Microsoft Word for Student Farmers

by Stacy Shang

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Stacy Shang

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Contents

Introduction 2

Chapter 1: Structuring your handbook

1.1 | Adding headers 4

1.2 | Using section breaks 5

1.3 | Adding page numbers 7

1.4 | Using styles 9

1.5 | Creating a table of contents 11

Chapter 2: Adding visual aids

2.1 | Formatting images 13

2.2 | Creating diagrams using shapes 15

2.3 | Creating charts 17

Chapter 3: Collaborating and sharing 19

3.1 | Sharing a document to edit 20

3.2 | Saving a document 21

3.3 | Combining multiple documents into a single document 22

3.4 | Exporting a document as a PDF 23

Photo credits 25

Colophon 26

Introduction

Why use this manual?

Tired of coming home from a long, grueling day at the UMass Student Farm, only to find out you have a crop analysis due at midnight? Scared of traversing the world of Microsoft Word's plentiful features? Well fear no more! *Microsoft Word for Student Farmers* will act as your guide to navigating Word's interface, saving you precious time creating handbook chapters that will impress even your farm director.

What can I find in this manual?

This manual contains three chapters, each broken down into subsections that cover specific tasks you may face in writing your handbook chapters:

- **Structuring your handbook**
  This chapter contains information on how to make your handbook more easily navigable. Learn to use styles to customize different types of text, add headers that change from chapter to chapter, auto-generate a table of contents, and more.
- **Adding visual aids**
  This chapter covers the main forms of visual aids that you may need to add to your handbook. Learn to display information about farm income or crop profits through charts, use shapes to make diagrams and room layouts, and format images.
- **Collaborating and sharing your work**
  The final chapter details key steps you may want to take once you are done with the main work of writing your handbook chapters. Learn to share a document with collaborators, export your work, and combine multiple chapters into the final handbook.

This manual was written for Microsoft Word 2025 for Windows users.

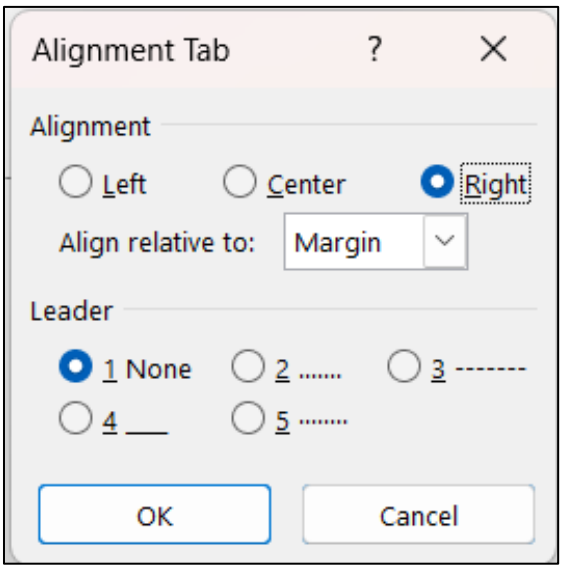
Chapter 1: Structuring your handbook

1.1 | Adding headers

Headers in your handbook can help to easily identify the current chapter and the student farmer that authored it.

Formatting headers

1. Double-click the header of the page.
2. Type the name of author of the current chapter.
3. From the **Header & Footer** tab, select **Insert Alignment Tab**. A dialog box opens.
4. Select **Right** under the Alignment options.



5. Type the name of the current chapter.

To apply different headers to different chapters:
Adding section breaks are useful for changing header formatting from chapter to chapter.

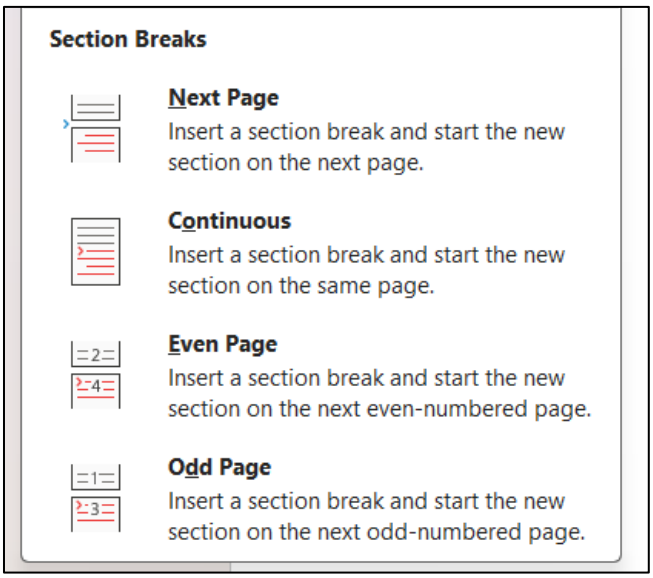
1. Insert your text cursor at the end of your current chapter.
2. Create a new section and unlink the header from the previous section. You may refer to "1.1 | Using section breaks" (page 3) to do this.
3. Format the header as described above.

1.2 | Using section breaks

You may want to apply different formatting to distinct sections of your handbook, such as chapter headers or footers.

Inserting section breaks

1. Insert your text cursor where you want to insert a new section.
2. From the **Layout** tab, select the **Breaks** dropdown menu.
3. Under **Section Breaks,** select where you would like the next section to start. A new section begins.

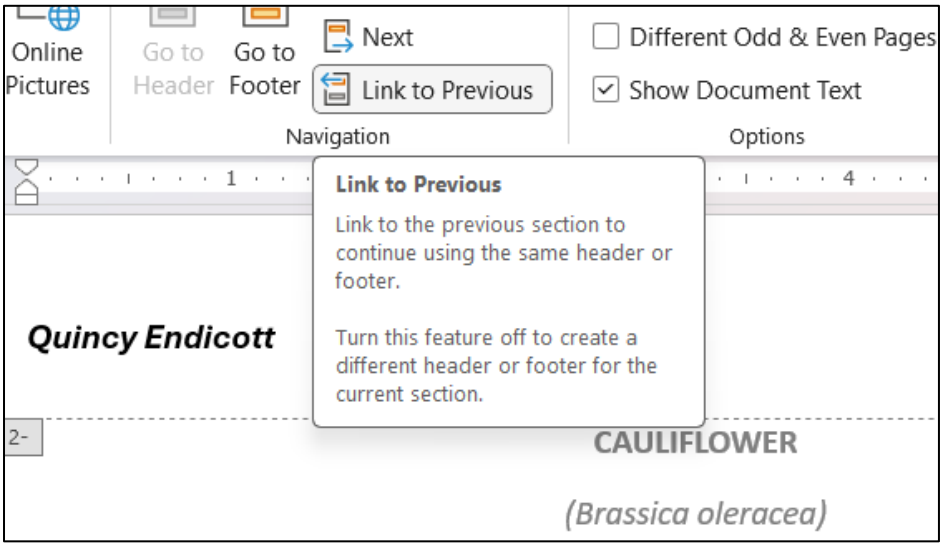


Unlinking sections

By default, formatting such as headers and footers are linked throughout sections. To apply different formatting to distinct sections, you can unlink them.

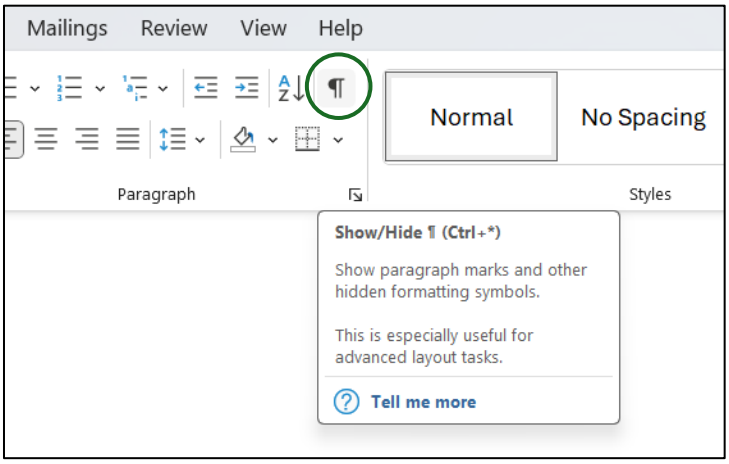
1. Double-click the header or footer of your new section. If the section is linked to the previous section, it will read “Same as Previous” in a box on the right.

2. Unselect **Link to previous**. The “Same as Previous” box disappears.

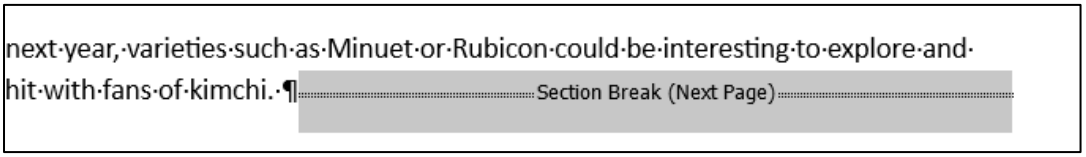


Deleting section breaks

1. From the **Home** tab, select the **Show/Hide** button. This allows you to see where section breaks have been inserted.



2. Select the section break you want to delete.



3. Press the **Backspace** key to delete.

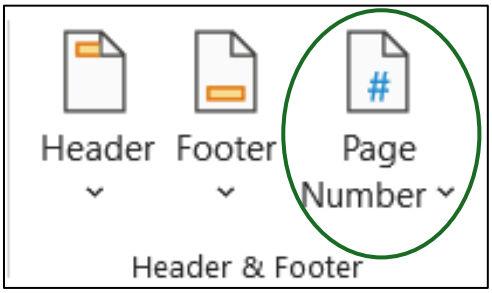
1.3 | Adding page numbers

You can add page numbers to your handbook to easily reference and navigate to different sections of the document.

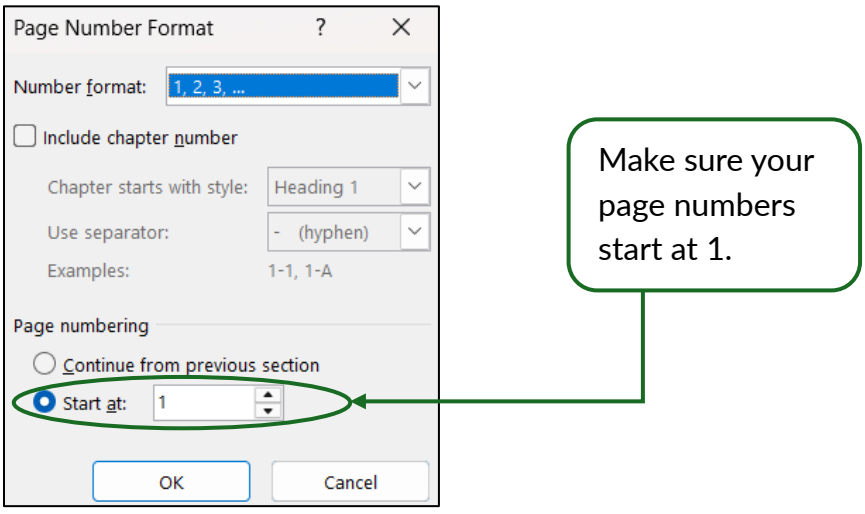
Starting page numbers later in the document

You may want your page numbers to begin later in the handbook, after content such as the cover page, sponsor shout-outs, and table of contents.

1. Insert your text cursor at the end of the unnumbered section of your handbook.
2. Create a new section and unlink the footer from the previous section. You can refer to "1.2 | Using section breaks" (page 5) to do this.
3. From the **Insert** tab, select the **Page Number** dropdown menu.



4. Select **Format Page Numbers**. A dialog box appears.
5. Select the **Start at** option. The number should be 1 by default.

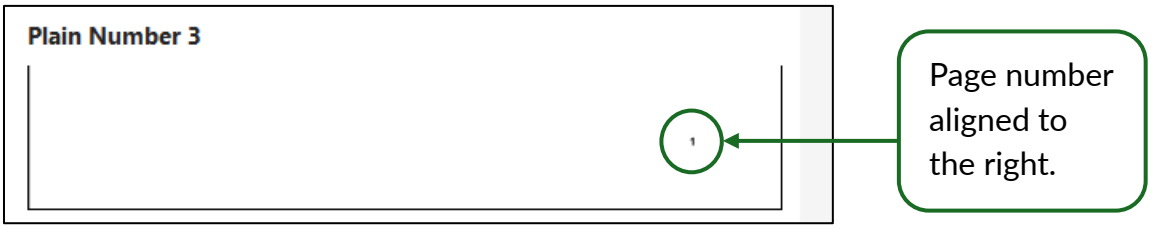


6. Select the **OK** button to save your changes.

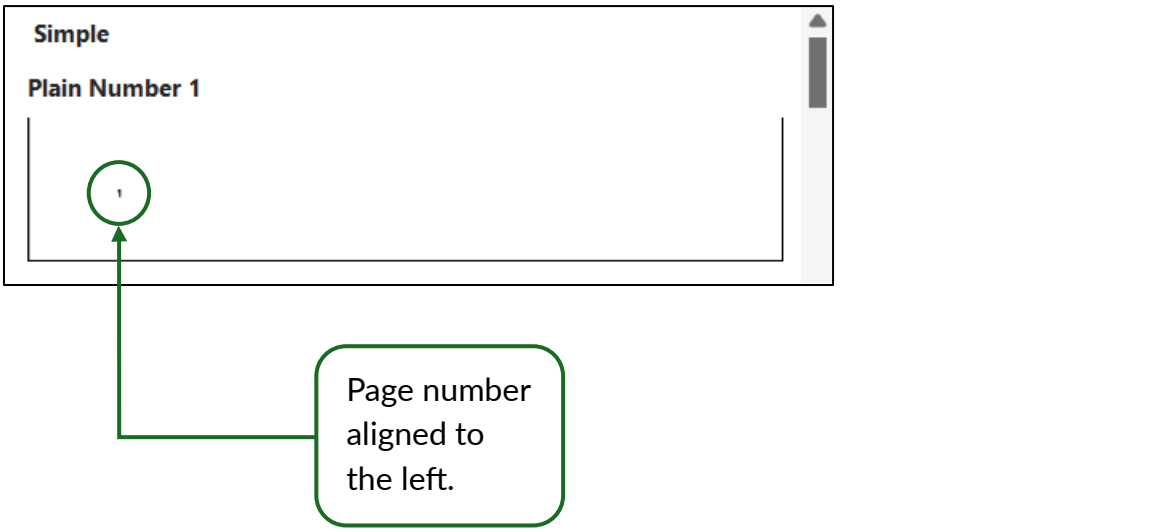
Formatting page numbers for odd and even pages

You can customize where page numbers appear on the page, such that odd numbers appear on the right corner and even numbers appear on the left corner.

1. On an odd-numbered page, double-click the footer.
2. Select the Different Odd & Even Pages checkbox.
3. From the **Page Number** dropdown menu, select **Bottom of Page**.
4. Select a pre-set style showing the page number on the right.



5. Scroll down to the even-numbered page below.
6. Repeat steps 2 and 3.
7. Select a pre-set style showing the page number on the left.

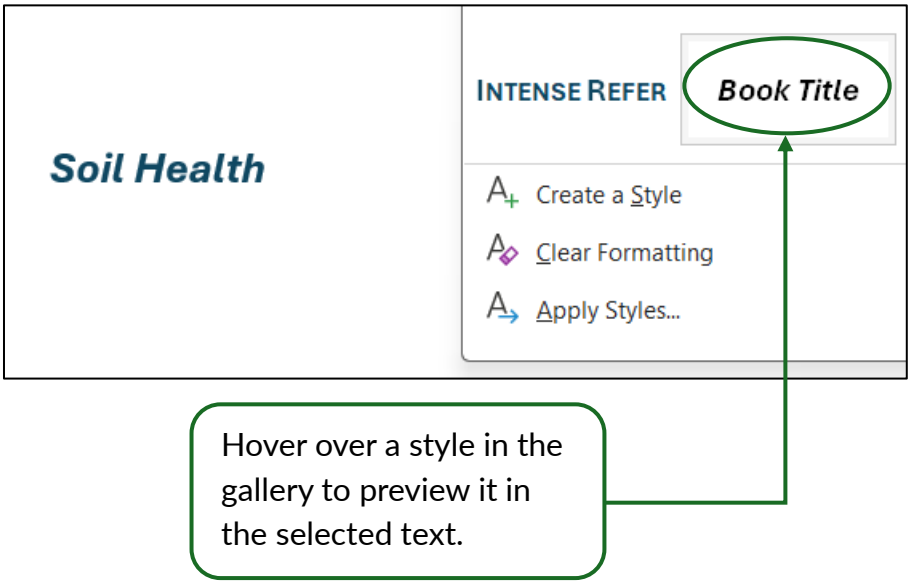


1.4 | Using styles

By using styles, you can apply custom formatting to different types of text (such as headings, body text) that is consistent throughout your document. Applying heading styles to your section titles allows you to generate a table of contents (see section 1.5, “Generating a table of contents” on page 11).

Selecting styles

1. Select the text you want to modify.
2. From the **Home** tab, navigate to the **Styles** dropdown menu. You can preview a style by hovering over it.



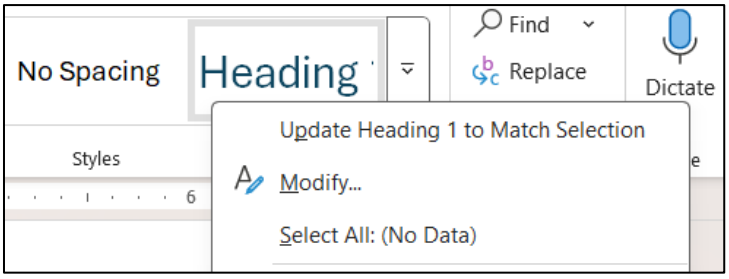
3. Select a style. The text changes.

Accessibility tip: Heading 1, 2, or 3?
With three different heading options, it may be confusing to determine when to use each one. Using proper heading hierarchy is important for users of screen-readers to navigate your documents, as well as generating a table of contents.

- **Heading 1:** titles of main sections
- **Heading 2:** titles of subsections within main sections (under Heading 1)
- **Heading 3:** titles of subsections within subsections (under Heading 2)

Customizing style formatting

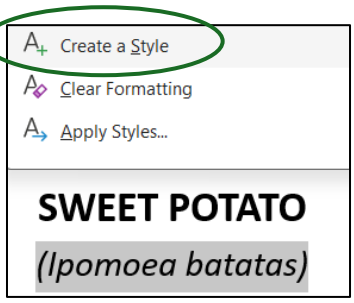
1. Modify the text of the style you want to customize and select it when done.
2. Navigate to the **Styles** dropdown menu and double-click the current style selection. A menu appears.
3. Select **Update [style name] to Match Selection**. All other instances of the style update to match the custom formatting.



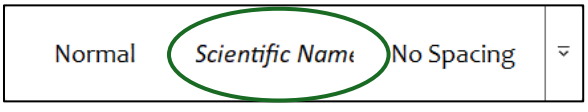
Creating new styles

You may want to create new styles for text with specific formatting requirements, such as crop names or scientific names, that you can add to the Styles gallery for easy access.

1. From the **Home** tab, navigate to the **Font** section to format your text.
2. Select the text.
3. Navigate to the **Styles** dropdown menu and select **Create a Style**. A dialog box opens.



4. Type the name of your new style in the text box.
5. Select the **OK** button. The style appears in your Styles gallery with the new formatting.

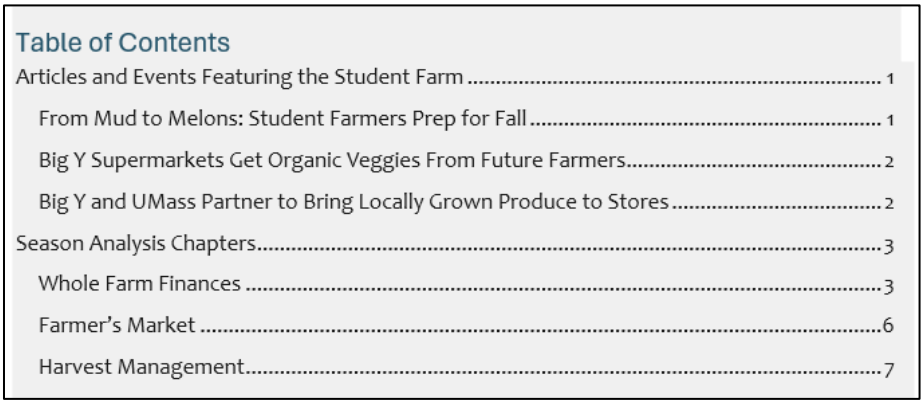


1.5 | Creating a table of contents

For easier navigation of your handbook, you may want to have a table of contents that displays chapters and their corresponding page numbers.

Auto-generating a table of contents

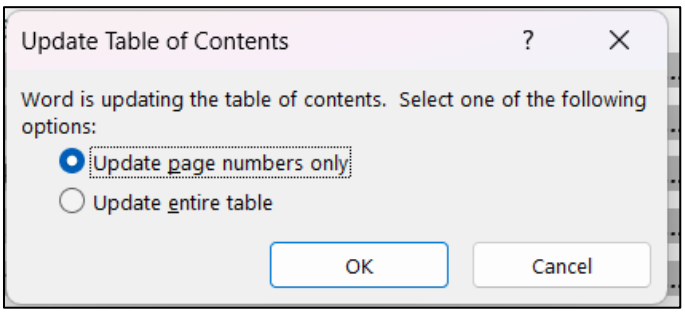
1. Insert your text cursor where you want to insert a table of contents.
2. Under the **References** tab, select the **Table of Contents** dropdown menu.
3. Select a Built-In table. A table of contents appears.



Updating a table of contents

After creating your table of contents, you may decide to make some changes to your handbook. You can update your table of contents to reflect those changes.

1. From your table of contents, select **Update Table**. A dialog box opens.
2. Choose one of the following two options:
   - **Update page numbers only**: Updates only the pages that headings are on, changes to heading text do not update.
   - **Update entire table:** Updates changes to heading text and page numbers.



Chapter 2:

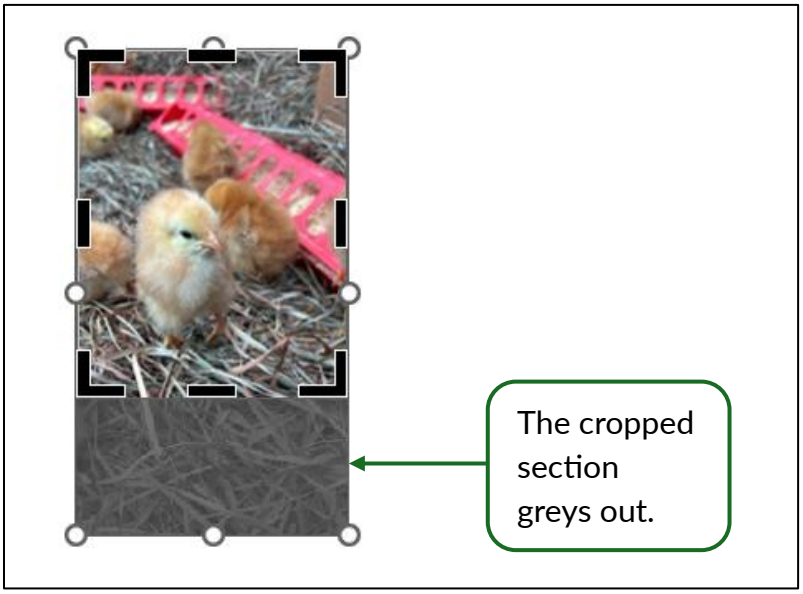
Adding visual aids

2.1 | Formatting images

Adding images to your handbook can help to better illustrate the work that has been done on the farm over the course of the season.

Cropping images

1. Select the image.
2. From the **Picture Format** tab, select the **Crop** dropdown menu.
3. Select **Crop**. Thick black lines appear on the corners and sides of your image.
4. Drag the corners or sides of your image to crop it. The cropped section greys out.



5. Save your changes by clicking elsewhere in the document.

Accessibility tip: What is alt text and how do I add it to my images?

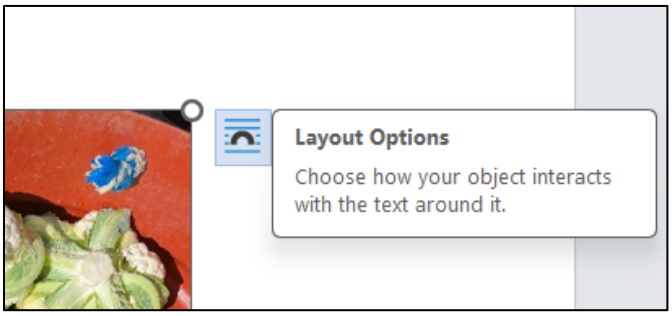
Readers that have vision impairments use screen readers to read documents. Alt text is a brief description of an image that is read by the screen reader. To add alt text to an image:

1. Select the image.
2. From the **Picture Format** tab, select **Alt Text**.
3. In the textbox, type a short description of the image that highlights its key elements. Do not start with “A picture of” or “An image of” as the screen-reader already provides this information.

Wrapping text around images

Word sets images to be in line with text by default, meaning images are treated the same as any other text. You may want text to wrap around your images instead.

1. Select the image. The Layout Options button (rainbow icon) appears to the right.
2. Select the **Layout Options** button.



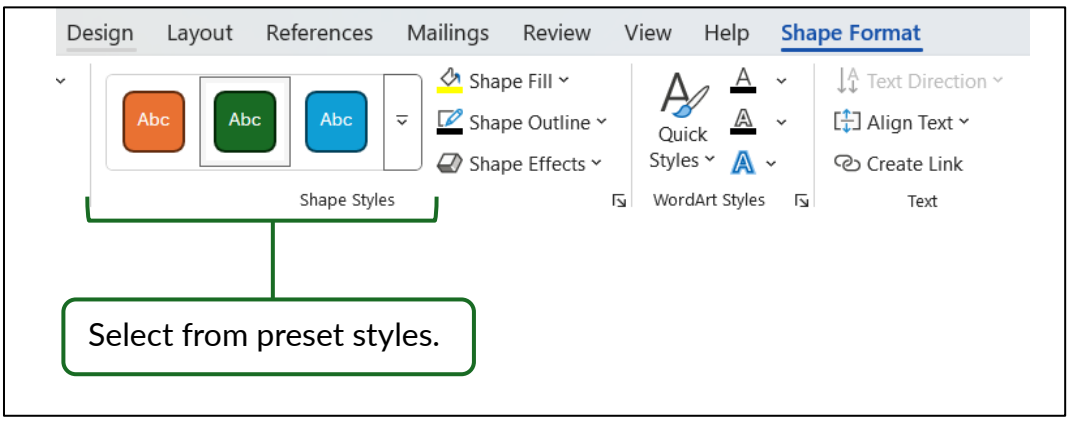
3. Select one of the following options:
   - **Square:** The text wraps around image in a square.
   - **Tight/Through:** The text wraps around image regardless of its shape.
   - **Top and Bottom:** The text only appears above and below the image.

2.2 | Creating diagrams using shapes

Diagrams can be helpful to better visualize complex processes or concepts, such as the movement of produce through the washroom.

Inserting and formatting shapes

1. From the **Insert** tab, select the **Shapes** dropdown menu.
2. Select a shape. Your cursor turns into a crosshair icon.
3. Select where in the document you want the shape to appear.
4. From the **Shape Format** tab, choose from the preset shape styles or customize the coloring and border of the shape.



5. **Optional:** Type some text to label what the shape represents (example: "Three Bay Sink").
6. Adjust the position and size of the shape as needed.

To center text vertically within a shape:

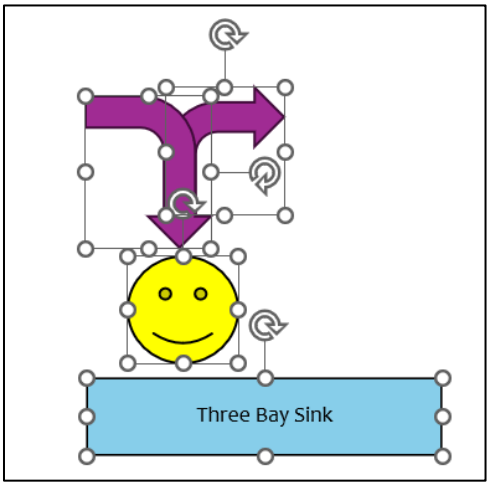
You may want there to be an equal amount of space above and below your text in a shape.

1. Insert your text cursor in the final line of text.
2. From the Home tab, select Line and Paragraph Spacing.
3. Select **Remove Space After Paragraph**. The extra space below your text disappears.

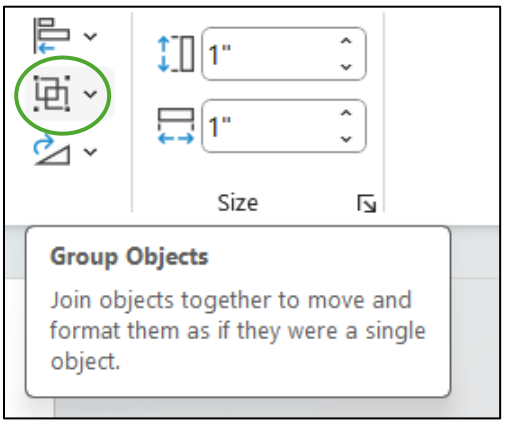
Grouping shapes

You may want to group the shapes within your diagram to reposition or resize them as one cohesive unit.

1. Press and hold the **Ctrl** key while selecting the objects you want to group.



2. From the **Shape Format** tab, select the **Group objects** button.



3. Reposition or resize the grouped objects as needed.

To unlink objects:

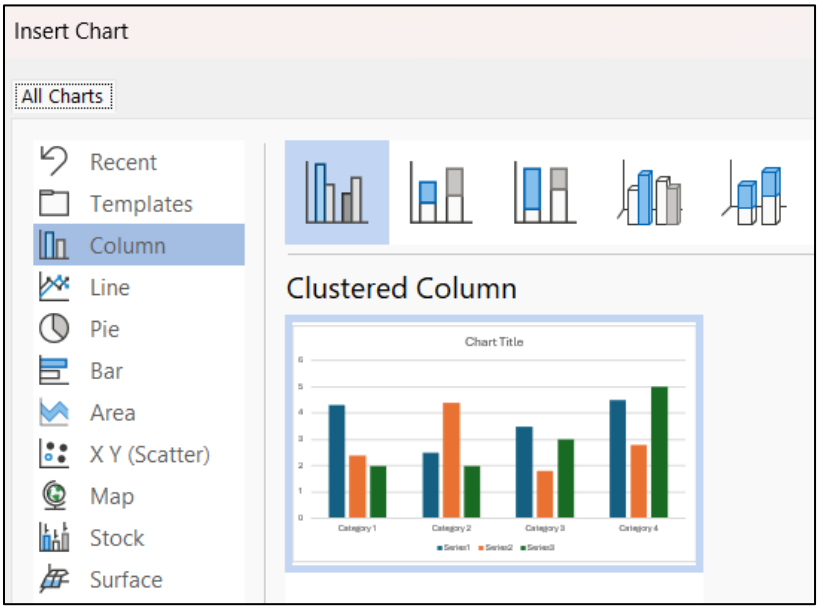
1. Select the grouped shape.
2. From the **Shape Format** tab, select the **Ungroup** objects button.

2.3 | Creating charts

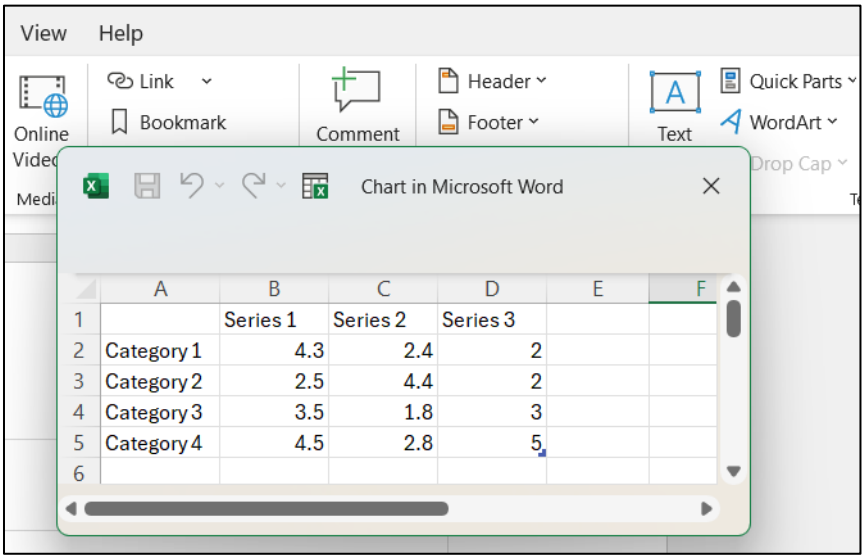
You may want to create various types of charts to visualize different forms of data, such as change in farm profits over time or the breakdown of income from sources of revenue.

Selecting a chart type

1. From the **Insert** tab, select **Chart** (bar graph icon). A dialog box opens.
2. Select the chart type from the vertical menu. **If applicable:** select the chart style from the horizontal menu. You may preview by hovering over your selection.

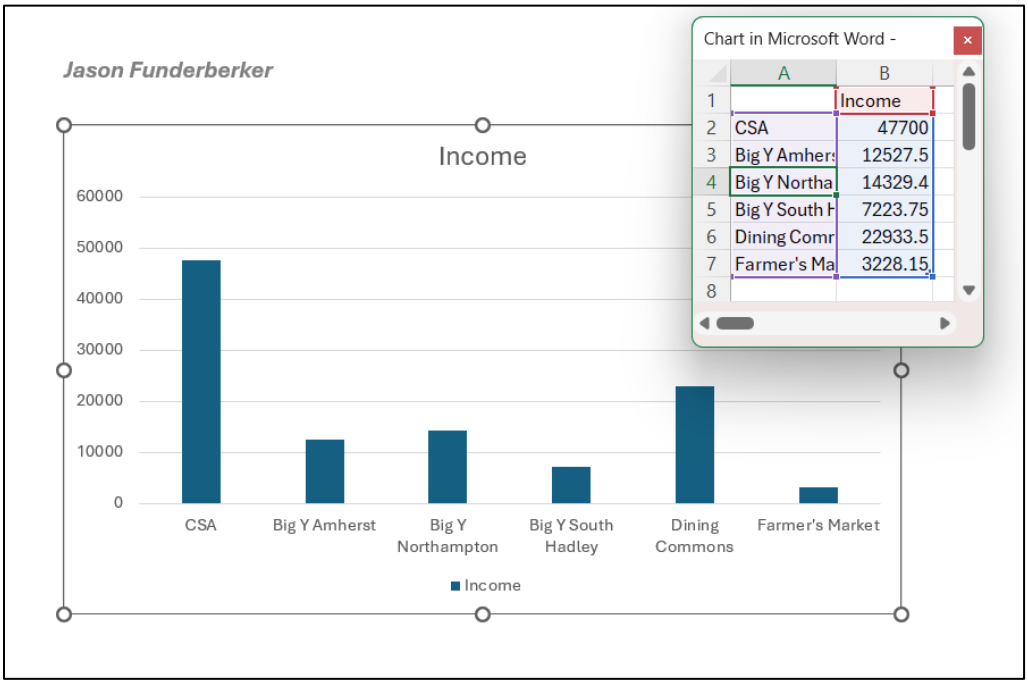


3. Select the **OK** button if satisfied with your selection. An Excel window opens.



Formatting a chart

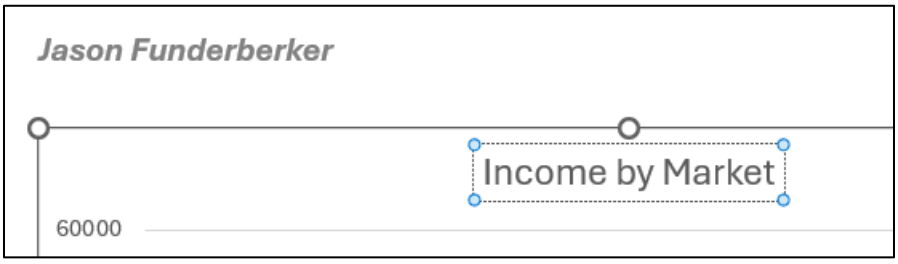
1. Fill in or add to the default values of the Excel spreadsheet with your own data. You can preview your changes in the main Word window.



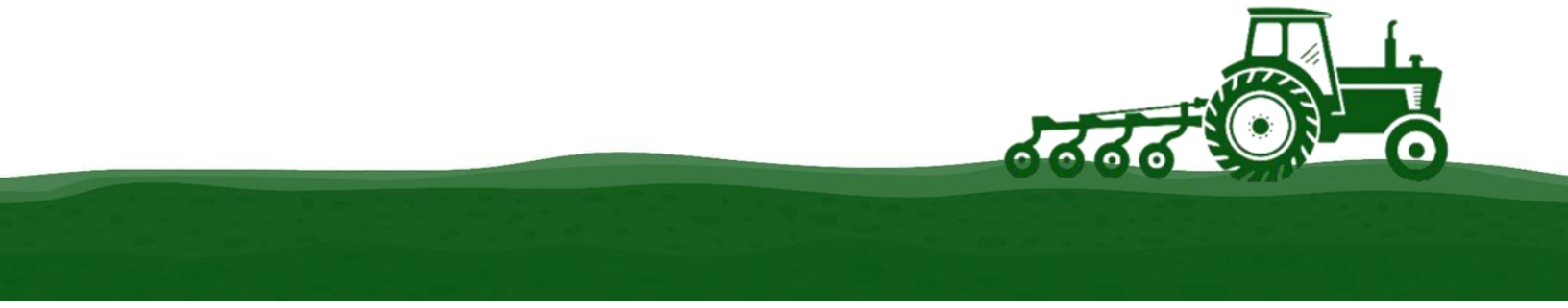
To delete a row or column:

1. Right-click on one of the cells of the row or column. A menu opens.
2. From the **Delete** tab, select either **Table Column** or **Table Row.**

2. Close the Excel window when done editing. You can double-click parts of the chart, such as the title, to edit or delete.



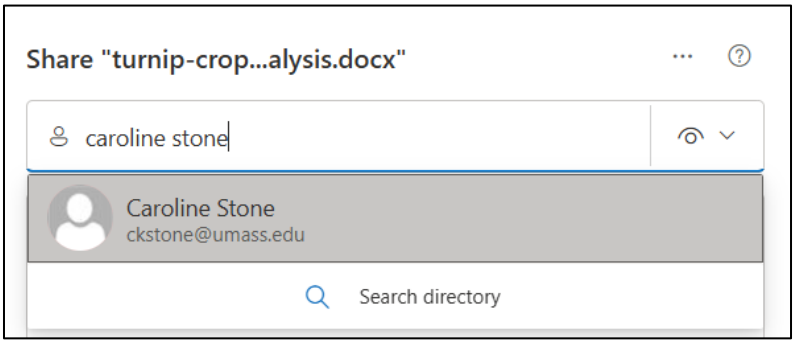
Chapter 3: Collaborating and sharing



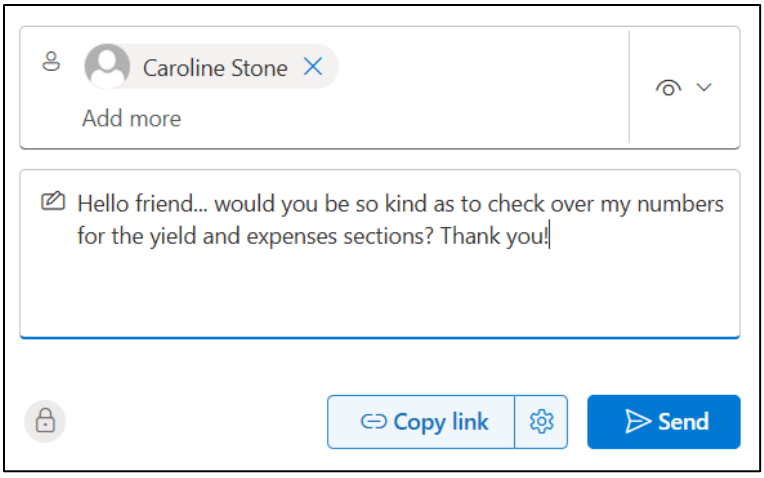
3.1 | Sharing a document to edit

You may want to share your work with your farm director or peers to get feedback or collaborate on a document.

1. From the **Share** dropdown menu in the top right of your document window, select **Share.** A dialog box opens.
2. Look up and select the person you want to share the document with by typing their name or email address. You may add multiple people to share with at once.



3. From the dropdown menu on the right, select one of the following options:
   - **Can edit:** can make any changes
   - **Can review:** can suggest changes
   - **Can view:** cannot make changes
   - **Can't download:** can only view, not download
4. **Optional:** Type a message to let your recipient know what you would like them to do in the document.

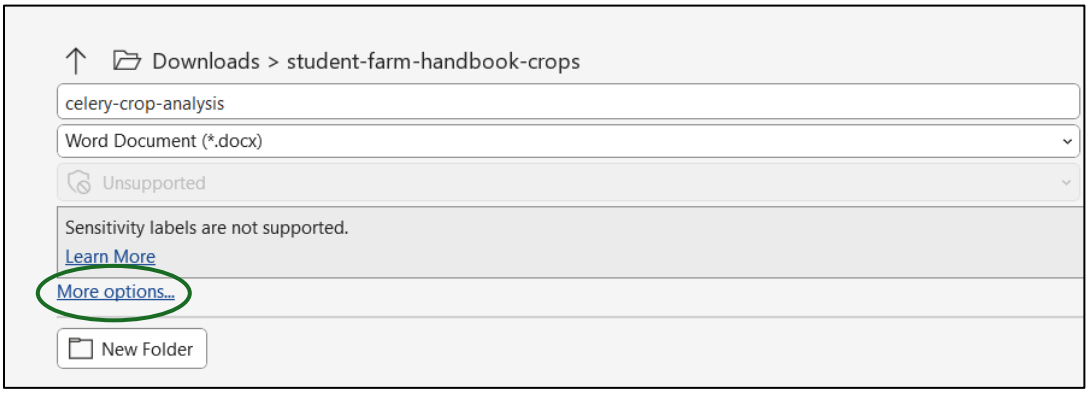


5. Select the **Send** button. The recipient is sent an email with a link to the document.

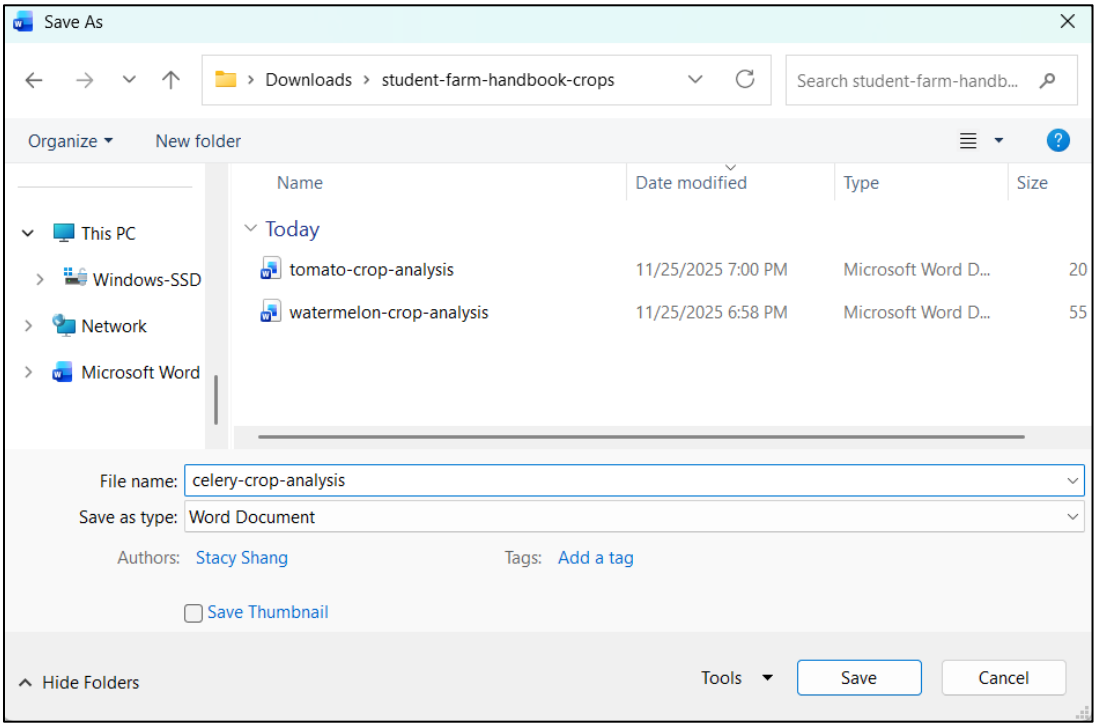
3.2 | Saving a document

You may want to save your document to the File Explorer on your device for easy access and sharing.

1. Select the **File** tab. The Home page opens.
2. In the **Save a Copy** tab, select **More options**. A File Explorer window opens.



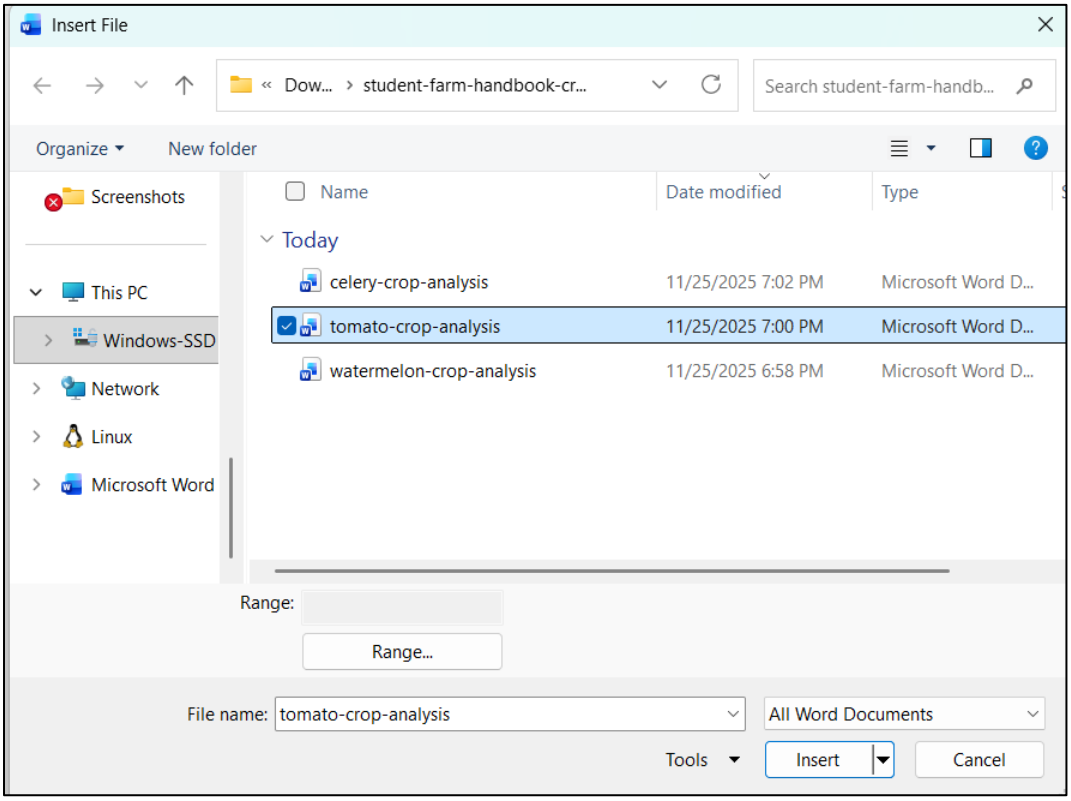
3. Find and open the directory you want to save your document in.
4. Select the **Save** button. Your document saves to the selected directory.



3.3 | Combining multiple documents into a single document

When it is time to create the final handbook, you may need to compile the work of multiple student farmers into one single document.

1. Ensure that you have downloaded all the documents to your File Explorer. You can refer to “3.2 | Saving a document” (page 21) to do this.
2. Under the **Insert** tab, select the **Object** dropdown menu.
3. Select **Text From File**. A File Explorer window opens.
4. Find and select the document you want to insert. If you want to insert multiple documents at once, select them in the order you want them to appear in.

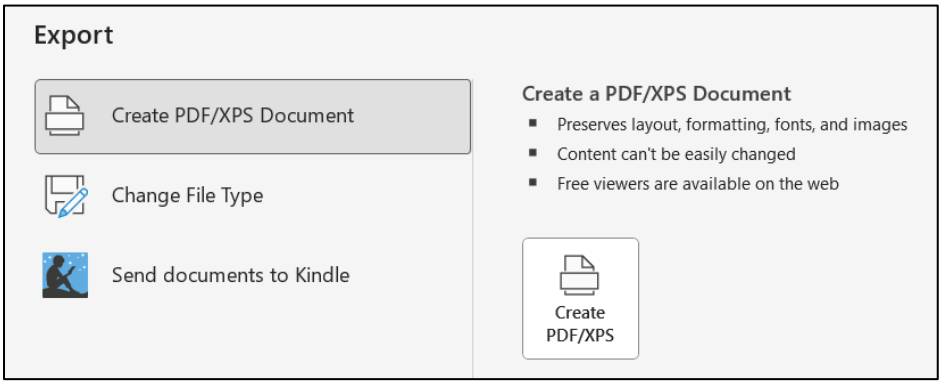


Select the **Insert** button to add the selected document(s).

3.4 | Exporting a document as a PDF

Saving your document as a PDF allows you to preserve the formatting as it appears on your device. You can then print out a hard copy of the handbook to show the year's work to stakeholders and future generations of student farmers.

1. Select the **File** tab. The Home page opens.
2. From the **Export** tab, select the **Create PDF/XPS Document** button. A File Explorer window opens.



3. Find and open the directory you want to save your document in.
4. Select the **Publish** button. Your document saves as a PDF.

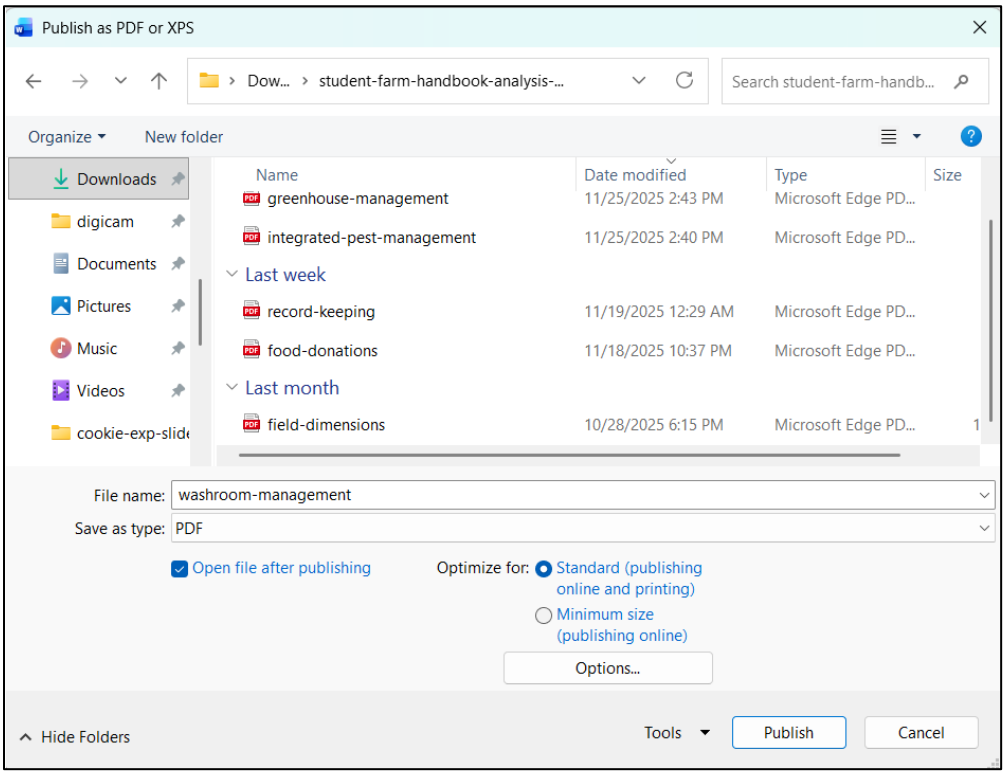


Photo credits

Cover page: Adam Li harvesting cucumbers. Courtesy of the UMass Student Farm.

Chapter pages:

Silhouette of a tractor with a plow. Ripa Ray on Vecteezy.

Seamless ground section vector design. Timplaru Emil on Vecteezy.

Page 13: Chick on the farm. Courtesy of Caroline Stone.

Page 14: Bin full of cauliflower. Courtesy of Caroline Stone.

Screenshots: All screenshots taken by Stacy Shang.

Colophon

This manual uses the typeface Abril Fatface to emphasize heading text, in complement with the more modern sans serif Lato for body text.

The cover photo was selected to highlight the intended audience of this manual— the student farmer. Edited with Google Photos and designed using Canva Pro, the color scheme matches the shades of green found within the manual.

Each chapter page includes the chapter title at the top of the page, and a tractor plowing a field along the bottom of the page. The tractor serves to balance the distribution of visual weight on the pages, as well as indicate the progression of the chapters as it moves along the field. The design was created using a combination of Adobe Photoshop and Canva Pro.

This manual was printed and bound by Staples in Hadley, Massachusetts.