A **section break** in Microsoft Word is used to divide a document into distinct sections, allowing you to apply different formatting (such as headers, footers, page orientation, margins, etc.) to different parts of your document. Section breaks are especially useful when you want to create documents with mixed layouts.

**Types of Section Breaks in Microsoft Word:**

1. **Next Page**: Starts a new section on the next page.
2. **Continuous**: Starts a new section on the same page.
3. **Even Page**: Starts a new section on the next even-numbered page.
4. **Odd Page**: Starts a new section on the next odd-numbered page.

**How to Insert a Section Break:**

**Method 1: Using the Ribbon**

1. Place your cursor where you want the section break to begin.
2. Go to the **Layout** or **Page Layout** tab in the ribbon (depending on your version of Word).
3. In the **Page Setup** group, click on **Breaks**.
4. Under the **Section Breaks** category, choose one of the following options:
   * **Next Page**: Starts a new section on the next page.
   * **Continuous**: Starts a new section without changing pages.
   * **Even Page**: Starts a new section on the next even-numbered page.
   * **Odd Page**: Starts a new section on the next odd-numbered page.

**Method 2: Using Keyboard Shortcuts**

Unfortunately, there is no direct keyboard shortcut for inserting a section break. You need to use the steps outlined above.

**How to Delete a Section Break:**

1. **Show Paragraph Marks**: To see section breaks, go to the **Home** tab, and click on the **¶ (Show/Hide)** button in the **Paragraph** group.
2. **Delete the Section Break**: Place your cursor just before the section break and press **Delete**. Alternatively, place the cursor after the break and press **Backspace**.

**How Section Breaks Affect Document Formatting:**

* **Headers and Footers**: Section breaks allow different headers and footers for each section. If you want to create distinct headers/footers in each section, you can unlink them by unchecking **Link to Previous** in the **Header & Footer Tools**.
* **Page Orientation**: You can apply different page orientations (portrait or landscape) to different sections of the document.
* **Margins and Columns**: Section breaks let you set different margins or create multiple columns in separate sections.

Section breaks are a powerful tool for managing complex documents where specific formatting is required for different parts.