Formatting your dissertation in *Word*

About this guide

This guide is not intended to be comprehensive training but a selection of tips for the effective formatting and structuring of your dissertation in **Word for Windows**. Each section concludes with links to an online Microsoft resource that will give more detail on the how to carry out the particular skill.

Contents

Using *Word* for your dissertation

Your dissertation is likely to be the biggest piece of written work and probably the single most important assignment you will undertake whilst at university. Structuring your dissertation correctly is crucial; therefore learning how to use certain features within *Word* can help you construct your dissertation easily and with less stress! It's worth taking some time at the beginning to get familiar with these features to save you time later.

General guidance

- When writing, type everything in the default format and then go back and use **Word Styles** to apply your required formatting as a separate operation. This is efficient and lends consistency.
- Use **Section Breaks**, to control the underlying document structure and give you control over custom areas of your document.
- Save your work regularly, try to get into the habit of saving your work every 15 minutes or so.
- Creating backups of your work is **essential**. This means having more than one copy, and in more than one place (preferably at least one in your O365 *OneDrive*).
- Using multiple, smaller files will help avoid *Word* corrupting, but you must adopt a systematic file naming convention, particularly as you will then have backups of multiple files. A single, large file approach is acceptable, but it is even more crucial that the file is backed up rigorously.
- Including the date at the start of the backup filename (in the format YYYY-MM-DD), will help ordering and identifying versions.
- Stick with one word-processing program (ie platform and version) for the entire document, and the entire writing process.

Using *Word* Styles

A *Style* is a defined set of formatting instructions that can be applied in one click. *Word* has many built-in styles ready to use and is an efficient and consistent method to format text. Start with a blank *Word* document and define all the Styles you need for formatting your dissertation by either modifying existing styles or creating new ones. Save this as a template for all your writing.

Using a Quick Style

Quick Styles are listed on the **Home** tab in the **Styles group**. Start by selecting the text you want to format then click the desired style from the Quick Styles gallery.

Heading styles (*Heading 1*, *Heading 2*, etc) are useful for giving structure to formal documents. There are 9 levels of Heading, in descending priority. To see the expanded gallery of other Quick Styles, click the down button beside the gallery list (circled).
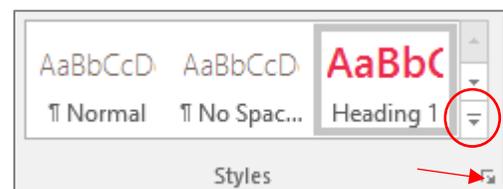
Modify a style's format definition

1. Click the Styles Task Pane launcher (see arrow on Gallery figure). In the Styles task pane, right click the style, and select **Modify**.
2. In the **Modify** dialog box, make the format changes you want— for example, select a different font, line spacing, etc.
3. Applying the modification to the style by clicking **OK**.
4. All the text that uses this style will update to reflect the modified style.

💡 Online resources: [Applying Built-in Styles](#) ; [Customize or create new styles](#)

Working with the navigation pane

Looking for specific text or a table or just need to easily move around your document? The **Navigation pane** is an efficient way to work with your document and is based on you having used Heading styles to structure your document.

View the Navigation Pane

The Navigation pane may already be visible to the left of your document. If not, on the **View** tab, in the **Show** group, select **the Navigation Pane** check box.
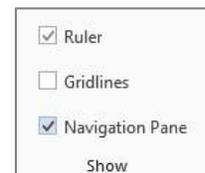
Search for text and other document elements

1. In the **Search Document** box, type the text that you want to find, or click the arrow next to the magnifying glass, and then select the desired **Find:** object option.
2. Click a result to see it in your document, or browse through all the results by clicking the **Next Search Result** and **Previous Search Result** arrows.

Tip: You can also open the *Search box* from the **Home** tab, in the **Editing** group: click **Find**, or press **CTRL+F**.

View thumbnail images of pages

1. In the **Navigation pane**, click the **Browse the pages** in your document tab.
2. To go to a page in the document, click the thumbnail image.

Browse by headings

1. In the **Navigation pane**, click the **Browse the headings** in your document tab.
2. To go to a heading in your document, click the heading.
3. To show or hide the subheadings under a heading, click the triangle next to the heading.

Tip You can move parts of your document around by dragging a Heading in the Navigation pane to a new position. You can also change the level of headings, and you can add new headings.

💡 Online resources [Use the Navigation Pane in *Word*](#)

Create distinct document Sections by using Section Breaks

Use **Section Breaks** to control custom areas of your document, such as isolating the formatting of your front pages from the body of your document (*Title*, *Acknowledgements*, etc), using landscape pages, custom headers and footers, and page numbering.

Create Sections in the document

1. In the main body of the document, position the cursor at the start of content that you want to lead the new section or move onto the the next page.
2. On the **Page Layout** tab, in the **Page Setup** group, click on **Breaks** to get the Breaks menu.
3. To start the new Section on a new page, click **Section Break >Next Page**.
4. Once you have a new Section you must break the links to the previous Section before you can do any customising. See the next topic for further instruction.

Online resource: Use Section Breaks in *Word*

Insert more advanced headers, footers and pagination

Break the link between Sections to create a unique header of footer

Headers and footers for a given section will, by default, mirror the text and structure of the preceding section unless you break the link to it.

1. Double-click in the header or footer region of your document to open the header/footer workspace. Place the cursor in the header or footer for which you want to break the link to the previous Section.
2. When the link to a previous Section is active, the header or footer includes this tab `Same as Previous`. To break the link, in the **Header & Footer Tools**, in the **Navigation** group, click the **Link to Previous** button to disable the setting.
3. The **Same as Previous** tab disappears from the right side of the header or footer region. You can now insert content that will be unique to this header or footer (depending on which you have broken the link for). You only have to break the link for one header or footer per section, regardless of the number of pages in each Section.

Change the format or starting page number

1. To change the format of your page numbers (for example, to use **-1-** instead of **1**, or the Roman Numeral **i** instead of **1**), or to change page number on which a Section starts, use the options in the **Page Number Format** dialog box.
2. Position the cursor in the section in which you want the formatting to be applied.
3. On the **Insert** tab, or the **Design** tab within **Header & Footer Tools**, click **Page Number**, and click **Format Page Numbers**, at the bottom of the menu.
4. If you want to change the look or system of the numbers, choose a setting in **Number format**.
5. You can also include a chapter number in front of the page number.

6. If you want numbering to restart at the beginning of a Section, select the starting number in **Start at**. To keep the numbering continuous, click **Continue from previous section**.
7. Click **OK**.

Online resource: Add a Section, header and footer to *Word*
Online resource: Add different page numbers or number formats to Sections

View Section Breaks and remove them

If you are having trouble getting headers, footers, and page numbers defined properly, you may be best to remove section breaks and start your restructuring again.

1. To see section breaks in a document, on the **Home** tab, click the **Show/Hide** button in the **Paragraph** group. You'll also see all your document's non-printing characters.
2. Scroll to the section break you want to delete.
3. Drag the pointer across the break to select it. Then press **Delete**.

Troubleshooting

If you can't see the section break at the end of the paragraph, try putting the cursor just before the paragraph mark and hit *return* as the section break will then show on the new line.

Create a Table of Contents (TOC)

The TOC feature in *Word* relies on the use of Heading styles to format the document. Ensure all text that is to be captured in the TOC **is formatted using Heading Styles**, (see the topic *Using Word Styles*).

Built-in automatic TOC

With the document headings formatted in an appropriate hierarchical manner using Heading styles (eg *Heading 1* for the top priority level, such as a chapter title; *Heading 2* for the next level, maybe a section heading; and *Heading 3* for a sub-heading, etc), do the following:

1. Place the cursor on the page where you want the TOC to appear in the document.
2. On the **References** tab, click **Table of Contents**.
3. Click **Automatic Table 1** or **Automatic Table 2**, (they are identical except for the label on the TOC) to insert a listing all text in Heading styles 1-3.

Update a Table of Contents

1. To update a table of contents that was created automatically from heading styles, click **References** tab> **Update Table**.
2. You can choose to **Update page numbers only** or **Update entire table** (preferred, as it will pick up all changes to the Headings).
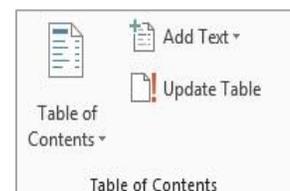
Troubleshooting

- If your TOC turns into a line of code, you may have inadvertently reverted to the field code that creates the TOC. Simply press **ALT+F9** to toggle back to your TOC entries.

- If you have either additional or missing text in your TOC, navigate to that text and check the correct style has been applied to it. Any inappropriate text displayed in the TOC, will have been formatted with a Heading style; to correct this, select the text in the document and choose **'Clear formatting'** from the drop down Styles menu. Update the TOC as above.

Online resources: [Create a basic table of contents;](#) [Creating a custom TOC](#)

Create a Table of Figures

Use captions to create a table of figures

Step One: Add a caption (carry out the following for each object requiring a caption)

1. Select the object (table, equation, figure, or another object) to which you want to add a caption.
2. On the **References** tab, in the **Captions** group, click **Insert Caption.**
3. In the **Label** list, select the label that best describes the object, such as a picture or equation. If the list doesn't provide the correct label, click **New Label**, type the new label in the Label box, and then click **OK.**
4. Type any text, including punctuation that you want to appear after the label.
5. Select any other options you want.

Step Two: Create the table (this will create a set of tables grouped by caption label)

1. Place the cursor where you want to insert the Table of Figures in your document.
2. On the **References** tab, in the **Captions** group, click **Insert Table of Figures**.
3. In the **Caption label** list, click the label type for the items that you want to include in your table of figures (eg, *Table*, *Figure*, etc).
4. Choose any other options that you want, and then click **OK.**
5. Repeat for Steps 1-4 for each label type.
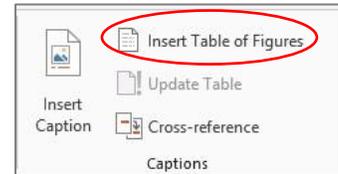
Online resources: [Add, format, or delete captions in *Word*](#)

Favourite Keyboard Shortcuts

Keys for Selecting and Editing Text

F8	Switches on extend selection mode
Crtl+A	Select the entire document
Shift+Arrow Keys	Extends selection in the direction you choose
Ctrl+Home	Move insertion point to the beginning of a document
Shift+F3	Change case

Keys for Formatting Text and Paragraphs

Ctrl+Spacebar	Remove text formats
Ctrl+Q	Remove paragraph formats
Ctrl+Shift+C	Copy formatting
Ctrl+Shift+V	Paste formatting
Ctrl+[	Reduce font size by one point
Ctrl+]	Increase font size by one point

Keys for General Tasks

Ctrl+Alt+U	Quickly remove table borders
F4	Repeat last action
Alt+Ctrl+I	Switch in and out of Print Preview
F7	Spelling and Grammar
Shift+F7	Thesaurus