

Package `listparskip` v. 1.0 User Guide

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Overview

The `listparskip` package modifies list environments such that they add `\parskip` and `\partopsep` before or after a list if and only if the environment follows or precedes, respectively, a blank line (i.e. a `\par`).

Most \LaTeX users are familiar with the `enumerate` and `itemize` environments, and a number of other environments share the same underlying macros and structure. These list environments are useful and versatile, and they come up in many different situations where fine control over vertical spacing is important.¹ The dimensions `\topsep`, `\parsep`, `\partopsep`, and `\itemsep` control vertical spacing for list environments, and by default, \LaTeX determines the space immediately outside a list as follows:

- Always add `\topsep` before and after a list
- Add `\parskip` (not `\parsep`) always before a list and usually after it²
- If a list begins outside of a paragraph, add `\partopsep` before and after the list

If `\parskip` is nonzero, for example in a formal letter, it is impossible to include a list inside a paragraph without the inter-paragraph space suggesting that the list forms its own paragraph. (Unless the user manually changes `\parskip` or adds negative vertical glue.) Similarly, \LaTeX chooses whether to add `\partopsep` after a list independently of what happens at that point in the source code.

The `listparskip` package modifies this behavior by making the `\parskip` and `\partopsep` spacing depend more closely on paragraph structure from the source code. Under `listparskip` rules, the space around lists happens as follows:

- Always add `\topsep` before and after a list
- If a list begins outside of a paragraph, add `\parskip` and `\partopsep` before the list
- If a blank line comes immediately after the list in the source code, always add `\partopsep` and usually add `\parskip`

These changes happen automatically after loading the package, and they allow the user to control whether \TeX positions a list environment as its own paragraph or as part of the surrounding paragraph. When `\parskip` and `\partopsep` are both `0pt`, this package does nothing, but for an example of what can happen when either dimension is positive, see `listparskip_example.pdf`, which is included with the `listparskip` installation and is available on CTAN. Users can load `listparskip` with the standard `\usepackage{listparskip}` syntax, and the package has no options.

¹There is an overlap in terminology. The list environments described in this document are very different from horizontal and vertical lists in the \TeX language.

² \TeX treats any text after a list as the start of a new paragraph, so if the next material to be typeset is text, \TeX adds `\parskip` after the list. If the user includes a box or rule instead of text, it does not trigger the start of a paragraph, and \TeX does not add `\parskip`.

Table 1: Recommended Source Code to Insert after a List

Next Material to Typeset	No New Paragraph Desired	New Paragraph Desired
Text	Nothing	Blank line
<code>\item</code>	Nothing	Nothing or blank line
Box or Rule	<code>\nullline</code>	Blank line, then <code>\nullline</code>

Immediately after the end of a list environment, `listparskip` expects to see a some text, a blank line followed by text, or an `\item`. As a general rule, text means an extra `\topsep`, and a blank line followed by text leads to an extra `\topsep + \partopsep + \parskip`. If you want to put something else, such as a box or rule, after the end of a list environment, you should type `\nullline` before the other material to prevent any spacing mishaps. This macro instructs \TeX to behave like it just encountered a line of text except without adding any vertical space. Table 1 shows my recommendations for code to include after a list in various cases depending on the desired result, and Table 2 shows the full rules for what happens after a list with `listparskip` in various situations. For more information, see `listparskip_code.pdf`, which is included with the `listparskip` installation and is available on CTAN.

Table 2: Space after a List When Using `listparskip`

Material after a List	Vertical Space Used in Addition to <code>\topsep</code>
Text*	None
Box	Don't do this [‡]
<code>\item</code> * [†]	<code>\parsep + \itemsep</code>
Blank line, then text*	<code>\partopsep + \parskip</code>
Blank line, then box	Don't do this [‡]
Blank line, then <code>\item</code> * [†]	<code>\partopsep + \parsep + \itemsep</code>
<code>\nullline</code> , then text	<code>\parskip</code>
<code>\nullline</code> , then box*	None
<code>\nullline</code> , then <code>\item</code> [†]	<code>\parsep + \itemsep</code>
Blank line, then <code>\nullline</code> , then text	<code>\partopsep + 2\parskip</code>
Blank line, then <code>\nullline</code> , then box*	<code>\partopsep + \parskip</code>
Blank line, then <code>\nullline</code> , then <code>\item</code> [†]	<code>\partopsep + 2\parsep + \itemsep</code>

*Recommended use.

[†]For `\item` in a nested list, the `\parsep` and `\itemsep` refer to the dimensions in the outer list, not the list that just ended.

[‡]With `listparskip`, putting a box after the end of a list environment without text or `\nullline` previously may mess up vertical spacing or paragraph indentation after the box depending on what comes next.