How to create a table of contents in Microsoft Word

How to create a Table of Contents

1. Apply the built-in Heading styles to the headings in your text.
2. In Word 2007 and Word 2010: **References > Table of Contents** > choose an option from the menu.

Creating a table of contents in a Microsoft Word document is a two-step process. First, identify the text that you want to appear in the Table of Contents. Second, tell Word to insert the Table of Contents. Having created your Table of Contents, you can then customize it in several ways, to suit your needs.

Identify the text that you want to appear in the Table of Contents

In your document, click within the first major heading that you want to appear in the Table of Contents. Apply the Heading 1 style to that paragraph. The easiest way to apply the Heading 1 style is:

- in Word 2007 and Word 2010: on the **Home** tab, in the **Styles** group, click the Heading 1 thumbnail.

In the same way, apply the Heading 1 style to other major headings in your document. Apply the Heading 2 style to sub-headings, Heading 3 style to sub-sub-headings etc.

If you don't like the way the heading styles look (eg, you want a different font or font size or colour), don't format the text directly. Instead**, modify the heading styles** see below..
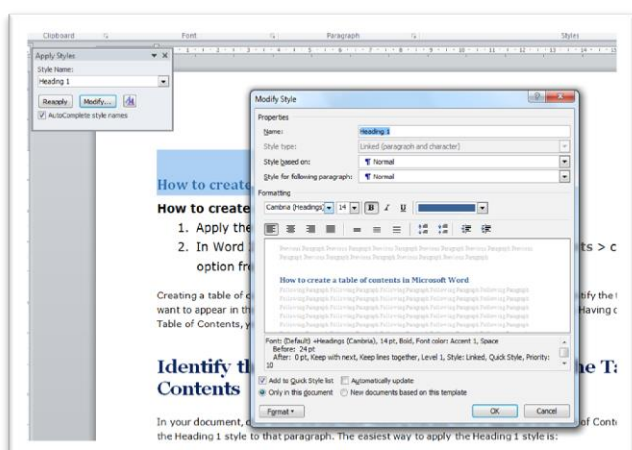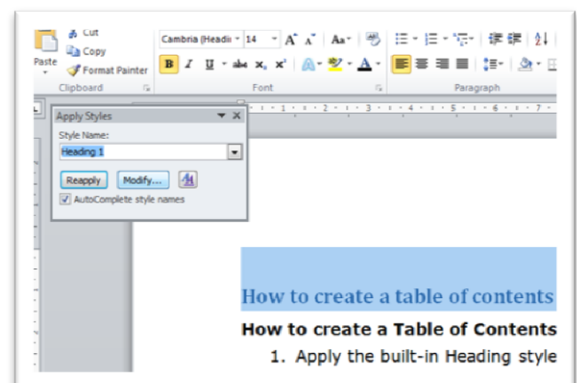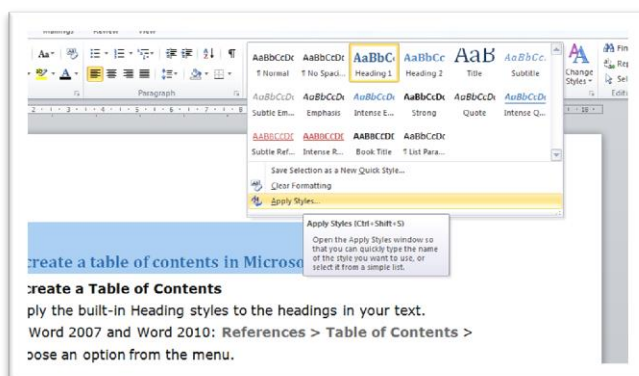
Word 2007 and Word 2010

1. Choose **References > Table of Contents**.

2. Choose one of the following items on the menu.

   - There may be **custom tables of contents** on your menu. If you click the thumbnail for a custom table of contents, your table of contents will be inserted into a content control. (There is further information about content controls below.)
   - There are two **built-in 'automatic' tables of contents**: Automatic Table 1 and Automatic Table 2. If you click the thumbnail for either of these, your table of contents will be inserted into a content control, and Word will add a heading. (There is further information about content controls below.) The only difference between the two is the text of the heading ("Contents" and "Table of contents").
   - There is a **built-in "Manual Table"**. This takes you back to the era of the electric typewriter. If you like typing things out for no good reason and your life expectancy is a lot longer than mine, this is for you.
   - At the bottom of the menu, you can choose **Insert table of contents**. This displays the Table of Contents dialog that was also in earlier versions of Word. If you want two or more tables of contents in one document, you must choose this option for the at least the second and subsequent tables of contents.

Using a table of contents content control in Word 2007 or Word 2010

You can use the content control to manage your table of contents (Figure 1).
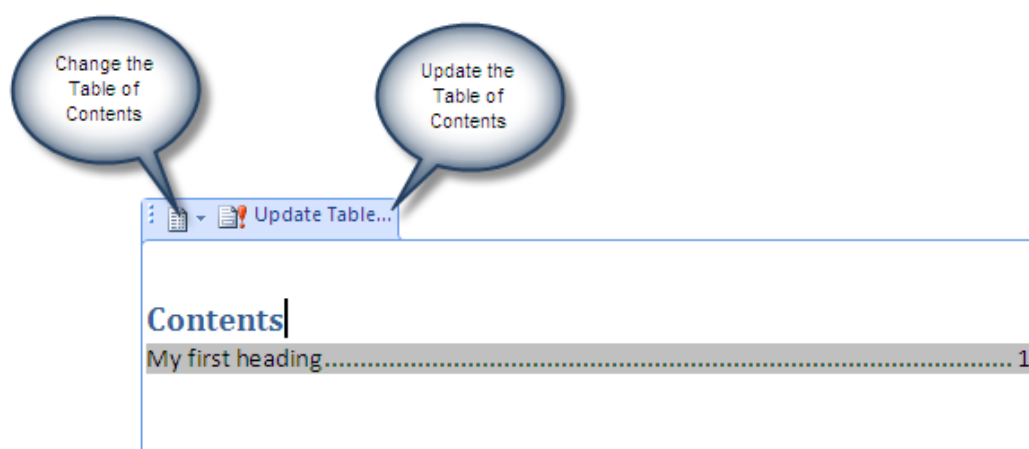

Figure 1: A table of contents in a content control

If you attempt to insert another custom or built-in table of contents that will be placed in a content control, then the new one will over-ride the existing one. If you want more than one table of contents in a document, use the "Insert table of contents" menu option for all, or at least the second and subsequent, tables of contents.

How to create a custom table of contents and have it appear on the Table of Contents menu in Word 2007 or Word 2010

You can save a custom table of contents and have it appear on the References > Table of Contents menu.

1. Insert your table of contents into any document, and adjust it to suit your needs.

2. Add text above and/or below the table of contents as required (for example, add a heading "Table of Contents", preferably formatted with the built-in TOC Heading style).

3. Select the text above, the table of contents, and the text below.

4. Insert > Quick Parts> Save Selection to Quick Part Gallery.

5. In the Create New Building Block dialog:

   - give your table of contents a name

   - in the Gallery list, choose Table of Contents

   - in the Category list, choose 'Create new category' and name your new category

   - click OK.

You can now insert your table of contents using References > Table of Contents. It will be inserted into a content control, like the built-in tables of contents.

Word displays entries in the menu in alphabetical order by category. Sadly, there are few letters in the alphabet before the "B" for "Built-In". If you want your custom tables of contents to appear before the Built-In category, but there is no name between "A" and "Built-In" that suits you, then put a space at the beginning of the category name. For example, name your category " Shauna". A space is alphabetized before a letter, so " Shauna" will be displayed before "Built-In".

How to change the look of the headings in the document

Use the Document Map

Once you have applied your Heading styles, choose **View > Document Map** or, in Word 2010,**View > Navigation Pane** and select the Document Map. You can now see roughly what will be included in your Table of Contents.
Right-click in the Document Map to choose which levels of heading to view.

If you don't like the way your headings look (eg you want a different font, font size, colour, more or less spacing before or after the heading), **don't** choose Format > Paragraph or Format > Font (in older versions of Word) or use the tools on the Home tab (in newer versions of Word). And don't use the font size or bold buttons on the toolbar or ribbon. Instead, modify the Heading style.

How to change the look of the Table of Contents itself

To modify the Table of Contents itself, you need to display the Table of Contents dialog. To display the dialog for an existing table of contents:

- in Word 2007 and Word 2010: click within the ToC and then click **References > Table of Contents > Insert Table of Contents** (if the ToC is in a content control, be sure you've clicked the ToC itself, and not any "Contents" heading above the ToC)

From the Table of Contents dialog you can modify the Table of Contents in several ways.

- By default, Word shows three levels in your Table of Contents. That is, it puts the text from Heading 1, Heading 2 and Heading 3 in the Table of Contents. If you want to show more or fewer levels, in the Table of Contents dialog, change the number in the **Show levels** box.

- There are very good reasons for [using the built-in Heading styles](#). But if you really need to use other styles (other built-in styles, or custom styles), you can put them in your Table of Contents. In the Table of Contents dialog, click **Options**, and allocate your style(s) to the appropriate level(s).
- To change the font, font size, colour etc used to create the Table of Contents itself, you need to do two things in the Table of Contents dialog. First, make sure that, in the **Formats** box, you have chosen "From Template". Second, click **Modify** and modify the relevant TOC style. Word uses style TOC 1 for the top level of contents, TOC 2 for the next level etc

For sophisticated customization, you can [edit](#) the switches in the TOC field.

How to create a table of contents for several documents

To create one table of contents for several documents, you need to do the following.

1. Create a separate document to hold the table of contents (we'll call this "the ToC document").

2. For ease, put all the documents, and your ToC document, in the one folder.

3. In your ToC document, use an RD (Reference Document) field for each document that you want to include in your Table of Contents.

    - To insert an RD field, do ctrl-F9 and, within the brackets that Word gives you, type RD "*filename*". For example { RD "Chapter 1.docx" }. You can't type the curly brackets by hand. You must do ctrl-F9.

    - If you can't put all your files in one folder, you must use double backslashes and double quotes. For example, { RD "C:\\My folder\\Chapter 1.docx" }.

    - In theory, you can use relative path names. But it never seems to work properly<g>.

4. Add an RD field for each document that you want to reference, in order.

5. Create the Table of Contents in this ToC document in the usual way.

6. Remember the page number rule: "The Table of Contents will pick up whatever pagination appears in your document". It applies when using RD fields to create a ToC for many documents. You may have to set the starting page number manually in each document if you want pagination to run consecutively through your project.