

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tools and Technologies for Technical Writers

Working with Microsoft Word

2023

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This is an example document to show how to use a Microsoft Word template.

It has been saved as a PDF so people can see what you can do, even if they don't have access to Microsoft Word. While Microsoft Word is relatively ubiquitous, not everyone has access to it.

About this template

This is an example template for Microsoft Word.

Many templates are just the styles, but templates often contain information about the styles as well. They might include information about how to properly apply the styles.

Cover page

The first page of your document should be a cover page.

The headers and footers for the document are set up to be different for the first (cover) page.

The first page must start with a paragraph using the `CompanyName` style. This should contain the name of the company this document is for, such as Middlesex Community College. Use this style only once in the document.

The second paragraph must use the style `Title`. This should be the Product name.

The third paragraph must use the style `Subtitle`. This should be the document title.

The fourth paragraph must use the style `Version`. This should be the version number of the product.

No other content should be on the first page.

Contents

After the cover page should be the table of contents. The template should include this automatically.

A good template would explain which headings should be included in the TOC and instructions on how to set it up.

Remember to update the table of contents before saving this document as a PDF.

1. Select the entire document (CTRL+A).
2. Press F10.
3. If prompted, select **Update entire table** and click **OK**.

After the table of contents, make sure there is a section break to a new page.

Heading 1

Use the Heading 1 style for all top-level headings.

This template does not have “chapters”. It is intended to be more of a hand out than a book. The first Heading 1 on a page is displayed in the running header. If there is no Heading 1 on the page, the last Heading 1 is used.

Tip: Many of the features of Microsoft Word are hard coded to the default styles. For example, the autogenerated table of contents only works with the predefined Heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.) When defining your own template, be aware of what automatic features you want to use and make sure you modify default styles instead of creating your own where necessary.

Body text uses the Normal style.

Heading 2

Use Heading 2 as the second level heading. Remember whenever possible to have at least two sub-headings per section. Avoid sections with a single sub-heading as much as possible.

Heading 3

Use Heading 3 as your third level headings.

Heading 4

While the fourth level Heading 4 is defined, try to avoid using it. If you're nesting that deep, you might want to rethink your structure.

Lists

You will need to use lists in your document.

Remember that you should use styles, do *not* use the list buttons in the ribbon.

Bulleted (unordered) lists

- ☞ This is a List Paragraph. If you need a bulleted list, use the List Paragraph.
- ☞ The next paragraph should also be a List Paragraph.
- ☞ This is another List Paragraph, but I am going to keep typing with text until it wraps a line so you can see what it is supposed to look like.
- ☞ Yet another List Paragraph.
This is a List Body. If you need a paragraph to line up with a List Paragraph, use a List Body.
The automatic paragraph after a List Body is another List Body.
- ☞ To return to the list, you need to apply the List Paragraph.

To return to normal, apply the Normal style.

This is a very poor template because there is only one level of bullet defined.

Minimally, a good template should have three levels of bullets with appropriate indented paragraphs.

Numbered (ordered) lists

In general, you only use ordered lists in procedures. Therefore, this simple template only has one ordered list defined.

1. This is Steps.
Use List Body to have text that aligns with the Steps text.
2. Because Word is dumb, you may need to right-click the first item in the procedure and select **Restart at 1** to get the list numbering correct.
 - ☞ Sometimes in a step you need to offer a list of options.
 - ☞ In this case, use the Step List style.
3. Apply the Steps style to return to numbering.

Apply the Normal style to go back to text.

This is a very simple template and is missing many things.

You generally want at least two levels of numbering for steps. You often need a “step 2a”. However, if you realize you might need three levels of steps, you might want to rethink your procedure.

Remember when testing your template, make a ridiculously long list to check what happens when you get to double digits. (I know of someone who had to rework a template to deal with triple digits.)

Every level of step should have a level of indented text associated with it.

Every level of step should have a level of indented bullet associated with it.

You may want two types of numbered lists, one for procedures and one for just an ordered list. You may want your procedure formatting to look slightly different.

Sometimes people use ordered lists to map to a diagram with numbered (or lettered) items on it.

Indented text

Every template should have some way to make text align with indented formats. For example, to have a paragraph of text align with the text of a bullet.

There are various methods.

- ☞ Create a generic set of indents that work with all other styles.
For example, Body 1, Body 2, Body 3.
This means that all your indented text needs to follow the same pattern.
Generally means you have fewer styles.
Can be tricky to learn that you use Body 3 after Bullet 2.
- ☞ Create specific sets of indents for each style.
For example, Bullet 1 Indent, Step 1 Indent, Step a Indent
If you need different styles to have different amounts of indents, this may be required.
Requires you maintain more styles.

This template is simplistic and doesn't have enough indents.

This is List Body. Use it to align with text in List Paragraph or Steps.

Special paragraphs

There are often special paragraphs that you used at specific times.

Note: This is a Note. If you're writing a sentence that starts with "Note that", you probably want this in a note.

Notes typically have some type of slightly more important text you want folks to remember.

There are often additional special note styles for things that are "Important".

There may be specific styles for legally required notices such as Caution and Hazard statements.

Tip: This is a tip, which is meant to highlight something useful that might make your life easier.

The following styles are defined, but should only be used by objects created by Word:

- 🔗 Footer – Defines the formatting for the running footer. This document has a centered page number.
- 🔗 Header – Defines the formatting for the running header. This document has the text of the Title paragraph – text of the Subtitle paragraph left justified. Then the first Heading 1 on the page right justified. If there is no Heading 1 on the page, it uses the previous Heading 1.
- 🔗 TOC 1, TOC 2, and TOC 3 – Defines the formatting of the generated table of contents.
- 🔗 TOC Heading – Defines the formatting for the title/heading of the generated table of contents.

The following formats are part of the default Word template but are not intended to be used:


- 🔗 Heading 5
- 🔗 Intense Emphasis
- 🔗 Intense Quote
- 🔗 Intense Reference

Inline formatting

There are often times when you need to use inline formatting.

- 🔗 Book Title – Use this format to reference other documents.
Have you read ***Pride and Prejudice*** by Jane Austen?
- 🔗 Emphasis – Use this format to indicate a word has importance. This is equivalent to the HTML element, which usually renders as italic.
When formatting documents in Word, make sure you use *Styles*, not the formatting controls.
- 🔗 Hyperlink – Use this format for links. For external links, Word applies this automatically. You will need to apply it manually for internal links.

Go to www.google.com.

 Strong – Use this format for bold text. This is often used for things you click when describing an interface.

Click **OK**.

Lorem ipsum dolor

The following paragraph is “lorem ipsum” text. When designing templates, it really helps to have dummy text to see what your layout and design looks like with text. Lorem ipsum text is based on old Latin text, but it generally has the right word length, ascenders and descenders as English text. It looks better than repeating “blah blah blah” or “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.” The text in this template was generated from <https://www.lipsum.com/>.

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