Final Project, Word edition

DITA and structured authoring go hand in hand. However, if you don't have access to tools that offer robust DITA support, working with it is virtually impossible. Therefore, we're going to make do with a Word template.

True structured authoring requires an enforced structure. However, if you can't install the tools you need, you can still mimic the important aspects of structured authoring.

I've done my best to create a Word template with styles that mimic Lightweight DITA. Using these styles (and these styles only), you should be able to create structured documents.

What is Lightweight DITA?

Lightweight DITA is almost a standard. It is currently a work in progress, but some companies have already adopted it. It is a simplified version of DITA that is meant to be easier to adopt.

You can learn more about Lightweight DITA from the draft specification: http://docs.oasis-open.org/dita/LwDITA/v1.0/LwDITA-v1.0.html

Creating topics

We are going to pretend that Word files are lightweight DITA topics.

You are going to create a new file for each topic. Topics are the basic units of DITA content. Each topic should be organized around a single subject.

Every topic must contain a title and it should be the first thing in the topic. Use the wDITA_title style for the title.

The second paragraph of every topic should be a "Short Description" Use the wDITA_shortdesc style. It has a green background. Short descriptions are the first paragraph of your topic. However, in DITA processing, they can be used to autopopulate content. For example, when you make cross-references to topics, when you render the topics as HTML, the short description can appear as a popup when you hover over the link. They can also be used when generating lists of topics. Think of when you do a Google search, the first sentence of the web page shows up after the title. Short descriptions fulfill that purpose. Learning to write good short descriptions is a worthy endeavor. You can search for more guidance, for example https://www.oasis-open.org/committees/download.php/57803/DITA-Adoption_2016_Writing-Effective-Short-Descriptions.pdf.

After that, you can use the wDITA styles to mimic Lightweight DITA elements.

Regular paragraphs should be wDITA_paragraph.

For bulleted lists, use wDITA_unorderedlist

- List item 1
- List item 2
- List item 3

For numbered lists, use wDITA_orderedlist

1. Another list item 1
2. Another list item 2
3. Another list item 3

Remember that Word is annoying. When you start another list using wDITA_orderedlist, it starts with the next number from the previous list.

4. Right-click the first item in the new wDITA_orderedlist.
5. Select **Restart at 1**.

If something is important, you can turn it into a note using wDITA_note.

This is a note.

You can use what is called a "Definition list". Definition lists consist of a wDITA_definitionterm followed by a wDITA_definitiondescription.

This is a term   This is the description.

This is a second term   This is a second description.

                                       With a second paragraph, also using wDITA_definitiondescription.

And back to a regular paragraph, wDITA_paragraph.

You can insert tables. Please select the wDITA_table from the Tables Design ribbon. Your cursor needs to be in the table.
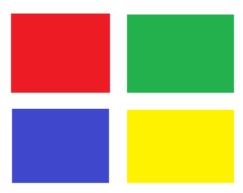
Table 1 Table caption

Heading 1	Heading 2	Heading 3
Cell contents	Stuff	Thing
You can use regular formatting in a cell	- List item 1 - List item 2	6. Ordered list 1 7. Ordered list 2

Tables should have captions. With your cursor in the table, go to the References tab and select **Insert caption**. You might need to change the label as appropriate.

You can also insert images.

Figure 1 This is a figure formatted with Caption,wDITA_figuretitle

Just use Insert Picture from the Insert tab. Images should also have captions. Select the image and use **Insert caption** from the References tab. You might need to change the label as appropriate.

Lightweight DITA also includes some inline formatting. You can have **wDITA_bold**, *wDITA_italic*, wDITA_subscript, wDITA_superscript, and wDITA_underline. You can also format links, either internal or external, using wDITA_xref.

A lot of technical documentation is about software. Many aspects of technical software requires code examples.

```
Use wDITA_codeblock for code samples.
The format respects whitespace and uses a monospace font.
   So you can have tabs
       To format code examples.
```

Working with Word templates

To mimic lightweight DITA, I have created a Word template. You need to add the template to your custom office templates folder so you can have access to it.

1. Create a folder in your Documents folder called **Custom Office Templates**.
2. Copy wDITA_Template.dotx to the Custom Office Templates folder.

   If you're lucky, that's all you need to do.

   Most likely, you will need to convince Word to find the Custom Office Templates folder.

1. Select File > Options.
2. Go to Save in the Options dialog.
3. Set the Default Personal Templates Location to the location of your Custom Office Templates folder.

   For example, my path is C:\Users\Zoe\Documents\Custom Office Templates.

Create a new Word file using wDITA_Template

It takes a few extra steps to create a new Word document using a custom template.

Make sure you have set up the template in your Custom Office Templates. See Working with Word templates.

1. Select **File > New**.

   You must select File > New. You cannot use CTRL+N and select the correct template.

2. On the New panel, select the **Personal** collection of templates.

   If you do not have a Personal option, you have to configure your personal templates location, as explained in Working with Word templates.

3. Select **wDITA_Template**.

Working with a master document

DITA has the concept of a "map" file. The map is basically the table of contents of your content. You reference topics from a map file to construct your document. You can use a master document in Word to do roughly the same thing.

I am not very familiar with working with master documents, and learned from a few web sites, such as https://www.dummies.com/software/microsoft-office-for-mac/word-for-mac/how-to-create-a-master-document-in-word-2013/.

After you create the master document, every time you re-open the file, you have to manually return to outline view.

If you open a master document, and all you see is a list of hyperlinks to your other Word files, do not panic.

1. Go to the **View** tab.
2. Select **Outline**.
3. If you are not automatically redirected to the Outlining tab, go to the **Outlining** tab.
4. Select **Show Document**.
5. Select **Expand Subdocuments**.

Whenever you produce output by saving as or exporting to PDF, make sure all the subdocuments are expanded. Otherwise, you just get a PDF of the references.

You may need to go through the master document and find all your wDITA_orderedlist styles and make sure that you select **Restart at 1** for each new list. Otherwise the master document "helps" by treating all the ordered list items as one big long list.

Don't try to save as HTML. Word can't do it.

You may need to produce two separate master documents, showing how you can reuse the individual topics.

Profiling and conditional content

As part of the final project, you are supposed to take advantage of the "profiling" or conditional text features of DITA. Unfortunately, this is not available in Word, so we're going to have to fake it.

In DITA, you can add attributes to paragraphs and inline formatting. Some of these attributes can be used for "profiling" or conditional text.

DITA has a few default categories:

- Audience
- Product
- Platform

DITA also includes the ubiquitous "otherprops" attribute as well, which you can use for any 'other' property you'd like. DITA can also be specialized so you could make special attributes just for your content.

Using these properties, you can define content that appears in specific scenarios, or doesn't appear for other scenarios. You could also provide special processing for certain content.

For example, you could have the values "admin", "poweruser", and "novice" for the audience attribute. You can label entire procedures for "admin", for all the special things an administrator needs to do. You could highlight shortcuts or advanced features with "poweruser", and mark the very detailed, step-by-step instructions for your "novice" users.

With these attributes defined and applied correctly to your content, you could create an administrator's guide or a new user's guide from the same set of procedures by including or excluding content appropriately. You could also provide specialty formatting, such as generally collapsing detailed steps that can be expanded if you need to know how to do something that experienced users are very familiar with, but novice users won't be.

These fantastic, useful features are not available in Word. That doesn't mean you can't tell me what you would do if you could.

Enter wDITA_draftcomment.

This is a "Draft Comment". In DITA, they can be easily excluded from output. Again, not possible in Word without crazy field codes and other shenanigans.

As you author your content, if you would mark a paragraph (or a whole topic) with a specific condition, explain in a "Draft Comment", using the wDITA_draftcomment style.

For example:

The next paragraph should be "admin"