

Using Microsoft Word Styles

The scenario

You are creating a handbook that's about 50 pages long. It has numerous headings and subheadings, which have to look consistent throughout. The document also needs a table of contents, and you'd like to convert it into a PDF file so you can put the manual on the web.

Normally, you'd make a heading look like a heading by highlighting the text, then choosing the font, size, and formatting you want. A week before your deadline, your boss says she wants a different font. It seems like you're stuck going back and changing every heading (there are over 100 of them) one at a time.

Then comes the really tedious part: the table of contents. You comb through the entire handbook, copying and pasting headings into the front of the document, making note of page numbers as you go. You set up tab stops, format the table, and think you're all done...and then someone wants to add three paragraphs on page 14 that change all the page numbers in the rest of the document. How many more hours of work will it take to fix the page numbers?

The solution

Using Styles can solve most of these problems. They require a different way of thinking about text formatting, but are fairly straightforward to use. Once you start to use them, you might never go back!

The benefits

- Styles help you **format text consistently**, especially in long documents
- Styles let you **change the look** of your document very, very easily – for example, you can change the font of every header in a document with about five clicks.
- Styles are the first step in creating **automatic tables of contents** (with page numbers that auto-update) within word, and in other types of documents, such as PDF documents and web pages.

The procedure

Overview

In theory, when using Styles, you format text by giving it a name that pertains to its function – for example, Heading, Body Text, Footnote, Callout, or Bullet. Then you create a set of instructions that tells each name how it should look – for example, you say that all text labeled “Heading” should be 16pt Arial, Bold, Left Justified.

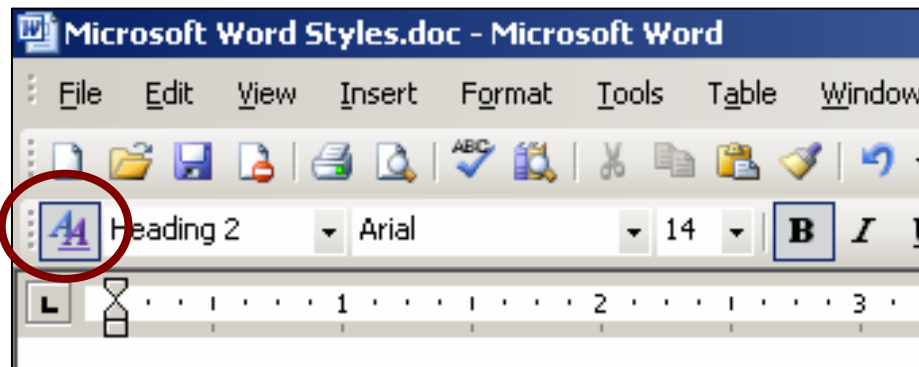
In practice, it's actually much simpler than this. Word has a couple of pre-defined Styles, which you can apply just by clicking. You can also adapt these styles to look the way you want, or make completely new styles from scratch.

Viewing the Style palette

In Word 2003, you can display a palette with all the styles on it, called the Task Pane. (FYI: the task pane can also show the dictionary, thesaurus, clip art, mail merge info, etc.) To view the Style section of the Task Pane, do one of the following:

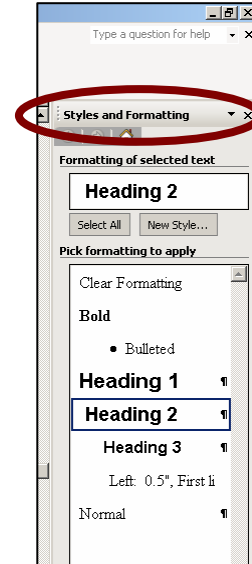
Option 1

- Click the Styles Palette button



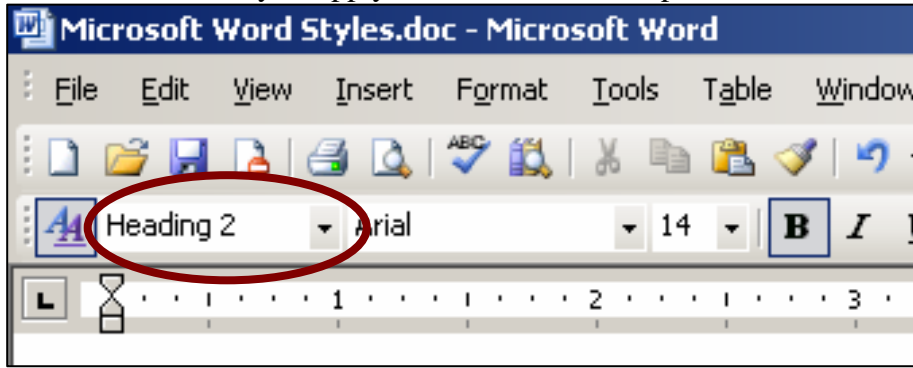
Option 2

- Choose View Menu → Task Pane
- At the top of the Task Pane, select Styles and Formatting to show the correct pane.



Applying a pre-defined style

- Highlight the text you want to change.
- Choose the style you want from the Style Menu (all versions of Word) or click the style you want in the Task Pane (Word 2003)
- Note that most styles apply to an entire line, not part of a line.



Modifying a style

Method 1 – using Word 2003's Task Pane

- Create or find text in the style you want to modify (see Applying a pre-defined style, above).
- Make the changes using the font, size, bold, italic, etc. icons.
- Highlight at least one word of the newly formatted text.
- Click the drop-down menu next to the style name in the Task Pane
- Choose “Update to match selection.”

Method 2 – works in earlier versions

- Choose “Styles” from the Format Menu.
- Click the style you want to modify.
- Click “Modify.”
- Enter your changes.
- Click “Save”

Creating your own style

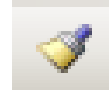
- Activate the Styles window (either the Task Pane or Format Menu→Styles)
- Click “New Style...”
- Give the new style a name.
- Select the formatting for the style.
- Click OK.

Cleaning up a messy document

When you first open a document that was created without styles, its style sheet (in the Task Pane) will probably be a mess. Here are several techniques for cleaning up the document.

Format Painter

- Format one bit of text properly.
- Highlight it.
- Click the format painter (the paintbrush on the standard toolbar). This “sets” the format painter with the formatting settings of the highlighted text.
- Click the text you want to re-format. The format painter will apply the settings from the highlighted text to the new text.
- If you have more than one item to format, **double-click** the format painter – then you can use it on as many bits of text as you like. When you are done, select a different tool or type something.



“Select Similar” (Word 2003)

- Format one bit of text properly.
- Highlight it.
- Right-click on it; at the bottom of the menu, there will be an option to “select text with similar formatting”.
- Choose the style you want to apply; it will apply to all the text at once.

Select Instances (Word 2003)

- Look at the styles in the Task Pane.
- Choose a style you want to convert.
- Click on its drop-down menu and select the first item: “Select all X instances.”
- Click on a different style to convert all instances of that style to a new style.

Deleting styles (Word 2003)

This is especially useful technique for styles with only one instance.

- Look at the styles in the Task Pane.
- Choose a style you want to delete.
- Click on its drop-down menu and select “Delete”
- Word will pick another similar style or convert the text to the “Normal” style.

Bonus items

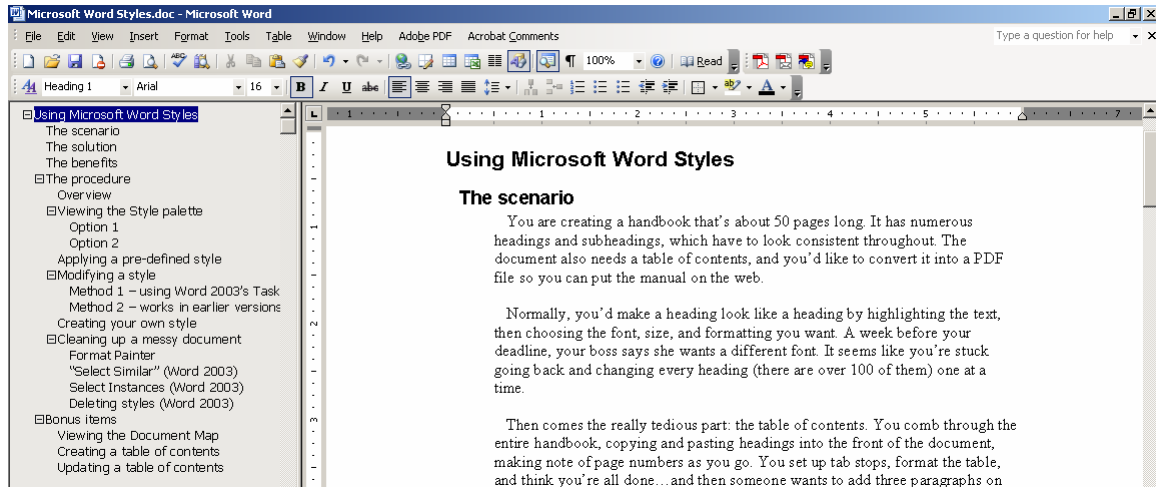
Once you’ve set up a document using styles (especially Headings), you can add lots of dynamic navigational features to your document.

Viewing the Document Map

The Document Map doesn't show up when you print a document, but it can help you navigate quickly through your document.

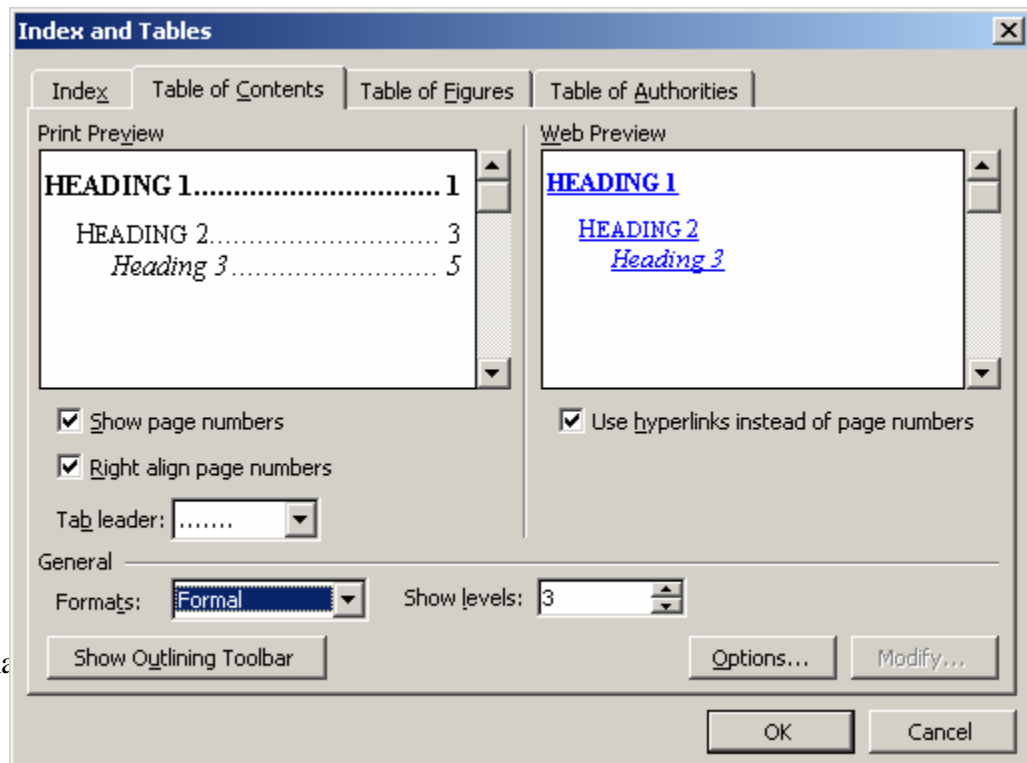
- View Menu → Document Map

That's it! To use the Document Map, click on the heading to jump to it. You can also click the + and – signs next to headings to expand and collapse headings.



Creating a table of contents

- Choose Insert Menu → Reference → Index and Tables
- Choose the Table of Contents tab.
- Pick a format for the table of contents.
- Designate how many levels you want to show. (Three levels of headings is usually about right.)



Updating a table of contents

When you click on an auto-generated table of contents, the whole table turns gray to let you know it was auto-generated. It's fairly difficult to update it by hand; the best way is to navigate to the text you want to change using the arrow keys on the keyboard and hitting the delete key.

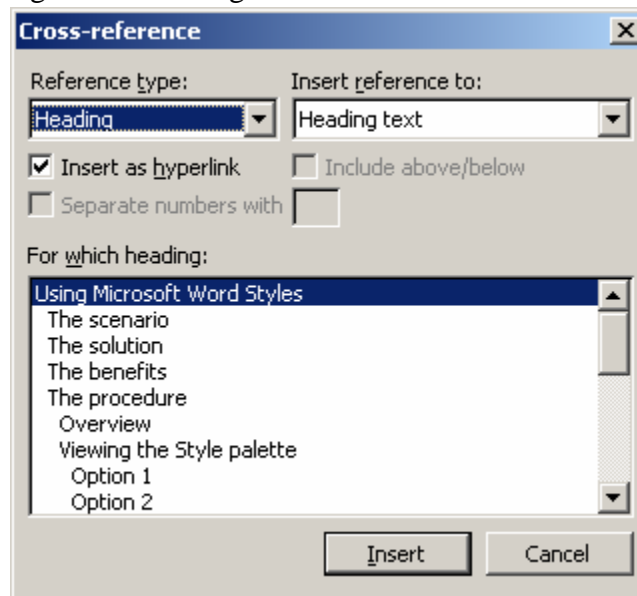
To update the page numbers or to add in new headings automatically:

- Right-click somewhere in the table of contents.
- Choose "Update Field."
- You will have the option to update the whole table (which will add in any headings you've created since you made the table) or just the page numbers.
- Choose the option you'd like and click OK.

"See also" references

You can automatically generate cross references to point to any heading and the page number that heading appears on, such as "See Creating your own style, page 3"

- Position the cursor where you want the cross-reference to appear.
- Choose Insert Menu → Reference → Cross Reference
- In the drop-down menus at the top of the dialog box that pops up, choose "Heading" and "Heading text."



- Click "Insert" but DO NOT CLOSE the dialog box when you are done.
- Change the "Insert reference to..." drop-down menu to "Page number."
- Click "Insert" again.
- Now close the dialog box.
- You will have something that looks like this: Creating your own style3
- Use the arrow keys to position your cursor before the page number and type ", page " so you now have "Creating your own style, page 3"
- You can right-click on the heading text or the page number to update them.