Scrivener's main interface comprises the following:

- The list on the left is called the **binder**, because it acts as the project's ring-binder, being where you file and organise all of your material.

- The **editor** contains the text you are reading right now, and is where you'll do all your writing. It can also show research documents, such as images and PDF files.

- If you click on the "i" in the right of the toolbar (the strip of buttons at the top of the window), you'll open the **inspector**. The inspector displays information relating to the document currently shown in the editor, such as its synopsis, label and status.

Let's start by looking at the binder in a little more detail—in the binder sidebar, click on the document entitled "The Binder".

Using the Binder

The binder is the main navigation tool in Scrivener. You use it to access different parts of your project, as well as to create new sections and arrange them. (*Note*: we refer to each section in the binder as a "document", but each document can contain as much or as little text as you like.)

 The basics are simple:

- Click on a document to open it in the editor.

- Click on the chevron next to a folder or group to show or hide (*expand or collapse*) its contents (*subdocuments*).

- Drag and drop documents to rearrange them.

- Double-click on a document to rename it.

- Click "+" in the footer at the bottom of the binder (or in the toolbar) to create a new document. (**Ctrl+N**)

- To create a new folder, click the button containing a folder with a "+" inside it at the bottom of the binder, or click the down arrow next to the "+" button in the toolbar. (**Alt+Shift+N**)

- You can also add new documents from the **Project** menu or by hitting enter when a document is selected and the binder has the focus.

- Import files into Scrivener by dragging them from File Explorer into Scrivener's binder. Alternatively, use **File > Import > Files...** in Scrivener's main menu at the top of the screen.

Special Folders

Along with anything else you add, the binder always contains three special folders that cannot be removed:

1. The **Draft** folder. Anything you want to be part of your finished manuscript should be placed inside this folder. Its contents will be compiled into a single document

when you export or print using **File > Compile...** Because the Draft folder is used for building your manuscript, it is unique in that it can *only* hold text files—you cannot import image or research files into this folder.

- *Tip*: If you want an image in the text of your manuscript, place the cursor inside a text document in the Draft and use **Insert > Image From File...** to insert the image into the text.

- *Note:* All folders and files can be renamed, even the special folders. In some of Scrivener's project templates, the Draft folder has a different name, such as "Manuscript".

2. The **Research** folder can hold text or media files (images, PDF files, video files and more), and is the default storage location for research materials not intended for inclusion in the final manuscript. You don't have to put all your research files into the Research folder, though—you can create other folders for your support materials anywhere you want.

3. Whenever you delete a document, it ends up in the **Trash** folder. *Documents are not deleted forever until you select* **Empty Trash...** *from the* **Project** *menu*.

There's Nothing Special About Other Folders

In Scrivener, there's no real difference between folders (excepting the three special folders) and text files. A folder is just a special kind of text file that has a different icon and opens in a different editor view mode by default (we'll get to view modes shortly).

You can convert a folder document to a text document and vice versa easily. Try this now:

- Right-click on the currently selected document in the binder ("The Binder" document).

- From the contextual menu that appears, select **Convert to Folder**. Note how the file icon becomes a folder icon.

- Right-click on "The Binder" document again. You'll see that the option is now **Convert to File**—click it to convert back. (You can also convert from the **Documents** menu.)

So, whether you prefer to use folders or text groups is entirely up to you, and you can convert between them at any time. (*Note:* A text or file group is any non-folder that has subdocuments.)

Searching

To search for documents in the project:

1. Click on the magnifying glass in the toolbar. A search field will appear at the top of the binder.

2. Enter text in the search field. The binder will be replaced with a purple search results list.

   - *Tip:* Click on the magnifying glass icon in the left of the search field to change search options.

3. Click on the "X" in the left of the search results header bar to return to the binder, or click on the magnifying glass in the toolbar again.
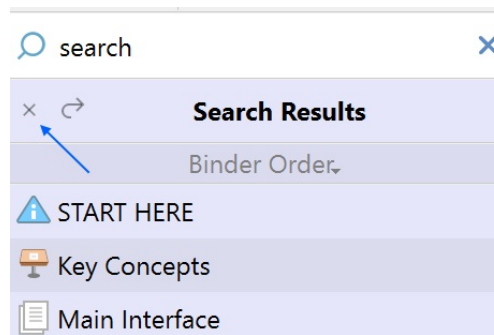
4. Click on the magnifying glass in the toolbar to hide the search field if it is still visible.

You can also run a quick search for documents using Quick Search field in the toolbar (which currently shows "The Binder", the current document name). This works like the search field in a web browser and brings up a menu of the top results. This is great when you know the title of the document you want to find.

Now let's take a look at the editor—click on "The Editor" in the binder.

The text you are reading now is contained in the editor. There are several ways to load a document into the editor, but the one you will use most often is to select a file in the binder, as you did to load this one.

Scrivener's editor can display a range of different file types, so let's try loading an image:

- In the binder, scroll down to the "Research" folder (you might need to expand it by clicking on the chevron next to it first) and then click on "Sunset".

- Once you've tested that out, return here.

Using the Editor

- The **Format Bar** appears directly below the toolbar. It provides easy access to many common formatting controls, such as bold, italics, paragraph alignment and spacing, and highlights.

- More formatting features can be found in the **Format** menu.

- The **Insert** menu allows you to insert images, tables, footnotes, comments and other elements into the text.

- **Edit > Find > Find...** in the main menu or using the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+F** brings up the Find dialog, allowing you to search through text in the editor.

- If you're a screenwriter, playwright or comic writer, you can enter scriptwriting mode via **Format > Scriptwriting > Script Mode**. (You can also toggle between scriptwriting and regular modes using the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+8**.)

The Header View

The header view (or bar) runs across the top of the editor and contains the name of the document, along with providing some useful tools.

Because in Scrivener you can break your writing up into sections as large or small as you want, you'll spend a lot of time jumping between them in the binder. Frequently, you'll simply want to return to the last document you were looking at. You can do so using the **history navigation buttons**:

- Try clicking on the **back button** (the left-pointing chevron) on the left of the header bar. It will take you to the previous document you were looking at.

- Click on the **forward button** next to it to return here.

- The up and down chevrons on the right of the header view work similarly, except that instead of navigating through the document history, they take you to the next or previous document in the binder.

Note: After navigating with the history buttons, the binder selection may not match what is shown in the main editor. (You can thus check back on a document you edited earlier without losing your place.) When the editor shows a different document to the one selected in the binder, a secondary light grey bar appears in the binder to indicate the current editor document.

Tip: Using **Navigate > Reveal in Binder** tells the binder to select the document currently open in the editor.

Also in the header bar:

- You can right-click on the header document icon to bring up a menu of useful options.
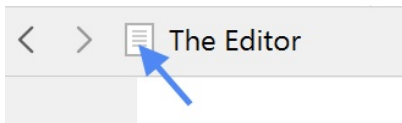
- You can click into the title to rename the document.

- You can drag the icon shown next to the title in the same way that you can drag documents in the binder.

- You can drag a document from the binder into the header bar to load it.

- The square icon on the very right of the header view will split the editor, but we'll come to that shortly.

The Footer View

The **footer view** is the horizontal bar beneath the editor. It will contain slightly different controls depending on what is open in the editor.

- When text is open in the editor, its word count is shown in the footer view. (You can change this to show the character count using Scrivener's "Editing" settings, available from **File > Options…** in the main menu.) Click on the word count for more information.

  - *Tip #1*: If the word count ever disappears from the footer view, it is most likely because you have switched on scriptwriting mode (see above).

  - *Tip #2*: To see the word count of your entire draft, hover over the search field in the toolbar with your mouse. Doing so will display a count of all the words in the Draft folder (on the left) and a count of the words you have written in the current session (on the right).

  - *Tip #3*: You can set a word or character count target for your manuscript via **Project > Project Targets**. (You can also set targets for individual documents by clicking on the target icon in the footer view.)

- You can change the current text scale (zoom) using the percentage control on the left of the footer view. (This does not change the font size; it just zooms in and out of the document.)

- When viewing PDF files, the footer view allows you to navigate between the pages. Click on "spacewalk_info" in the Research folder to test this out, and then come back here by clicking on the "back" arrow in the header view.

At this point, now that you know how to use the binder and editor, you could go off and start using Scrivener, because the binder and editor are the two features you'll be using the most. So if you're itching to jump in, feel free to go and create your own project (**File > New Project…**) and experiment. Just know that, like Luke Skywalker at the end of *The Empire Strikes Back*, you're not fully trained in the ways of the Force just yet. Be sure to come back ~~to Dagobah~~ here as soon as you're ready to continue your training.

Ready? Okay, click on "The Inspector" in the binder (or the down chevron on the right of the header view) and let's do ourselves some inspecting.

Click the blue "i" icon on the right of the toolbar to open the inspector. The inspector will appear as a third pane on the right of the window, and it shows extra information associated with the document that you have open in the editor.

At the top of the inspector you will see these buttons:
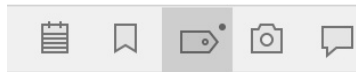
These buttons change what is displayed in the inspector. From left to right, they are:

- **Notes**: The document synopsis and notes.

- **Bookmarks**: Bookmarks associated with the document and project.

- **Metadata**: Various metadata relating to the document.

- **Snapshots**: Snapshots you have taken of the document. (Snapshots are older versions of the document.)

- **Comments & Footnotes**: Comments and footnotes associated with the text in the editor.

The buttons available will change depending on what sort of document is shown in the editor. For instance, "Snapshots" and "Comments & Footnotes" are only available for text documents.

A dot in the corner of one of these buttons indicates that there is content in the associated tab.

Let's start by clicking on the Notes button. Once you've done that, select "Synopsis & Notes" in the binder.

Synopsis Index Card

At the top of the Notes tab of the inspector is a virtual index card, in which you can type a synopsis of your document (the header of the index card can be used to rename the document, too).

A core idea behind Scrivener is that every section of the project is associated with a synopsis which can be viewed either alongside the section text (in the inspector) or alongside other synopses (in the corkboard or outliner). This allows you to switch between an overview of your manuscript and its text.

Imagine it like this: each document in Scrivener is a sheet of paper with an index card clipped to it. You can scrawl a summary of the document onto the index card, and then you can take the card and lay it out alongside other index cards to work with the bigger picture. (We'll see that bigger picture when we come to look at the corkboard and outliner views.)

Notes

Below the index card is the notes area, where you can jot down anything relating to the document that you don't want in the text itself, such as ideas and problems.

On to "Label & Status"...

At the bottom of the inspector are the label and status pop-up buttons. (This document's label is "Blue" and its status is "To Do".)

Label and status are simply arbitrary tags that you can assign to a document. You set up the label and status tags you want to use in a project by going to **Project > Project Settings…** You might, for example, rename "Label" to "POV" (for Point of View) and use it to record the name of the point-of-view characters in a novel, so that you can assign a character to each scene.

Status works much the same way, except that it is meant to keep track of the state of the document—for instance, "Finished", "To do", "A Mess" and so forth—although you can rename it and use it for anything you want. The only real difference between label and status is that labels have colours associated with them, and status items do not.

Tip: To assign a label or status to multiple documents, select several documents in the binder, right-click on them, and select the label or status from the contextual menu that appears.
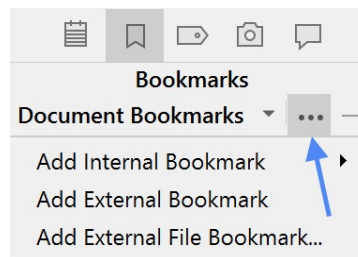
Next, click on "Bookmarks" in the binder.

Click on the Bookmarks button in the inspector header bar (the second icon).

The Bookmarks tab allows you to store references to other documents in the project, on your hard-disk, or on the internet.

To add a new bookmark, do one of the following:

- Click the three dots button above the Bookmarks list.

- Drag a document from the binder into the list.

- Drag a file from File Explorer into the list.

- Drag a URL from a browser into the list.

Selecting a bookmark in the list opens the content of the bookmark in the lower half of the inspector. You can see that the "Key Concepts" document has been added as a bookmark for this document, and that its text can be viewed right there in the inspector. (Click on "Key Concepts" in the Bookmarks list at the top of the inspector if its contents are not visible.)

Double-click a bookmark to open it: external bookmarks open in their default application; internal bookmarks open inside Scrivener.

Bookmarks can be associated with either individual documents or the entire project: click the bar labelled "Document Bookmarks" to switch between Document Bookmarks (specific to the current document) and Project Bookmarks (available from any document).

Project Bookmarks

Project Bookmarks can also be accessed from the bookmarks icon in the toolbar,

providing fast navigation to frequently-needed documents:

- Click the red bookmark icon in the toolbar. A list will appear. I have already added the "START HERE" document to the project bookmarks.
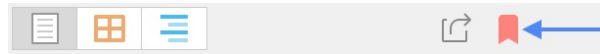
- Click "START HERE" in the list. The bookmarked document will be opened in the editor.

- Hit the back button in the header view to return here afterwards.

Now select "Metadata" in the binder.

Click on the third button in the inspector header bar, the one containing the tag icon, to open the Metadata tab.

Each document in Scrivener can be associated with different types of metadata. Which metadata you use, or whether you use it at all, is entirely up to you.

General Metadata

At the top of the Metadata tab is "General Metadata". This contains the following:

- Created Date and Modified Date: the dates on which the current document was created and last edited.

- Include in Compile: if the document is inside the Draft folder, this checkbox determines whether the current document should be included as part of the final manuscript when compiled.

- Section Type: used by Compile to determine how to format the current document in the manuscript. We'll look at section types when we come to Compile.

Custom Metadata

In the middle of the Metadata tab is "Custom Metadata". By default, this tab is collapsed, but you can expand it by clicking either the "Custom Metadata" header bar or the disclosure chevron next to it.

Custom Metadata allows you to add your own checkboxes, pop-up menus, dates and text fields so that you can keep track of any information that doesn't fit elsewhere.

You can set up custom metadata by going to **Project > Project Settings…** or by clicking the three dots icon at the top of the Custom Metadata area. Once you've done this, the custom metadata for each document can be viewed and edited either in the inspector or in the outliner.

Keywords

You can add arbitrary keywords to your documents to make searching for them easier, or to make keeping track of what is in a particular document easier. For example, you could add keywords for characters that occur in a scene, themes referenced or topics discussed.

To add a keyword: Click the "+" button in the Keywords header bar.
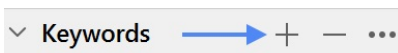
You can also assign keywords via the keywords tab.

1. Click on the three dots icon in the "Keywords" header bar.

2. Select "Show Project Keywords".

Alternatively, go to **Project > Project Keywords** in the main menu.

Do so now. A tab appears showing all keywords in the project. Here you can create, organise and delete keywords, as well as search the project for selected keywords.

To change the colour associated with a keyword, double-click on its colour chip in the keywords tab.

Drag keywords from the tab to the inspector list to assign them to the current document, or drag and drop them onto documents in the binder, outliner or corkboard to assign them to selected documents there (you can assign keywords to multiple documents this way).

Try dragging the keyword entitled "Assign this one" from the keywords tab to the keywords list in the inspector now.

Okay, on to "Snapshots".

Scrivener's Snapshots feature keeps older versions of your documents around for reference. To capture a version before embarking on a major edit of a document, select **Take Snapshot** (**Ctrl+5**) in the **Documents > Snapshots** menu. Try that now (you will hear the sound of a camera shutter which indicates that the snapshot has been taken).

Once you have taken a snapshot, you can edit your document safe in the knowledge that you can return to the older version whenever you want.

Click on the "Snapshots" button (the one with the picture of a camera on it) in the inspector header bar to see what I mean.

- The inspector now shows a list of snapshots at the top, which should consist of the one you took and one I took while writing the first version of this tutorial.

- Clicking on a snapshot in the list reveals its text in the lower part of the inspector.

- Restore an older version of your text by selecting the version you want from the list and clicking on **Roll Back** at the top (at which point, you will be given the option of taking another snapshot of your current version).

Note: You can immediately tell which documents have snapshots associated with them because their icons have dog-eared corners.
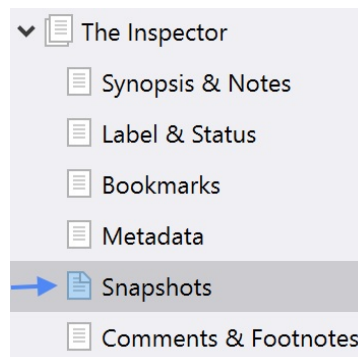
To see what's changed in the document since the snapshot was taken, click on "Compare". Try that now:

Type some text on the line below (anything you want):

Delete the text in the following line:

DELETE ME!

Now:

- In the inspector, select the snapshot you took a moment ago.

- Click "Compare". See what happens?

  - Text that has been added to the document since the snapshot was taken appears underlined and in blue.

  - Text that has been deleted appears struck out and in red.

  - Note that the comparison only shows *textual* changes—it does not show changes to the formatting.

- Click on the left and right arrows at the top of the inspector, next to the three dots button, to navigate between the changes.

Tip: You can alter the granularity (level of detail) of the comparison by clicking on the three dots button next to "Compare" (which should now read "Original", because clicking on it again will turn off the compare feature). Changing the granularity will give different results for different documents, depending on the scope of the edits.

You can also compare the differences between snapshots by selecting a snapshot in the list and clicking on **Compare** to reveal the subsequent changes made after the selected snapshot was taken.

Let's move on to "Comments & Footnotes".

Now we'll look at the "Comments & Footnotes" tab—don't worry about clicking on the button in the inspector header bar just yet, though.

Click on the yellow highlighted text in the sentence below:

This sentence has a comment attached[Comments get displayed and selected as soon as they are clicked on in the main editor.].

Note how the inspector automatically switches to the Comments & Footnotes tab, and the comment associated with the text gets highlighted.

Next, click on the grey footnote directly below the comment in the inspector.

This sentence has a footnote attached[1].

See how clicking on the note in the inspector automatically selects the text associated with it in the editor?

If you click on a note in the inspector, the editor automatically scrolls the text to where the note is located. Try scrolling to the bottom of this document, and then clicking the comment in the inspector to return to the top.

Tip: If the comments aren't open in the inspector and you don't want to show them, **Alt+Click** on a comment or footnote to open it in a popover instead of in the inspector.

Adding Comments and Footnotes

Let's try adding some comments and footnotes of our own. First, select some of the text in the following sentence:

Select some of the text in this sentence.

Next, do one of the following:

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1. This is a footnote. For footnotes to be exported properly, it's important to add them in such a way that the link ends exactly where you want the footnote to appear in the text.

- Click on the arrow to the right of the paperclip icon in the toolbar and select **Add Comment** from the menu that appears.

- Click the comment icon in the "Comments & Footnotes" bar of the inspector.

- Go to **Insert > Comment** in the main menu (or hit **Shift+F4**). A new comment will be created in the inspector ready for editing.

Then:

- Add some text.

- Hit the **Escape** key to return the focus to the editor.

You add footnotes in exactly the same way, but choosing **Footnote** in the menu or clicking the "cf" icon in the inspector.

Note: It doesn't matter where you attach comments, but with footnotes you should always ensure that the footnote link (the grey highlight) ends at the place you want the footnote number to appear when printed or exported.

Changing the Colour of Comments

To change the colour of a comment:

1. Right-click on a comment in the inspector.

2. Select a colour from the menu that appears.

(You cannot change the colour of individual footnotes, which are differentiated from comments by all being grey[2].)

The contextual (right-click) menu also allows you to convert comments to footnotes and vice versa, and to revert comments and footnotes to use default formatting (which can be set in the "Editing" tab of the Options).

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2. You can choose a different colour for footnotes via the "Appearance" tab of Scrivener's Options.

Tip: If you have a lot of comments, you can collapse individual comments and footnotes by clicking on the disclosure chevron (the downward-pointing arrow) in the top-left of each comment box.

Right, that's the inspector covered! Now let's take a look at composition mode. By now, you know the drill: click on "Composition Mode" in the binder.