This isn't quite the simplest possible LATEX document:

```
\documentclass{article}
\begin{document}
This isn't quite the
simplest \LaTeX\ document.

Now with \emph{two}
paragraphs!
\end{document}
```

> This isn't quite the simplest LATEX document.
> Now with *two* paragraphs!

It is supposed to illustrate a couple of key points, however:

- The document begins with a `\documentclass` command, which tells how the document will be formatted (with the `article` format),

- All of the text following `\begin{document}` is shown in the document,

- In the document, *line breaks and extra spaces are ignored*, so that even though there was a line break between the words "the" and "simplest," LATEX decided where to break the line to best fit the "page,"

- The exception to this is the two carriage returns between the paragraphs, which are interpreted as a paragraph break. In the `article` format, this prompts LATEX to indent the paragraphs,

- We use *macros* to control the typesetting of text. Some just insert text or characters (`\LaTeX`), some have arguments, (`\emph{emphasized text}`), some have optional arguments, given with square brackets. And there are macros which are like "switches," but we'll talk about those later, and

- Spaces are ignored after macros, so that to get a space trailing a macro we include an explicit space by escaping it with a backslash (as in `\LaTeX\␣`).

A couple of other notes about typing text in LATEX:

- Spacing: Generally speaking, there's no reason to muck with LATEX's choice of spacing. There are two possible exceptions to this. When a line shouldn't break on a space, use a *tie* (the tilde character `~`): P. Gavin LaRose is typed `P.~Gavin LaRose`. And LATEX will put a longer space following a period that isn't preceded by a capital letter, which you don't always want—for Prof. LaRose, type `Prof.\ LaRose`.

- Hyphens: An en-dash is obtained with a double-hyphen: `--`. Thus, to get pp. 1–7, type `pp.~1--7`. Similarly, an em-dash is a triple-hyphen—as used here: we type `...a triple-hyphen---as used here:...` And a hyphen is a single-hyphen. Duh.

- Breaks: Generally speaking, don't force line breaks. If you have to, use a double-backslash (`\\`). Force a page break with `\newpage`.