

Word Notes

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Word

Word is one of Microsoft's more used but less celebrated programs. While it is not the powerhouse that is Excel, Word does have many tools that can make document creation much, much easier and more professional, *if* you do things Word's way.

If you insist on using Word as a glorified typewriter, you will waste hours of your own time and *days* of the time of some poor person who actually understands Word and has to clean up your broken, malformed, horrible document¹.


¹ Sometime, if you want to be filled with rage, once you understand how Word is supposed to work, open up some official HCC Word document and witness the horrors I have seen and tried in vain to fix.

Word Paragraphs

A Word document is made of paragraphs. While sometimes formatting might be applied to an individual word, such as *italics* to emphasize one word in a sentence, most formatting in Word should happen to whole paragraphs. This will make documents easier to update, easier to change overall, and possible to generate tables of contents for.

In Word, a “paragraph” doesn’t mean a grammatical paragraph, but any set of words with a new line after it. For instance, the heading “Word Paragraphs” above is a paragraph as far as Word is concerned.

Objects

Other elements of Word documents work around paragraphs but are far less controllable. Images, tables, SmartArt, etc, have a text wrap option (look for  while one of them is selected) which can specify whether the object should be treated as inline (like a word in the text) or how the text should wrap around it.

One thing to be aware of is that Word’s control over where such objects end up when you edit the document text is notoriously, catastrophically, random. Do not be surprised if objects jump across pages and end up far from the paragraph you thought they were anchored to. Most of the time you can just gently drag them back to where they belong, but sometimes the only choice is to delete them and re-create them again.

Paragraph Styles

A paragraph style is a type of formatting that applies to a whole paragraph. For example, this paragraph is in Normal style, while the heading “Paragraph Styles” is in Heading 1 style.

If you would like to change the look of most of your paragraphs, instead of tediously changing each one, change the Normal style, and all the paragraphs marked as Normal will change to match. You can do this by going up to the Normal style under Styles (in the Home tab), right-clicking, and choosing Modify, or (maybe easier) change one paragraph in the document to the format you want, select it, then go up to Normal style under Styles, right-click, and choose Update Normal to Match Selected.

You can do the same with any of the other styles built in.

Your Own Style

If there is a particular type of formatting that you frequently want in your document, but it doesn’t match one of the types of paragraph word has built-in - for instance, if you want a

particular style for when you are quoting from twitter, you can create a paragraph with that formatting, select it, and in the Styles dropdown, choose Create a Style and give it a name:

What you say: "Bringing this to the top of your inbox." What you mean: "I know you're ignoring this, but it's been three days." - @Microsoft (6:33 PM, Aug 11, 2020)

After that, your style will be added to the list (for this document) and you can use it to apply to any paragraph you want.

It's been so long since we posted anything about Word your professor got bored and gave up looking for a relevant quote. - @Microsoft fake tweet that never happened (5:15 AM, 12th of never)

This is useful if for your field there are specialized ways of formatting text, such as for translations, code, or scriptwriting tags.

Advantages

So why do this instead of just formatting as you go? Because it lets you be lazy, which is the highest calling of the computer professional! (Even better, it lets you be lazy while looking like a wizard to your boss who thinks Word is a typewriter).

Once you've created the style, it takes only one click to apply it to a paragraph, no matter how many complex things you did to get the paragraph to look like you wanted it to.

If you realize you need to adjust the formatting, you just modify the style and every paragraph with that style gets updated - you don't have to look through the document and hope you don't miss updating one paragraph.

For built-in styles, there are whole suites of styles designed to go well together, so you can quickly change the overall look of your document to suit different needs (suit your resume to the *asthetique*[™] of the company you're applying to).

Using header styles also lets you automatically generate a table of contents of your document, and if you turn on the Navigation Pane under the View tab, see the structure of your document and jump between sections at any time.

Design

In the design tab, there are many built-in sets of pre-designed styles. There are also color and font families. With these you can quickly apply a new professional look to your whole

document at once. This allows you to take a simple document and quickly turn it into a handout or program suitable to give out.

Note that if you have modified styles yourself to change the fonts and colors, sometimes the built-in designs will not look as good, but you can usually make further adjustments.

You can also create your own as needed. Suppose your company declares that for accessibility, all your documents must use dyslexia-friendly fonts and colorblind-friendly colors. Under Fonts in the Design Tab you can choose Customize Fonts, and create a suite of easily read fonts, and you can do the same choosing an easily distinguished set of colors under Colors > Customize Colors. Note that you can even set your choices to be the default for all documents created from then on.

Footnotes

A footnote is a way of adding extra information to your document without disturbing the flow of the text. For instance, if you want to provide the source where you got your information², you could include that in the middle of your paragraph, but that would probably interrupt the point you were trying to make. Instead, include a footnote.

Footnotes are also used for expanding acronyms, clarifying potentially ambiguous references, adding related but inessential facts, and providing amusing anecdotes³. If you find that you are often making parenthetical asides in your writing and you hate to cut them out entirely, stick them in a footnote.

Endnotes are similar, but instead of the note being at the bottom of the page where the text appears, they appear at the end of the chapter or document.

In Word, you can insert a footnote under the References tab. Word automatically numbers footnotes for you and moves them to stay with the text they are related to as you edit the document. If you cut a paragraph with a footnote from later in the document to earlier, the footnote will move with it, and be re-numbered to reflect its current position⁴.

² I learned this in grade school.

³ I learned this from Terry Pratchett.

⁴ People often try to fake footnotes in Word by drawing a line at the bottom of a page, formatting a number as a superscript, and typing their text in the footer. This is *much, much, much more work* than just using an actual Word footnote. It is the opposite of what being a lazy computer professional is all about.

Tables of Contents

In the references tab in Word is a button called Table of Contents. If you click it and choose one of the built in tables, it will generate a table of contents for your document, based on the paragraphs in your document that are styled with Headings (e.g. Heading 1, Heading 2, etc). The table will appear wherever your cursor is when you insert it.

Unfortunately, the table of contents does not update itself constantly. Instead, you must click on it and choose Update Table (you will be given options, and usually want to update the entire table).

In addition to giving a preview of the contents of your document and a guide to finding the right page, the entries in the table of content act like hyperlinks, you can control-click on a heading in the table to be taken directly to that part of the document.

Citations

If you are writing a paper, whether it is a report for a class or a description of your research, it is important to format your citations of sources or related work using the expectations for your field, or your peers (or professors) won't take your work seriously. Word can manage and format citations for you. If you are doing a large literature survey, this can save you a lot of time.

In the reference tab you can choose a style (such as APA, Chicago, or IEEE) for your citations. Under Manage Sources, you can add a new source of various types (Book, Web site, Case, etc) and enter all the appropriate information for each one. When you want to cite one of your sources, click Insert Citation [1] and choose the source from the list.

You can automatically generate a bibliography/reference list/works cited list with the Bibliography button. Like the table of contents, you will have to manually remind it to update itself when you add something new [2].

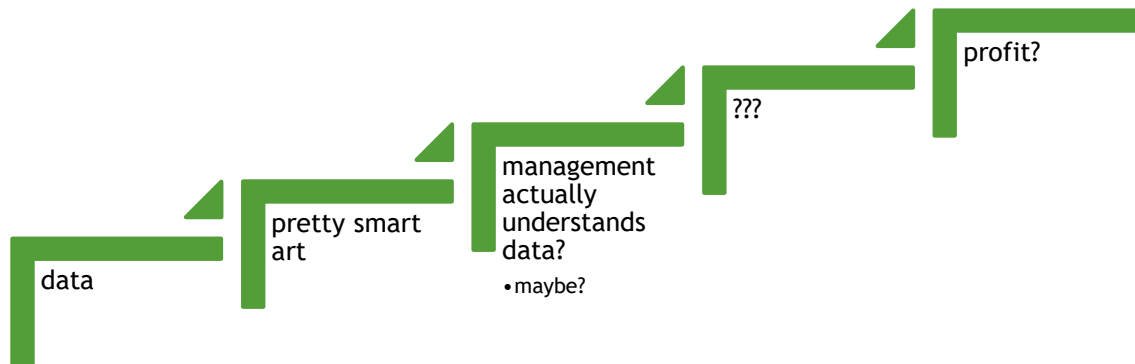
SmartArt

We frequently need to present data in a document in a way that is easy to understand at a glance, or at least visually pleasing. SmartArt is a shortcut for doing this.

In the Insert tab is a SmartArt button, which gives a long list of built-in SmartArt designed for illustrating processes, comparisons, hierarchies, etc. Once you have added a SmartArt, you can add text and often images.

Trying to edit a SmartArt by dragging, selecting, deleting, etc the parts of the SmartArt visually almost never works well. While editing a SmartArt, I would always use the Text Pane

and edit the text that the SmartArt is formatting for you. If the Text Pane is not visible, go to the SmartArt-Design tab and turn it on. Most SmartArt is based on a bulleted list, and you can add more bullets in the text pane to add more parts to the SmartArt, and in some cases add sub-bullets for extra detail.



Works Cited

- [1] A. C. Chapin, *My Brain and Stuff It Made Up*, Bel Air, Md: HCC Pressure Press, 2020.
- [2] A. C. Chapin, "Can You Believe How Convenient This Is?," in *Proceedings of the Preceding*, Atlantis, 2021.