

## Some Tips for Academic Writing and Using Microsoft Word

Pooyan Doozandeh<sup>1</sup> & Frank E. Ritter  
Applied Cognitive Science Lab, The Pennsylvania State University  
ACS Tech. Note 2019–2 (June 10, 2019)

This document will teach some writing tips and some advanced techniques in Microsoft Word. It includes using dash and hyphen, quotations and italicizing, outline view, styles, hidden text, key bindings, breaks, and bibliography tools. The main use of this document is in writing articles, proposals, theses, dissertations, books, resumes, CVs, and other academic texts.

**Using dash and hyphen.** Dash and hyphen are two different characters, and there are different types of dashes and hyphens described in Table 1. Word does not make these clearly available, but they are available to use if you know how to find them.

Table 1. Description of the usage of different types of dash and hyphen.

<u>Character</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Key(s)</u>	<u>Typical usage</u>
-	hyphen or hyphen-minus	Win: minus key Mac: minus key	To separate components of a compound word ( <i>long-standing; twentieth-century writers</i> ); prefixes and suffixes ( <i>de-Stalinization</i> ).
–	en-dash	Win: ctrl + minus Mac: option + minus	To indicate spans or differentiation, replacing “to” and “and” ( <i>years 1754–1763; US–Canada border; pp. 81–101</i> ).
—	em-dash	Win: ctrl + alt + minus Mac: option + shift + minus	To show a break in a sentence or parenthetical statements (“ <i>Glitter, felt, yarn, and buttons—his kitchen looked as if a clown had exploded</i> ”; “ <i>A flock of sparrows—some of them juveniles—alighted and sang.</i> ”). There is no space around em-dash.
--	double hyphen or sig dash	Win: two minus keys Mac: two minus keys	To insert dashes when you do not have a phototypesetter tool like Word or LaTeX (with no space around it); with a space after, it is also used in electronic signatures ( <i>-- Sophie Smith</i> ).

*Note:* minus keys mentioned above refer to the minus key in the numeric keypad section of keyboards. They might not work with the hyphen key on the main section of keyboards.

**Quotations and italicizing.**<sup>2</sup> There are no agreed-upon rules about the usage of quotations; but there are certain conventions that are followed commonly. The purpose of double quotation is to

---

1 pooyan.doozandeh@gmail.com

2 Derived from the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*.

write materials quoted directly from a source. But it can be used for other reasons. When introducing a word or phrase used as an ironic comment as slang, or as an invented or coined expression, you can use double quotation (*considered "normal" behavior; the "good-outcome" variable*). In this usage, use quotation marks only the first time the word or phrase is used. To cite a letter, word, phrase, or sentence as a linguistic example, or to introduce a technical or key term, do not use double quotation. Instead, italicize the term (“we call it *fidelity-transfer correlation*”). The main use of single quotation marks is within double quotations to set off material that in the original source was enclosed in double quotation marks (*In their study they found that “the ‘fidelity of simulation’ should not be of concern” (p. 55).*).

**Outline view.** It helps you manage a document’s structure and headings without getting lost in the text. Academic papers usually have headings in different levels; a heading might have several sub-headings, each having their own sub-headings, and so on. This tool can thus help in organizing your documents. To access Word’s outline view, go to the View tab. In outline view, you can directly edit headings and paragraphs beneath each heading. An example of using outline is shown in Figure 1.

- ⊕ **Introduction**
- ⊕ **Definitions and terminology**
  - ⊕ *Definition of fidelity*
    - ⊖ Fidelity as a domain-general concept
    - ⊕ **Types**
      - ⊕ **Visual**
        - Ferwerda (2003) offers a general measure of fidelity in digital images. He provides three levels of analysis to the degree of realism of images: physical realism, photo-realism, and functional realism. Each of these levels offer different criteria of measurement for the degree of realism of an image.
      - ⊕ **Auditory**
      - ⊖ **Olfactory**
      - ⊕ **Object**
    - ⊕ **Fidelity in computational systems and simulations**
      - ⊖ Summary
    - ⊕ *Definition of training*
    - ⊕ *Fidelity in training simulation systems*
      - ⊖ Summary
  - ⊕ **Literature review of the relationship between fidelity and training**
  - ⊖ **Fidelity: A refined concept**

Figure 1. An example of using Outline View when editing a document.

Each heading or paragraph has a level. The highest level (i.e., level 1) contains the primary headings (e.g., title, introduction, method, conclusion). The next level (i.e., level 2) contains secondary headings (e.g., within the method section, there are headings of materials, participants, and design), and these levels continue as such. See the Appendix for a list of keybindings for outline view. Some operations available in outline view are listed below.

- The entire document in the outline view (i.e., headings and paragraphs) is editable.
- You can move sections, headings, and paragraphs around the document in outline view by dragging them with the mouse pointer.
- You can change the level of sections by first selecting them, and then using the left or right arrows on the top menu (or using the Tab key or Shift+Tab to change the level).
- You can open or close a heading and its content by double-clicking on the heading icon, or using + or – keys on the keyboard while the heading is selected.

*Note:* it is preferable to use outline view when you start creating a document. Converting documents that were created without outline to outline view might take some time.

**Styles.** Use Styles to format sections in your document. As for some examples, you can use the "Title" style for your title, "Heading 1" for level 1 heading, "Text" style for the main text of the document, and "Caption" style for the figure captions and subtitles. The main reason of using Styles is that, instead of repeatedly going through several steps (e.g., spacing, font, color, italics) across many sections in the document and monitoring their uniformity by hand, you can use Styles and choose the kind of formatting you need (e.g., title), and Word does all the formatting for those parts across the whole document. Once you have several sections of your document in a specific style, and if you want to apply a change to all those sections (e.g., changing the font size from 11 to 12), instead of editing those sections one by one, you can simply make the change to the Style of those sections, and it automatically applies the change to all sections with the same Style.

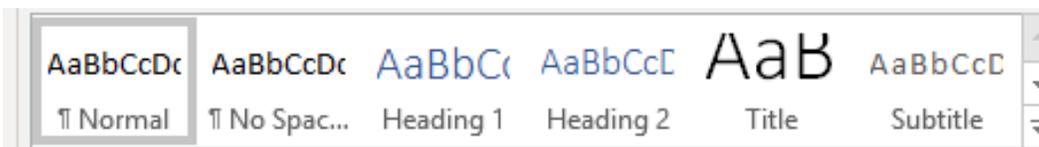


Figure 2. Default Style menu which is usually on the top of Word's main page.

To use Styles, you can navigate to the provided Styles tab on the top menu. As is shown in Figure 2, there exist several styles by default. You can first select your text or paragraph and click on one of the styles. To remove the style from the selected text, you should open the tab on the right-bottom corner of the panel and choose Clear Formatting. This will change the style of the text to your Word's default settings of text. You can also create your own style by opening the tab on the right-bottom corner and choosing Create a Style.

As a side note, when you install Word in your computer and open a new page, the default formatting (e.g., line spacing, paragraph spacing, indentation, font, font size) is decided by Word, and it might be different from your preferred default formatting. So, you should change formatting elements for every new document. You can change this, so that every time you open Word, the

formatting of a blank page is your default preference. To do this, create a Word document, and in the blank page, click on the small opening tab on the right bottom corner of Font menu, decide your formatting, and click on “Set As Default”. Similarly, you can do this for Paragraph menu in which you can decide spacing, indentation, alignments, and other options.

**Hidden text.** If you have confidential information in a document or text that you do not want others to see at first sight, or if you have old or personal notes about the document (e.g., author contact details, dead prose, prose to reuse, references yet to include), you can hide selected text in your document. To hide a piece of text, select the text, and then press Ctrl+Shift+H. Or:

- Right-click on the selected text, and then click the Font tab.
- Select or clear the Hidden check box. Click Ok.

*Note:* make sure the Hidden Text checkbox is unchecked in File>Options>Display.

To show the hidden text, you can use Ctrl+\* (in Mac, Option+\*). To show the hidden text together with all other hidden formatting in the document, you can also use ¶ on the top menu of Word (in Paragraph tab).

**Other useful characters and keybindings.** Keybinding means pressing (binding) several keys at the same time for a specific purpose (also called keyboard shortcuts). There is a list of useful keybindings in the Appendix. You can also find many useful keybindings when using Word at: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/>. In that webpage, search “keyboard shortcuts”, and you can find keybindings for both Win and Mac. Two useful keybindings are listed below.

#### Non-breaking space

If you reach the end of a line in Word, it automatically breaks the line and goes to a new line at the closest space character. To prevent Word from breaking a line at a certain space character, you can insert a non-breaking space. To do so, you can use Ctrl+Shift+Spc (in Mac Option+Spc). For example, you would not want Word to break a line at the space in “730 ms” or “ad hoc”.

#### Non-breaking return (cr - carriage return), or soft return

When you press the Enter (or Return) key in Word, it automatically puts extra space between the current line and the next line. But sometimes you do not need space between lines (e.g., you may want to divide a title into two lines without adding additional space between them). Here, you should use a soft return or non-breaking return. To do so, press Shift+Enter (in Mac, Option+Return). For example, the space between the current paragraph and the title line “Non-breaking return” is non-breaking return, but the space between the end of the previous paragraph (“...’ad hoc”.) and the next line (“Non...”) is simple (or hard) return.

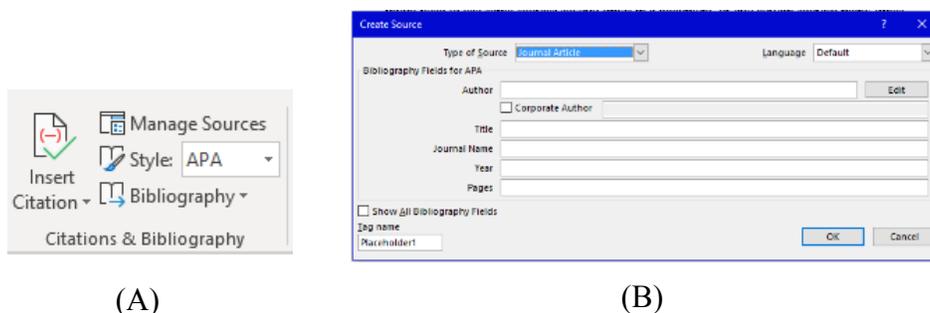
**Section and page breaks.** Section Breaks should be used for separating different sections of a document when they have different structure. For example, if you want to write a document in one column in each page, and you need to write the next section of the document in two columns, you should insert a Section Break after the first section, and write in the two-column structure in the next section. Page Break is used to separate different sections with the same structure.

Also, when you select a line or a heading and want Word to keep it together with the next paragraph, you can right click, choose Paragraph, and in Lines and Page Breaks tab, choose “Keep with next”. For example, this would preclude Word from separating a heading from its paragraph in two separate pages. You can similarly insert page break.

**Bibliography tools.** Sometimes you need to cite articles, books, or other sources several times in a document, and keeping track of literature and citing papers by hand becomes a challenge. In those cases, references need to be stored in an accessible way for future citations. If you are a graduate student or write frequently, bibliography tools can be helpful; it may not pay off in the first 100 pages, but will pay off after that. You can use a range of tools to store the citation of your articles, books, and other sources, and afterwards, you can cite those sources easily, both in text and in references section. For a list of the professional bibliography management tools, go to the webpage:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference\\_management\\_software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_management_software).

Word has a simple tool that can help you manage your references. In Word, go to References>Citations & Bibliography (Figure 3, A). After choosing your style of formatting (e.g., APA), you can click on Insert Citation, and choose Add New Source (Figure 3, B). After filling the information of a source and adding the source, you can go to Citations & Bibliography and choose Insert Citation for inserting a source in text. When you want to write the reference section, in Citations & Bibliography you should choose Bibliography, and choose the source.



*Figure 3.* A refers to the Citations & Bibliography tab in Word’s References menu, and B is the window that appears when you choose Add New Source in the Insert Citation menu.

## Appendix: Some Useful Keys and Keybindings in Word

<i>General</i>	<i>Moving Around a Document</i>	<i>Selecting Text</i>
Ctrl+N: Create a new document	Ctrl+Left/Right Arrow: Move one word to the left or right	Shift+Left/Right Arrow: Extend your current selection by one character to the left or right
Ctrl+O: Open an existing document	Ctrl+Up/Down Arrow: Move up or down one paragraph	Ctrl+Shift+Left/Right Arrow: Extend your current selection by one word to the left or right
Ctrl+S: Save a document	End: Move to the end of the current line	Shift+Up/Down Arrow: Extend selection up or down one line
F12: Open the Save As dialog box	Ctrl+End: Move to the end of the document	Ctrl+Shift+Up/Down Arrow: Extend selection to the beginning or end of the paragraph
Ctrl+W: Close a document	Home: Move to the beginning of the current line	Shift+End: Extend selection to the end of the line
Ctrl+Z: Undo an action	Ctrl+Home: Move to the beginning of the document	Shift+Home: Extend selection to the beginning of the line
Ctrl+Y: Redo an action	Page Up/Page Down: Move up or down one screen	Ctrl+Shift+Home/End: Extend selection to the beginning or end of the document
Alt+Ctrl+S: Split a window	Ctrl+Page Up/Page Down: Move to the previous or next browse object (after performing a search)	Shift+Page Down/Page Up: Extend selection down or up one screen
Ctrl+Alt+V: Print Layout View	Alt+Ctrl+Page Up/Page Down: Move to the top or bottom of the current window	Ctrl+A: Select the entire document
Ctrl+Alt+O: Outline View	F5: Open the Find dialog box with the "Go To" tab selected, so you can quickly move to a specific page, section, bookmark, and so on.	F8: Enter selection mode. While in this mode, you can use the arrow keys to extend your selection. You can also press F8 up to five times to extend the selection outward. Use Esc to exist the selection mode.
Ctrl+Alt+N: Draft View	Shift+F5: Cycle through the last three locations where the insertion point was placed. If you just opened a document, Shift+F5 moves you to the last point you were editing before closing the document.	
Ctrl+F2: Print Preview View		
F1: Open the Help pane		
Ctrl+F: Search a document		
F7: Run a spelling and grammar check		
Shift+F7: Open the thesaurus. If you have a word selected, Shift+F7 looks up that word in the thesaurus.		
<i>Editing Text</i>	<i>Character Formatting</i>	<i>Paragraph Formatting</i>
Ctrl+Backspace: Delete one word to the left	Ctrl+B: Apply bold formatting	Ctrl+M: Increases a paragraph's indent one level each time you press it
Ctrl+Delete: Delete one word to the right	Ctrl+I: Apply italic formatting	Ctrl+Shift+M: Reduces a paragraph's indent one level each time you press it
Ctrl+C: Copy or graphics to the Clipboard text	Ctrl+U: Apply underline formatting	Ctrl+T: Increases a hanging indent each time you press it
Ctrl+F3: Cut selected text to the Spike. The Spike is an interesting variant on the regular clipboard. You can keep cutting text to the Spike and Word remembers it all. When you paste the Spikes contents, Word pastes everything you cut, but places each item on its own line.	Ctrl+Shift+W: Apply underline formatting to words, but not the spaces between words	Ctrl+Shift+T: Reduces a hanging indent each time you press it
Ctrl+Shift+F3: Paste the Spike contents	Ctrl+Shift+D: Apply double underline formatting	Ctrl+E: Center a paragraph
Alt+Shift+R: Copy the header or footer used in the previous section of the document	Ctrl+D: Open the Font dialog box	Ctrl+L: Left-align a paragraph
	Ctrl+Shift+< or >: Decrease or increase font size one preset size at a time	Ctrl+R: Right-align a paragraph
	Ctrl+[ or ]: Decrease or increase font size one point at a time	Ctrl+J: Justify a paragraph
	Ctrl+=: Apply subscript formatting	Ctrl+1: Set single-spacing
	Ctrl+Shift+Plus key: Apply superscript formatting	Ctrl+2: Set double-spacing
	Ctrl+Shift+A: Formats all letters as uppercase	Ctrl+5: Set 1.5 line Spacing
	Ctrl+Shift+K: Formats all letters as lowercase	Ctrl+0: Remove one line spacing preceding a paragraph
	Ctrl+Shift+C: Copies the character formatting of a selection	Ctrl+Shift+S: Open a popup window for applying styles
	Ctrl+Shift+V: Pastes formatting onto selected text	Ctrl+Shift+N: Apply the normal paragraph style
	Ctrl+Space: Removes all manual character formatting from a selection	Alt+Ctrl+1: Apply the Heading 1 style
		Alt+Ctrl+2: Apply the Heading 2 style
		Alt+Ctrl+3: Apply the Heading 3 style
		Ctrl+Shift+L: Apply the List style
		Ctrl+Q: Remove all paragraph formatting

*Note.* Except in some cases, Mac uses Option key instead of Ctrl.

**Acknowledgements.** Helpful comments from Farnaz Tehranchi, Cesar Colchado, and Raphael Rodriguez in preparing this document is gratefully acknowledged.