just doesn't look right if it isn't in grey and red. Le sign.

==> Homestuck Fan: Read this guide.

This is already getting too meta, cut that shit out.

==> Narrator: Okay fine, open up the "Edit Work" tab.

You scan down the edifice of grey, searching for the fabled "work skins" menu. You know it's here somewhere. At last, your search is at an end, it's at the bottom, just above your carefully crafted words of genius.

==> Homestuck Fan: Enable the Homestuck Work Skin.

Hooray, your quest is at an end! This thing will magically convert all of your pesterlogs for you, right? You hit preview...

Oh. It looks the same. What the hell do you do now??

==> Homestuck Fan: Chill out and appreciate the majesty of the Homestuck Work Skin.

Even though you don't know how to use it yet, you silently thank the angels of Paradox Space who spent their time figuring out what colour and style every kid's text should be. You offer them your soul. They politely decline.

==> Homestuck Fan: Master HTML like a boss.

You toggle the text entry to HTML, ready to step out into the deep end. You don't need no Rich Text water-wings. The experience bumps you up your Echeladder to **AMATEUR SYNTAXIDERMIST**.

Congratulations!

==> Narrator: Stop messing around and get to the point.

With the pesterlog section in front of you, you examine what the HTML reader has done to your work. Apparently it's seen fit to sprinkle mysterious `<p>` and `</p>` symbols everywhere. Naturally, it is immediately obvious that the `<p>` symbols specify the beginnings of paragraphs, and the `</p>` the ends. This HTML business is a piece of lovingly prepared birthday cake with some decorative fake arms shoved into it.

Some finesse is going to be needed in order to get the text looking the way you want, though. You consult this guide in a totally non-meta way, nearly sidestepping an authorial paradox. It tells you the following.

You find the beginning of your pesterlog section, which in this case reads:

```
<p> turntechGodhead [TG] began pestering carcinoGeneticist [CG]</p>
```

You won't settle for plain old body-text. You're going to Homestuck that shit. You change it to the following:

```
<p class="pesterlog"> turntechGodhead [TG] began pestering carcinoGeneticist [CG]</p>
```

You hit the "Preview" button, and choirs of angels sing in celebration of the sight of your wonderous formatted text. This only happens the first time, so don't get used to it. Angels are very busy, you know. They're basically throwing you a bone here.

Your text now looks like this:

turntechGodhead [TG] began pestering carcinoGeneticist [CG]

Have a biscuit, you've earned it.

==> Homestuck Fan: What about the rest of the pesterlog? It's still not colourful enough.

Now is the time to thank the beings of pure light who made the work skin. For thine is the power to colourize your text.

The next bit of your fic reads as follows:

TG: dude i warned you about bananas

CG: SHUT THE FUCK UP STRIDER, YOU HAD NO IDEA THEY WOULD TURN MY HORNS YELLOW.

let's format it until it can't see straight. As before, you change the `<p>` command to something else. In this case, you run with a hunch and try just typing in the kids names. If the skin is so awesome, that should be it, right?

```
<p class="Dave">TG: dude i warned you about bananas
```

<p class="Karkat">CG: SHUT THE FUCK UP STRIDER, YOU HAD NO IDEA THEY WOULD TURN MY HORNS YELLOW.

You hit preview....and...

TG: dude i warned you about bananas

CG: SHUT THE FUCK UP STRIDER, YOU HAD NO IDEA THEY WOULD TURN MY HORNS YELLOW.

Balls. It looks the same. What gives?

==> Narrator: Comfort suicidal Homestuck Fan. That stump is looking way too tempting right now.

You're not looking at the goddamn stump. It holds no interest for you. You wonder how this comic still has any fans left considering the author left a loaded gun lying around for whenever they get the slightest bit confused.

==> Narrator: OK fine. Tell them how to fix it.

With pleasure. It turns out that the work skin requires you to use names without capital letters. HTML denies the existence of capital letters for religious reasons, much in the same way many robots deny the existence of numbers other than 0 and 1. You de-capitalize your commands in solidarity with HTML.

<p class="dave">TG: dude i warned you about bananas

<p class="karkat">CG: SHUT THE FUCK UP STRIDER, YOU HAD NO IDEA THEY WOULD TURN MY HORNS YELLOW.

You hit preview once more...

TG: dude i warned you about bananas

CG: SHUT THE FUCK UP STRIDER, YOU HAD NO IDEA THEY WOULD TURN MY HORNS YELLOW.

Huzzah! Success!

You wonder if this approach will work with any character's name?

==> Narrator: Yes it will, apart from characters that use another character's text color.

Oh, you get it. So instead of typing "meenah" you'd need to type "feferi". Or for Davesprite it would be "dirk".

That sounds pretty easy.

The only thing that remains is to add a cheeky little </p> to the end of your pesterlog.

HTML is basically a passive-aggressive English teacher at heart, and if you forget, it will bat its eyelashes at you while sweetly whispering "but I thought you wanted the other 10,000 words of this piece to be in angry grey text, because you didn't say stop."

Remember to say stop, kids. Always use a `</p>`.

==> Homestuck Fan: Recieve a boon from your Narrator.

The narrator bestows upon you enough experience to climb yet another rung on your Echeladder. You are now a majestic **PESTERING DILLETENTE**.

==> Homestuck Fan: Wait a minute, the pesterlogs always show the kids chumhandles in their colour, and I tried to write a quadrant symbol and it came out all weird. Clearly we aren't done here.

You'll have to enrol in the advanced class for info like that, my old chum. By which I mean wait for the next chapter to come out.

Happy Formatting!

Chapter End Notes

Formatting this formatting guide was worse than actually formatting pesterlogs. Still, I hope it's helpful for someone.

For extra masochism, I wrote this on my phone. It corrected "Huzzah!" to "Nissan!" which I find amusing for some reason.

Let's make this shit FNCY

====> **Homestuck Fan: Cry with shame at inability to format pesterlogs**

What, already?

Perhaps if you're lucky, someone nice will help you out of the pit that has been so conveniently placed in your path, disguised as regular patch of dirt. "What pit?" You said, endearingly, as you toppled into it. Or you stepped skilfully around it and you haven't had any problems. Either way, let's help out the idiots who did fall into the trap of MS Word's legendary feud with HTML.

The long and storied history of this feud stretches back into the mists of the early nineties, when HTML said something rude about WordPerfect...What's that? You don't care and the pit is full of angry snakes?

Fine.

It turns out that the type of "quotation marks" that are used by MS Word are too curvy and sensual for HTML to handle. If you try and type out your HTML commands in Word, AO3's HTML reader will have a terrible fit of the vapours and refuse to acknowledge these curvaceous harlots of the punctuation world.

In short, if you're having problems, re-type the quotations within the code sections once you upload to AO3. Alternatively, copy the code you need from the cheat sheet at the end of this document. That should allow you to climb gracefully out of the pit of shame and carry on your merry way, making that face that suggests you totally meant to fall in that hole, you're just not in on the joke, OK?

====> **Homestuck Fan: Make it FNCY, motherfucker.**

Right. Time to step out of the kiddie pool teeming with pesterlogs that don't look quite right, have too much space between the lines and are drooling unselfconsciously all over themselves. You're pretty sure that water is almost entirely piss at this point.

Water-wings equipped, you head out into the grown up pool. Go on, dip your toe in. You won't drown, the water's metaphorical. Pretty soon you're doggy-paddling up and down with a little <> on each arm, ready to learn some real shit. Let's make this log look **FNCY**.

====> **Homestuck Fan: Sort out the "pestering" command, it needs more colours!**

The "who is pestering who command" has each kid's text written in their colour, but unlike the pesterlogs the colour doesn't take up a whole line. This is a special kind of witchcraft known as specifying the format of a span of text, rather than a great, lumping paragraph. It's the watchmaker's tweezers to the <p> command's sledgehammer.

Specifying a span is the same as for a paragraph, except instead of using the <p class="john"> and </p> commands, it uses and .

How easy is that? A pesterlog starting line has three of these spans of text specified, so it's a little more complicated. The three parts you will need are (the italics explain what each part of the code is for):

```
<span class="john">ectoBiologist [EB] </span> The chumhandle and initials of the person pestering  
<span class="pesterlog"> began pestering </span> The pesterlog command text  
<span class="dave"> turntechGodhead [TG]</span> The chumhandle and initials of the person being pestered
```

When you use them in your own logs, you just stick all three parts together like one big, happy ménage à trois. They are the OT3 of the pestering world. D'awww.

```
<p><span class="john"> ectoBiologist [EB]</span> <span class="pesterlog"> began pestering </span> <span class="dave"> turntechGodhead [TG]</span></p>
```

You copy this into your own log, just to try it out, and with flagrant disregard for plagiarism laws. You feel a little dirty but the result more than makes up for it:

```
ectoBiologist [EB] began pestering turntechGodhead [TG]
```

Awwww yeah.

That's some sweet Pepsi-cola if you do say so yourself. The Narrator gently reminds you that this is an instructional guide, numbnuts. You can copy whatever you like from it, save from claiming the whole lot as your own work. The Narrator also reminds you that she knows where you live.

She also calls your attention to the handy cheat-sheet, the glorious expanse of which houses every chumhandle already united with its specifying code. Sweet Christ on a cracker, you'll never need to type them out again.

===>Homestuck Fan: Be overcome with gratitude and die with a smile on your face.

You collapse back into your **QUEST OFFICE-CHAIR**, and in the last few seconds of life remaining to you, you thank the gods of Paradox Space that you shelled out the extra boonbucks for a chair with your class symbol on it.

You arise from your chair, reborn as the mighty **CRACKERJACK SPANNER**.
A fine title for one so adept in the pestering arts.

===>Homestuck Fan: Discover the extent of your spanning powers.

This spanning business seems like it would be useful, but what exactly can you do with it? Well, it turns out you can use it to make your work look smooth, professional and downright sexy. It won't fix the content, but damn. The readers just won't care about that when they get an eyeful of the log you're packing.

Replacing the simplistic `<p class="john">` command with something altogether more subtle takes skill. Skill at using the “ctrl” and “c” keys simultaneously, specifically.

Here’s something to aim those powers at:

```
<span class="john">EB: hey dave! </span> <br />
<span class="dave">TG: sup egbert </span> <br />
```

You recognise the span commands, those are your bread and butter these days. But where the hell did that rogue `<br />` come from? What is it’s business here? You point an accusing finger at the interloper: *J’accuse!*

Calm down. Breathe. The `<br />` command simply specifies that everything before it is on its own line. It saves you having to bracket your oh-so-swanky span coding with an additional `<br>` and `</br>` to specify a page break.

Let's see what it looks like:

```
EB: hey dave!
TG: sup egbert
```

Beautiful. You can already smell the chemistry between these two, and it smells like red and blue text.

==>Homestuck Fan: Right, you’ve got this covered. See you later, condescending Narrator.

In a while, idiot who doesn’t want to know how to do quadrant symbols and emotes. Oh, you seem to be back. How odd.

Quadrant symbols such as `<>`, `<3` and `<3<` are problematic, because they use parentheses. The HTML reader scratches its head at them, vainly looking for what’s supposed to go inside them. We have to use some trickery to get around it.

Be warned, dear reader. This is the only section that the Narrator cannot provide in handy copyable form – the commands would simply be translated. You’ll have to flex those fingers of yours and do some copying old-skool-stylee.

To do the symbols, you’ll need to use the HTML code for each symbol, rather than just typing it out. The only ones we need are the ones for `<` and `>`, which are shown in the picture below (don’t try and molest it with your cursor, that text is locked up tight and sitting pretty on photobucket). The "equal" signs are not part of the code, you want everything after it:

```
< (less than) = &lt;
> (greater than) = &gt;
```

Cunningly, the lt in stands for "lesser than", and the gt stands for "greater than". The more you know... So for the quadrant symbols, you'll need to type out the following. Make sure you use semi-colons, not colons. HTML doesn't want to go anywhere near you colon.

For the quadrant symbols, you simply jam the codes for the parentheses you want together:

<> (diamond) = <>

<3 (heart) = <3

<3< (spade) = <3<

And with that, I can teach you no more. Run wild and free, my pupil. Enjoy your HTML powers, and don't forget to cheat at every opportunity.

==>Homestuck Fan: Wait! What about the cool emotes? You promised me cool emotes!

Ahh, my child. Now comes the Darwinian portion of this guide. For those who are smart enough to figure out that the answer you seek is at the bottom of the cheat sheet shall prosper, and those who are not will fail to achieve the level of coolity granted by these emotes. Happy hunting!

The Almighty Cheat-Sheet of Doom

Welcome to the Almighty Cheat Sheet!

The idea is to download this sheet and save it, or keep it open in your browser when you're working. Enjoy never having to type out a character's chumhandle again!

For the start and end of Pesterlog Chats, use the following span codes in this format:

<p> ectoBiologist [EB] began
pestering turntechGodhead [TG]</p>

Pesterlog Text:

 began pestering
 ceased pestering

Beta Kids:

 ectoBiologist [EB]
 ghostlyTrickster [GT]
 turntechGodhead [TG]
 tentacleTherapist [TT]
 gardenGnostic [GG]

Alpha Kids:

 golgothasTerror [GT]
 timaeusTestified [TT]
 gutsyGumshoe [GG]
 tipsyGnostalgic [TG]

Trolls:

 apocalypseArisen [AA]
 adiosToreador [AT]
 twinArmageddons [TA]
 carcinoGeneticist [CG]
 arsenicCatnip [AC]
 grimAuxillatrix [GA]
 gallowsCalibrator [GC]
 arachnidsGrip [AG]
 terminallyCapricious [TC]
 centaursTesticle [CT]
 caligulasAquarium [CA]
 cuttlefishCuller [CC]

Cherubs:

Calliope: uranianUmbra [UU]
Caliborn (grey): undyingUmbrage [uu]
Caliborn (green): undyingUmbrage [uu]

Other Characters:

Davesprite: `<span class="dirk"> turntechGodhead [TG] </span>`

AR/Lil' Hal: `<span class="dave"> timaeusTestified [TT] </span>`

The Condesce: `<span class="feferi"> )(er Imperious Condensation [IC] </span>`

For pesterlog body text, there are two versions: BASIC and FNCY

For BASIC instructions, see chapter 1

For FNCY instructions, see chapter 2

BASIC formatting uses these codes to replace the `<p>` at the beginning of each new line of text the character types:

Beta Kids:

`<p class="john">`

`<p class="dave">`

`<p class="rose">`

`<p class="jade">`

Alpha Kids:

`<p class="jake">`

`<p class="dirk">`

`<p class="jane">`

`<p class="roxy">`

Trolls:

`<p class="aradia">`

`<p class="tavros">`

`<p class="sollux">`

`<p class="karkat">`

`<p class="nepeta">`

`<p class="kanaya">`

`<p class="terezi">`

`<p class="vriska">`

`<p class="equius">`

`<p class="gamzee">`

`<p class="eridan">`

`<p class="feferi">`

Cherubs:

Calliope: `<p class="calliopie">`

Caliborn (grey): `<p class="caliborn">`

Caliborn (green): `<p class="felt">`

Other characters:

Davesprite: `<p class="dirk">`

AR/ Lil' Hal: `<p class="dave">`

The Condesce: `<p class="feferi">`

Remember to always end your pesterlogs with a: `</p>`

FNCY pesterlogs look more like the ones in the comic, but have more code at the beginning and end of each line. Use these if you want a truly authentic log that won't take up pages and pages. If you're just doing a few lines or are new to pesterlog formatting, stick with the **BASIC** version.

Your pesterlog text goes between the `<span class>` and `</span>` brackets. (e.g. `<span class="jade">GG: hi dave!!!</span>`)

*As with **BASIC** logs, remember to always end your pesterlogs with a: `</p>`*

Beta Kids:

```
<span class="john"> </span> <br />
<span class="dave"> </span> <br />
<span class="rose"> </span> <br />
<span class="jade"> </span> <br />
```

Alpha Kids:

```
<span class="jake"> </span> <br />
<span class="dirk"> </span> <br />
<span class="jane"> </span> <br />
<span class="roxy"></span> <br />
```

Trolls:

```
<span class="aradia"> </span> <br />
<span class="tavros"> </span> <br />
<span class="sollux"> </span> <br />
<span class="karkat"> </span> <br />
<span class="nepeta"> </span> <br />
<span class="kanaya"> </span> <br />
<span class="terezi"> </span> <br />
<span class="vriska"> </span> <br />
<span class="gamzee"> </span> <br />
<span class="equius"> </span> <br />
<span class="eridan"> </span> <br />
<span class="feferi"> </span> <br />
```

Cherubs:

```
Calliope: <span class="calliopie"> </span><br />
Caliborn (grey): <span class="caliborn">
</span><br />
Caliborn (green): <span class="felt"></span><br />
```

Other Characters:

```
Davesprite: <span class="dirk"> </span> <br />
Ar/Lil' Hal: <span class="dave"> </span> <br />
The Condesce: <span class="feferi"> </span> <br />
```

Character Emotes

Some characters use Homsetuck specific emotes (such as Sollux's bi-coloured shades), which are actually tiny images stored on Andrew Hussie's HS servers. By cunningly mining the HTML from pages with the emotes in them, I have pulled out the code needed to insert the emotes.

To insert these, just copy paste them into your log:

AR/Lil Hal's Shades:

```

```

ARquiusprite Shades:

```

```

Dave's Shades Emote

```

```

Sollux's Shades Emote (Red and Blue)

```

```

Sollux's Shades Emote (Blind)

```

```

Works inspired by this one

[Pesterlog Formatting±](#) by [Yagirlaradia42](#)

[Random experiments with the work skins](#) by [WingedSea](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!