

Formatting - Tips, Tricks, and Answers

Formatting

Word includes several formatting tools that allow you to make your text appear how you want. Depending on the purpose of your document, altering certain formatting elements like backgrounds, lines, margins, or highlighting may be crucial. The following articles outline what Word allows you to format and how to best utilize it.

The following articles are available for the 'Formatting' topic. Click the article's title (shown in **bold**) to see the associated article.

[**Absolutely Getting Rid of Formatting**](#)

Need to get rid of the formatting applied to a bunch of text? One of the easiest ways to do this is to use Notepad in conjunction with Word.

[**Adding a Background to Your Document**](#)

Document backgrounds come in handy if you plan on converting the document to a Web page. Here's how you can add a background of your choice to your document.

[**Adding Horizontal Lines at the Sides of a Word**](#)

Want to add a couple of horizontal lines at the sides of a word? It can be trickier than it sounds, but there are several ways you can get just the type of lines you want, exactly where you want them.

[**Adding Vertical Lines at the Sides of a Word**](#)

Vertical lines are even easier to add around a word than are horizontal lines. There are a variety of methods you can use to add the lines, and only a few of them include any drawing.

[**Adjusting Bottoms of Pages**](#)

When you allow Word to naturally flow your text through a document, you may find that the text on each page ends at a different vertical position. If you want each page's text to end at the same place, you need to adjust the vertical alignment for the document, as described in this tip.

[**Aligning Plus/Minus Symbols**](#)

Scientific writing often involves the use of special symbols, such as the plus/minus symbol. If you want to align these symbols within a table, there are a couple of techniques you can use.

[**Automatic AutoCorrect Exceptions for Beginning Sentences**](#)

When automatically capitalizing the beginning of sentences, Word relies on how you historically have done your typing. This can cause some problems, as detailed in this tip.

[**Automatic Blank Pages at the End of a Section**](#)

If you want to have a blank page at the end of a document section, you can insert one manually or you can use the technique described in this tip. The technique makes the added pages dynamic and easy to use.

[**Avoiding a Section Break Booby Trap**](#)

Section breaks got your document formatting all messed up? It could be because of the way you added the section breaks in the first place.

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[Changing All Text of a Particular Colour](#)

Need to change the colour of some text in your document? This tip discusses three different ways you can approach the task to make short work of the change.

[Changing One of Three Fonts](#)

Once you are done formatting your document, you may want to make changes to part of that formatting without messing up the other parts. This tip shows you two ways that you can make changes to one font (and only one font) in your document.)

[Changing Sections](#)

When you divide your document into sections in order to change page layout attributes, you need to give some thought to what Word will do if you later delete some of those sections. Here's the info you need to make an intelligent decision about deleting sections.

[Changing the Default Highlighting Colour](#)

One of the tools that Word makes available on the Home tab of the ribbon is the Text Highlight tool. This functions similar to a physical highlighter, and defaults to the colour yellow (which is the most common physical highlighter). Here's how to change the default colour used by the tool.

[Changing the Highlighting Colour](#)

You can highlight words and phrases in your document, much the same as you can mark printed words and phrases with a highlighter. Here's how to use the highlighter and change the colours you use in highlighting.

[Cleaning Up a Document that Mixes Styles with Direct Formatting](#)

Need to get rid of direct, explicit formatting applied to a document? Here's an easy way to do it using familiar Word tools.

[Copying Formats](#)

Want to copy a format from one place to another without taking your hands off the keyboard? It's easy to do if you apply the shortcut keys in this tip.

[Detailed Measurements](#)

Want to know exactly how far something on the ruler is from the left and right margins of your document? It's easy to figure out with this esoteric shortcut.

[Double-Spacing Your Document](#)

Need to produce a quick double-spaced printout of your document? You can do it by using the simple steps in this tip.

[Embedding Fonts in a Document](#)

Fonts are essential to getting your text to look just the way you want it to look. If you have a font that you use in a document and that font isn't available on another person's system, then you need to figure out a way to let them see what you are seeing. The answer may be to embed the fonts right in the document.

[Fixing Mismatched Bullets and Numbers](#)

When you format bulleted lists or numbered lists, you may be surprised if some of the bullets

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or numbers don't match the other bullets or numbers. Careful attention to what you are actually formatting can help to cure this problem, as discussed here.

[Formatting a Company Name](#)

Want your company name to always appear in a particular formatted manner? Word provides two ways you can approach the task, as described in this tip.

[Formatting a Cover Page](#)

Formal reports look better when they are set up with an introductory cover page. Here's how you can add a cover page in a snap.

[Formatting Differences between Word Versions](#)

Create a document in one version of Word on one machine and then open that document in a different version of Word on a different machine and you may be surprised at the results. There can be lots of things that affect how the same document is rendered, displayed, and printed on each system. This tip discusses some of the things you can do to minimize the differences between systems.

[Formatting Fractions](#)

Need to have a great looking fraction in a document? It's relatively easy to do if you apply the formatting techniques discussed in this tip.

[Formatting Line Numbers](#)

Legal documents often use automatic line numbering for their documents. If you want to format those line numbers, you can do so by simply changing the style used to display them.

[Formatting Multiple Documents](#)

Need to format a bunch of documents so they all look the same? If the documents use styles, doing the formatting is relatively easy, as described in this tip.

[Formatting Page Numbers](#)

Need to format the page numbers you added to your document? Word makes it easy, using the same techniques you use to format regular text.

[Getting Identical Margins](#)

Need to get the margins on your document exactly right? It can be a challenge to get the Word settings where you need them and then wrestle with the printer so it does what you expect. Here are some things to keep in mind.

[Getting Rid of Blue Squiggly Underlines](#)

In an effort to make your writing better, Word uses "squiggly" underlines to mark things it thinks you may need to change. If you see some blue squiggly underlines on your screen, you may wonder what they are for and how to get rid of them. Here's the skinny.

[Getting Rid of Section Breaks, but Not Section Formatting](#)

Word allows you to change the character of how your pages are designed by using multiple sections in a document. If you want to get rid of a section, yet maintain the formatting associated with that section, it can be a real challenge.

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[Intelligent Title Case](#)

A common editorial need is to change the capitalization used on different words in a selection of text. Word provides a rudimentary way to adjust the case of the text, but you may want a more intelligent way of changing it.

[Italic Typing Doesn't Stay Italic](#)

If you turn explicit formatting on and off as you type, you may notice some quirky behaviour in Word. This tip examines one such behaviour and how you can correct it.

[Last Paragraph Line Strung Out Incorrectly](#)

Justifying a paragraph may have undesired effects on the last line of a paragraph. If this occurs with your text, you'll appreciate the approach described in this tip.

[Letters and Numbers in Page Numbers](#)

A common task is to add page numbers to document headers and footers. If you want those page numbers to include more than just digits, you can easily accomplish your desires.

[Lines that Don't Change When You Type](#)

Create a form in Word and you will invariably be faced with the need to place fill-in-the-blank lines in the document. If you want those lines to remain as people fill in the form, there are a couple of ways you can format the document.

[Losing All Formatting in a Document](#)

Have you ever made a formatting change to a couple of characters or to a paragraph, only to see those changes affect text elsewhere in the document? Here's the reason that is happening and what you can do about it.

[Making a Customized Theme Available to Others](#)

Microsoft Office applications (including Word) allow you to work with collections of common formatting specifications, called themes. If you create a customized theme, you probably want to share that theme with others, so they can use it. Here's how you can.

[Making a List of Words Italic](#)

You can use Find and Replace to change the attributes of text in your document. When you want to make changes to lots and lots of text in your document, it becomes more challenging. This tip looks at a few ideas of how you can take a list of words and make all instances of those words italic in a document.

[Making Bottoms of Pages Line Up](#)

Want to make your text look good on the finished page? This tip discusses a common speed bump in this quest--making the bottom of each page line up.

[Making Sure a Document Always Has an Even Number of Pages](#)

For some documents, you may want to make sure that a printout always has an even number of pages. Word has no intrinsic way to do this, but you can work around this apparent limitation using the techniques in this tip.

[Margins for All Documents Changing](#)

Have you had the margins in a group of documents change without you knowingly doing

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anything? This tip explores some reasons this might happen and what you can do to keep your margin settings consistent.

[Noting Formatting Inconsistencies](#)

When you create a document, Word is constantly checking behind the scenes to make sure that what you type makes sense. Tools such as spelling and grammar checking are not the only way this is done. You can also have Word check for formatting inconsistencies.

[Precise Ruler Adjustments](#)

When adjusting the position of things on the ruler (like tab stops), you can use the Alt key to get very precise in your adjustments. Just hold down the key as you drag items with the mouse, and you can immediately see what is happening.

[Quickly Displaying Formatting Specs](#)

It's easy to apply formatting to text, but often hard (after the fact) to know exactly what was done. If you often need to know what formatting is applied to a text selection, you'll love the shortcuts described in this tip.

[Reducing Leading without Cutting Off Text](#)

When decreasing the vertical spacing of lines in a paragraph, you might end up with a condition where parts of your letters are cut off. This tip discusses why that occurs and what, if anything, you can do about it.

[Removing Extra Paragraph Marks](#)

Tired of having too many paragraph breaks in your document? You can get rid of the extra paragraph marks by using the simple macro presented in this tip.

[Reversing Type](#)

Most text appears black on white, not white on black. If you want to change this so that your type is reversed, here's a quick way to do it.

[Rotating a Page of Text](#)

You can rotate a page of text by using the Far East language support built into Word. This tip shows how easy it is to implement this little trick.

[Section Breaks Changing On Their Own](#)

Sometimes Word does things that just don't make sense. For instance, have you ever inserted a section break into your document and had Word change the characteristics of the section break just before the one you inserted? If this happens to you, you might appreciate the information in this tip.

[Selective Formatting using Find and Replace](#)

The Find and Replace tool in Word allows you to search for formatting and alter it in your replacement text. What it doesn't do, however, is allow you to be selective on which characters of your replacement text have formatting applied. There is a way around this using two passes through Find and Replace, as described in this tip.

[Setting a Precise Custom Paper Size](#)

Word allows you to define your own custom paper sizes. It is possible, though, that those sizes may change on their own. This tip discusses why that may happen and what you can do.

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[Sign-in Sheets](#)

Printed sign-in sheets are a staple at many meetings and seminars. Word can create them lickety-split just by using a few tabs. It's all in the setup of your styles, as this tip illustrates.

[Spelling Out Page Numbers](#)

If your document is more than a couple of pages long, adding page numbers is a nice finishing touch. If you want, you can even have those page numbers be spelled out using words by applying the technique described in this tip.

[Squeezing Everything In](#)

Do you have just a line or two of text that 'spills over' onto another printed page? Here are some ways you can compress your text and squeeze it all by that extra page.

[Squeezing Lines Together](#)

The space between lines of text is technically referred to as "leading." This tip examines various ways you can adjust leading so that you squeeze lines of text together vertically, so they are almost touching.

[Stubborn Highlighting](#)

When you make extensive edits to a document and those edits include changing the formatting of numbered or bulleted lists, you can end up with some strange (and stubborn) results. Here's a look at the problem and how you can regain control of your list formatting.

[Turning Off Highlighter Display](#)

You can use the highlighter tool to add all sorts of colour to your document. If you want to turn off those colours so that your highlighting doesn't show, you can do so by making a single configuration change.

[Unable to Set Margins in a Document](#)

If you find that you cannot set the margins in a document, chances are good that it is due to document corruption. Here's how to try to recover the document.

[Understanding Font Styles](#)

Fonts, by default, come with one or more styles that define variations of how that font is displayed in your document. Understanding font styles enhances the way in which you can format your text.

[Understanding Mirror Margins](#)

Rather than have the margins of your documents always be the same, you can use what Word calls "mirror margins." Here's how to set those margins and how they will affect your printed output.

[Understanding Point Sizes](#)

Points are the common unit of measure for typefaces in the printing industry. They are also used quite often in Word. Here's what they are all about.

[Updating to Smart Quotes](#)

As you type a document, Word automatically converts your quote marks and apostrophes to "curly" versions that look more professional. When working with a document from a different source that doesn't include these smart quotes, you may want to convert them all, so

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they look the same. This is easy to do simply by using Word's Find and Replace function. This tip explains how.

[Using the Format Painter with Editing Restrictions in Place](#)

Word allows you to apply protection to your documents that can affect which tools users can access. If you want to exempt some tools from restrictions, you might be out of luck. Here, though, is a possible workaround for one such restriction.

[Using the Highlighter](#)

Need to draw attention to some text? Consider using the Highlight tool, which functions just like the highlighter pens you pick up at the office supply store.

[Vertical Alignment of Sections](#)

Using one of the page setup options in Word, you can specify that the paragraphs within the section be vertically aligned a certain way on the page. This tip illustrates how you can set up this type of formatting.

[Working with Other People's Files](#)

When you get files from other people, you may want a quick way to apply your formatting to their text. Provided that the document you receive is formatted using styles, the application of your own formatting is easy when you use the technique described in this tip.