

Microsoft Word Tips and Tricks

Writing an assignment often requires special characters and formatting elements. Here are some guidelines for achieving a more polished-looking document in Word.



Headers and Footers




A **running header** is text in the top margin of every page of your document. In PC versions of MS Word (since 2007), you can just double-click your mouse in the top margin to activate the text box for the header. (1) Use the Home tab Paragraph buttons to align the text to the right, (2) type your last name (for MLA-style papers), (3) a space, (4) select the Insert tab, (5) Page Number, and (6) Current Position and Plain Number to automatically number all the

pages in your document.

A **footer** is text that appears in the bottom margin of every page. Generally, the pages of student papers are numbered in the header, but if a footer is called for, selecting a centered page number is recommended, since being an odd or even page won't matter.

In Word for Mac (since 2011), use Print Layout View, and double-click in the top margin for header access. Insert a page number aligned to "outside." Position the right-align tab arrow  to the left of the page number. On page 2, set the left tab arrow  past the number box. Note: the default margins are 1.25" in Word for Mac, so they'll likely need to be changed to 1" on all sides.

Footnotes



Footnotes are bibliographic citations or related notes placed beneath a short horizontal line at the bottom of a page, but not in the bottom margin. Under the References tab, the button "AB¹ Insert Footnote" automatically creates the footnote formatting with a superscript number in the text and below a short separator line. You must type in the source information in the footnote itself. The footnote numbers will continue sequentially throughout the whole paper unless you select  in the Footnotes section and choose "restart each page" under the Numbering dialogue box.

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The **keyboard shortcut for footnotes** is CTRL+ALT+F. Hold down CTRL and ALT at the same time, then press the F key just once. (Once a footnote is entered, you can mouse over the note in your text and the citation will appear in a floating text bubble, so you can double-check what each superscript number reference is without going to the bottom of each page.)

In Word for Mac, go to the Document Elements tab [Header, Footer, Page #] and then Citations. From the Insert menu, choose Footnote, Format, then Start at. In the Numbering pop-up, click the option you want, then click Apply.

Subscript and Superscript

Subscript is a small character or characters that hang below the regular baseline of text. They can be inserted with the  button on the Home tab in Word for PCs. **Superscript** characters, such as exponential powers (πr^2), may be inserted with . To type a sub- or superscript character, click the button, type the character, then click the button again to resume typing regular characters.

In Word for Mac, according to the *Office 2011 for Mac* online forum, to type subscript, hold the Command (Cmd) key and the = key, then type; to type superscript, hold Shift and Cmd and =, then type. Earlier versions may use Shift + Cmd + (minus key) for subscript, Shift + Cmd + = for superscript.

Dashes

The **dash** — is a horizontal line that is longer than a hyphen and should not have a space before or after it. It is used for dramatic breaks in the flow of sentences. In the middle of a sentence, there must be a pair around a phrase, e.g., an appositive, as with parentheses. The dash may be typed with two hyphens -- immediately after a word, followed by the next word, and then a space. No spaces should be around the hyphens. In MS Word, this sequence automatically creates an **em dash**, the dash that is as wide as the letter “m” in whatever font you are using.

To insert a dash into text, (1) place the cursor after the last letter of the word you want followed by a dash, (2) type two hyphens, (3) any character, (4) a space, then (5) just delete the unnecessary characters. Or, you may place the cursor where you want a dash, hold the ALT key while you type 0151, then release ALT. This is the code for the em dash on a PC. In Apple’s OSX, type Option + Shift + a hyphen.

Acute and Grave Accents, Tilde, and Cedilla

To type an acute ´ accent over a vowel, as in the words *résumé* and *fiancé(e)*, hold down CTRL and press the apostrophe ´ key, release both keys, then type the vowel (such as *e* or *Shift + e*) to get *é* or *É*. **For the grave ` accent**, hold CTRL and press the tilde ~ ` key (to the left of the number 1 key along the top row) then type the vowel. **For the tilde**, such as on *ñ*, hold CTRL and Shift, press the ~ tilde key, then type the letter you want. **For the cedilla**, such as on *ç*, hold CTRL and press the comma, then type the letter *c*.

Degree Symbol

To write the degree symbol °, hold down both CTRL and SHIFT, press the 2 key for the @ symbol, then release all those keys and press the space bar once.

Hanging indents

To create hanging indents for a list of sources, type the entries first, then highlight the text and click the Line Spacing button from the Home tab Paragraph section. Choose “Line Spacing Options ...” and in the dialogue box Indentation section, under Spacing, select “Hanging” from the drop-down menu.

Dialogue Format and Punctuation

When presenting dialogue, direct speech between characters in a story or between people in an essay, start a new paragraph for each turn taken in the conversation:

“I saw your father today,” Mrs. Winslow said. “He looked terrible. Is he feeling okay?”
I sighed. I had been expecting this question for weeks, but why did it have to come from Mrs. Winslow? “He’s been better,” I muttered. “You’d have to ask him how he feels.”
“All right, you don’t have to get all snippy with me!”
“I wasn’t . . .” I said too late. She had already gone off in a huff.

Punctuation for direct speech is done just like any other sentence, with a capital first letter at the beginning and a period, question mark, or exclamation point at the end of a complete sentence, but placed inside the end quotation marks as fits the type of sentence. For speech or dialogue tags, e.g., *he screamed*, or *said Liza*, use a comma, whether the tag is placed before or after the quoted speech.