

How to Create a Manuscript Template Using Microsoft Word

Creative writers often chafe at following directions. One way to make your submissions outstanding, without standing out to prospective publishers as “hard to work with,” is to format them properly, according to the publisher’s manuscript formatting requirements. If you submit manuscripts frequently, it is helpful to create a template. A template contains pre-defined styles, document properties such as title and author, bits of reusable, static text such as standard Headers and Footers, and dynamic fields such as word or page counts.

This guide provides step-by-step instructions for setting up a manuscript formatting template in Microsoft Word. These instructions are based on the latest version of Microsoft Word for Office 365, using the OWFI 2021 Contest Formatting Rules for unpublished categories, Category 8 – ARTICLE: HOW-TO as an example. Older versions of Word have the same features, but the appearance of menus and the steps to access them may vary slightly.

A few minor modifications will allow you to repurpose the template for manuscript submissions to publishers, once the contest is over.

CREATING A CUSTOM TEMPLATE

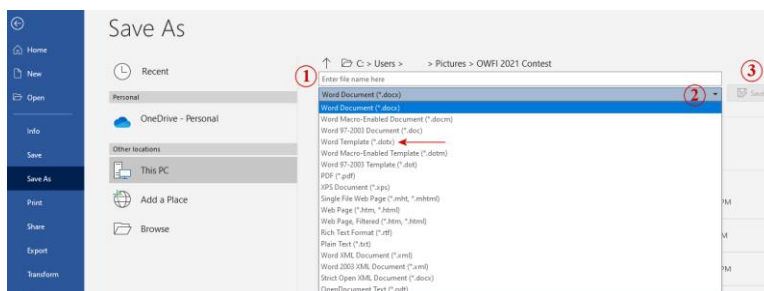
Microsoft Word has a built-in template called *Normal.dot* (or *Normal.dotx*). You can change the styles in *Normal.dot*, but this will affect all documents that you have created that are based on this built-in template. For example, if you have created and carefully formatted a newsletter

for the Homeowners' Association, and then you format a manuscript for publication and update styles in Normal.dot, the next time you open your newsletter, all that careful formatting may suddenly be changed. It is better to create a custom template for specific purposes, such as manuscripts you plan to submit to publishers.

You can make changes to a custom template within a single document that is based on it, or you can save changes to the template for *all* documents that are based on it. To update older documents with modified styles, you will need to open them, review the changes, and save them again.

To create a custom template, complete the following steps:

1. Open Microsoft Word.
2. Select **New > Blank document** (or, if you are already editing a document, select **File > New > Blank document**).
3. Select the **Layout** tab.
4. Select **Margins > Normal**.
5. Select **Orientation > Portrait**.
6. Select **Size > Letter (8.5" x 11")**.
7. Select **File > Save As...**



NOTE: In some older versions of Word, select **File > Save as... > Word Template**.

8. Click the **Enter filename here** text box ①. Type a name for your template. In this example, it is called *OWFI_Contest_2021*. Give it any name that will help you to easily identify it the next time you want to use it.
9. Click the **Save as type** box ② and select **Word Template (*.dotx)**.
10. Select the **Save** button ③ located just to the right of this box.

NOTE: The default folder for custom templates is **Documents > Custom Office Templates**. Leave that as-is to make it easier to access the template for new Word documents in the future.

MODIFYING NORMAL STYLE AND CREATING CHAPTER HEADING STYLES

About Normal Style

The **Normal** paragraph style is the basis for all other styles in a Microsoft Word template. It is the only style where the **Style based on** property is set, by default, to **[no style]**. This cannot be changed. Most styles inherit their properties from **Normal**, or from another style that inherits its properties from **Normal**.

For example, if you create a style called **Body Text A** and set its **Style based on** property to **Normal**, it will inherit all the properties of **Normal**. You can override selected properties for **Body Text A**. If you then create a style called **Body Text B**, and set its **Style based on** property to **Body Text A**, it will inherit the **Normal** style properties that you did not modify in **Body Text A**, plus the specific modifications you made to the style properties of **Body Text A**. You can override *any* of these properties in **Body Text B**.

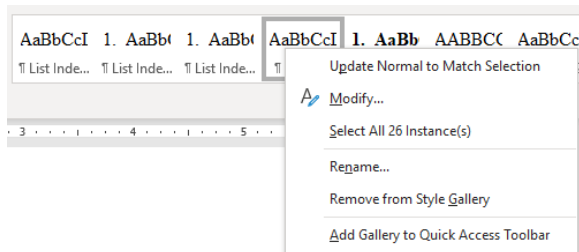
Set the **Normal** style properties first, using the minimum number of formatting options that you want to apply *throughout* your manuscript, such as the basic body font and font size, body

paragraph indentations, and tab stops. Unless otherwise specified, Times New Roman, 12pt size, is a recommended and readable typeface.

To modify any existing style, complete the following steps:

1. On the **Home** tab, in the **Styles** group, right-click the style you want to change, then click

Modify...



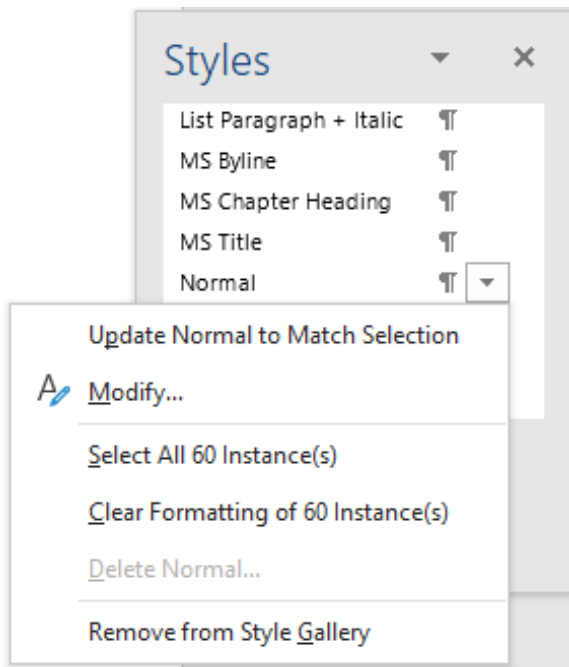
Or,

On the **Home** tab, click the bottom right corner of the **Styles** group to open the **Styles** dialog:

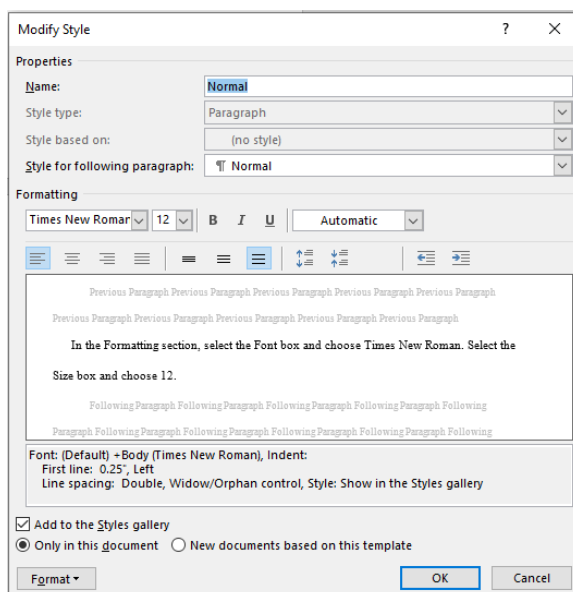


NOTE: Style names will vary, depending on your template. These illustrations are examples, only.

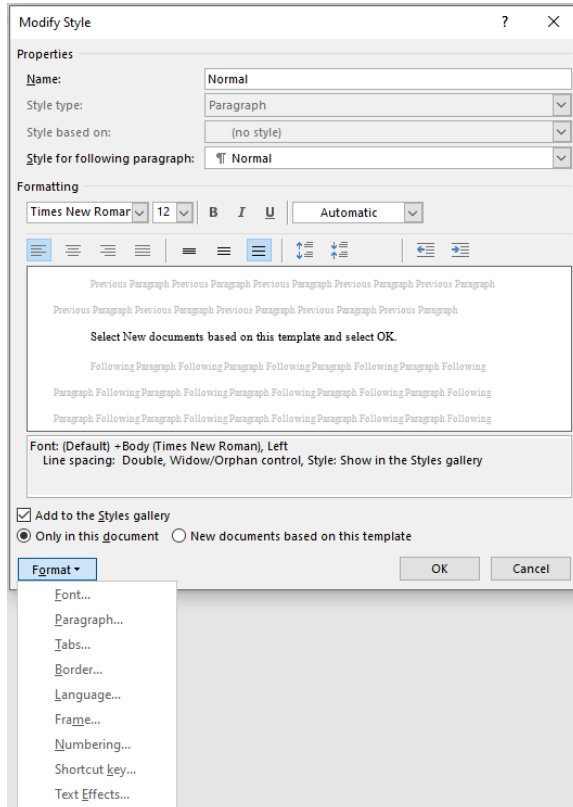
Then, right-click the style you want to modify and select **Modify...**



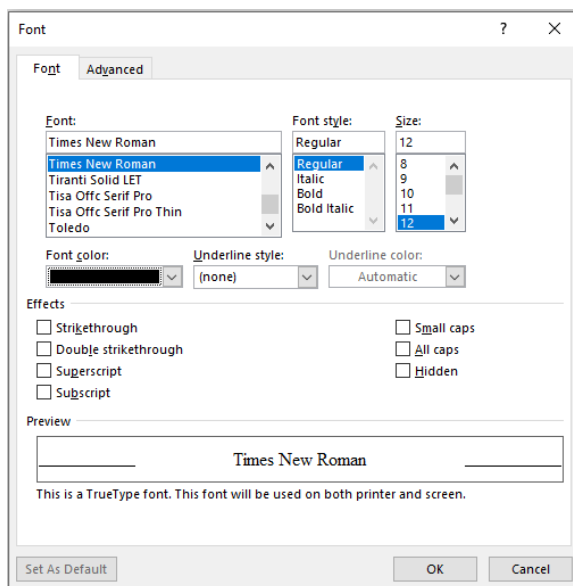
2. In the **Modify Styles** dialog, you can quickly change some of the most frequently used properties, such as font, size, character style (bold, italic, underscore, and color), alignment (left, center, right, or justified), line spacing (single, double, triple), and left paragraph indentation.



3. Select the **Format** button to reveal additional properties that can be configured or modified for each style.

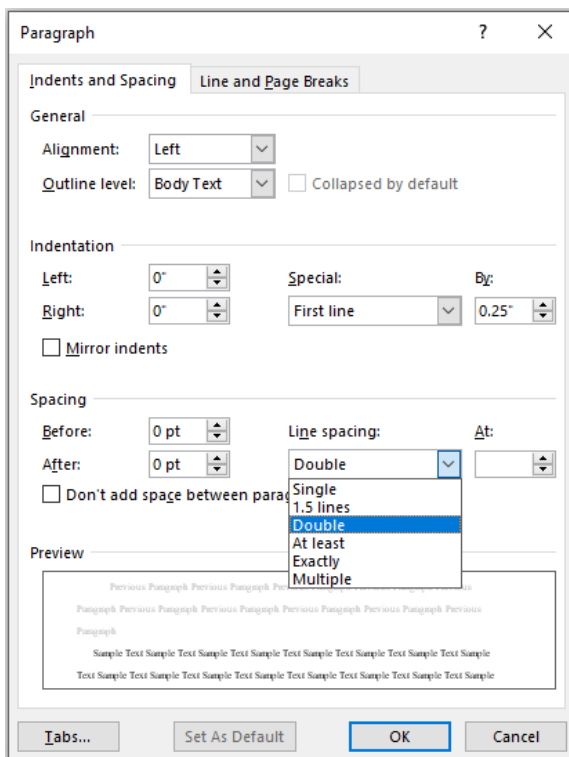


4. Choose **Font** to modify the following properties:



- Select **Font > Times New Roman**.
- Select **Font style > Regular**.
- Select **Size > 12**.
- Select **Font color** and choose black.

5. Choose **Paragraph**.



In the **General** section:

- Select **Alignment > Left**.
- Select **Outline level > Body Text**. **Outline level** corresponds to outline levels assigned to elements of your document that you will see when you select the **View** tab and choose **Outline**.

In the **Indentation** section:

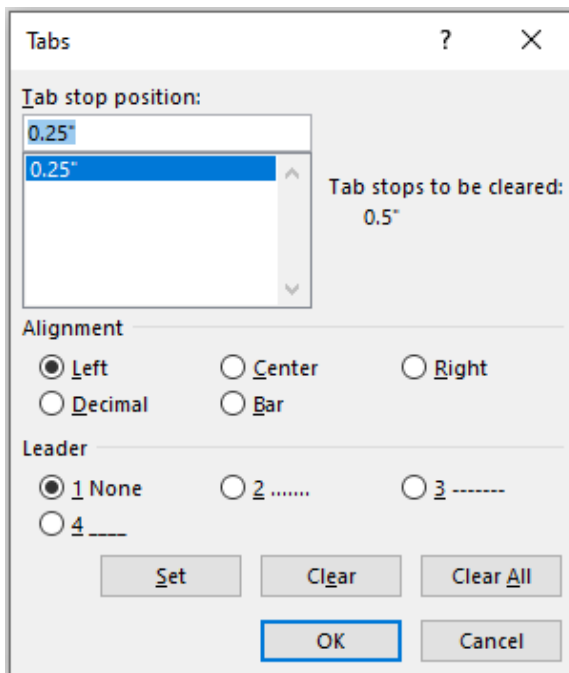
- Select **Left: 0, Right: 0**

- Select **Special > First line, By > 0.25"** (you can specify this measurement in millimeters or centimeters, inches, points, or pixels – all measurements will be converted to inches).

In the **Spacing** section:

- Select **Before: 0, After: 0**
- Select **Line spacing > Double** (leave **At:** blank; this is used to specify a custom number for **At least, Exactly,** and **Multiple**).

6. To set tabs, select the **Tabs** button.



Enter a tab stop position, select the alignment for the text entered after the tab, and specify a leader character if desired. Click **OK**.

7. Select **New documents based on this template** to ensure that any new or modified styles will be saved in the template and applied to all new documents that are based on it. You will need to do this each time you modify a style.



8. To apply changes and exit **Modify Style**, select the **OK** button.
9. Click **File > Save** to save changes to the template.

Title and Chapter Headings

The **OWFI 2021 Contest Formatting Rules** specify the following elements which will require creation of new styles:

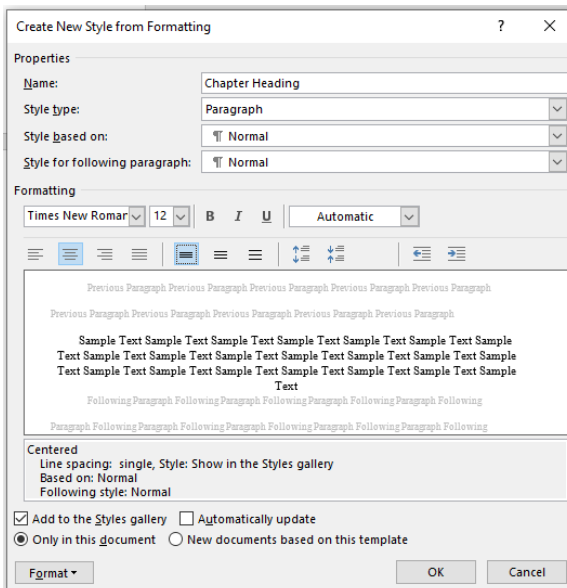
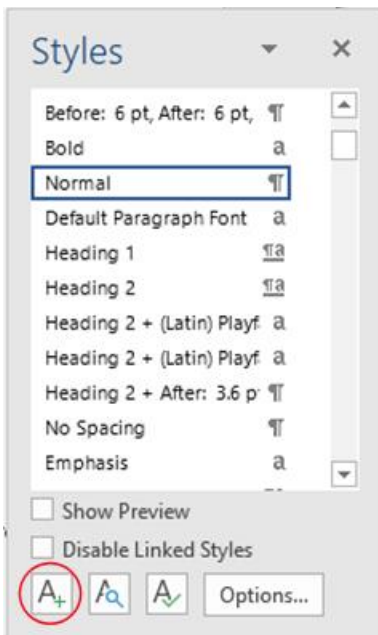
- **Title:** Located 2 spaces after header, centered, and 2 spaces above the intended work.
- **Chapter headings:** Located approximately 3 inches below the top of the page and centered.

To create a new style, complete the following steps:

1. On the **Home** tab, click the bottom right corner of the **Styles** group to open the **Styles** dialog.



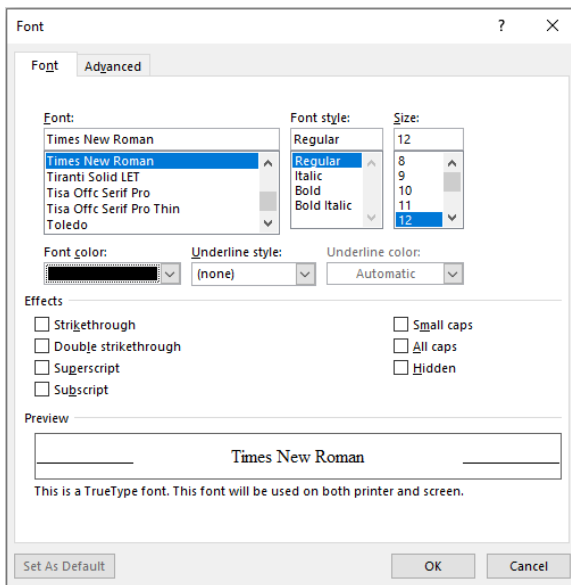
2. Select the **New Style** icon (lower left):



3. In the **Name** box, type a name for your new style. For example: *MS Chapter Heading*.

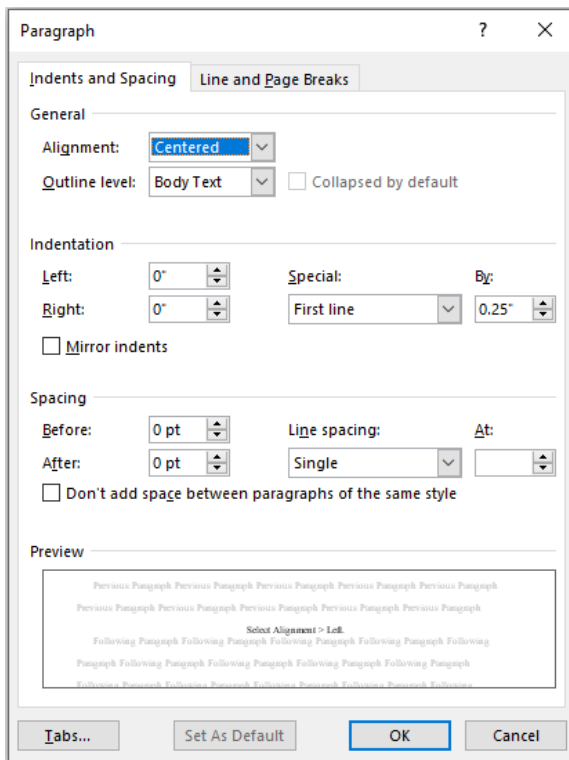
TIP: Preface your custom style names with any constant abbreviation, such as MS (for “Manuscript”) or MY (for “My <custom style name>”) to make them easier to find when sorted alphabetically in the list of available styles.

7. Choose **Font** to modify the following properties:



- Select **Font** > **Times New Roman**.
- Select **Font style** > **Regular**.
- Select **Size** > **12**.
- Select **Font color** and choose black.

8. Choose **Paragraph**.



In the **General** section:

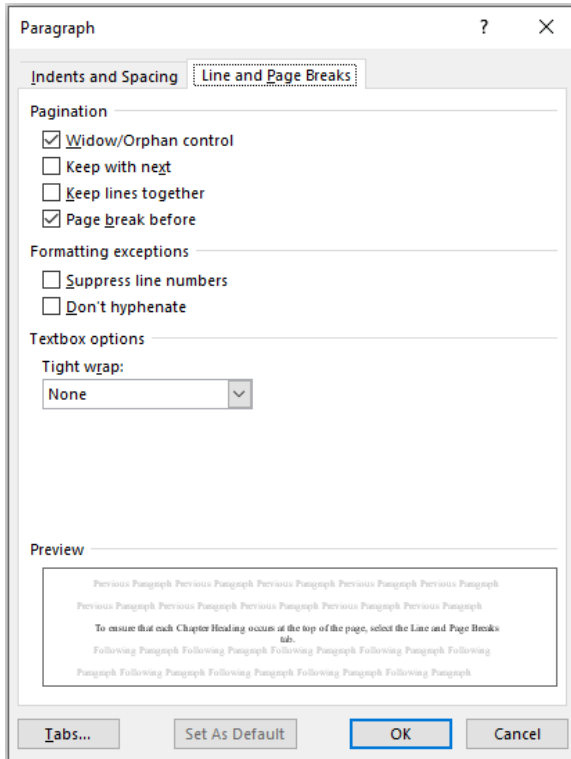
For *MS Chapter Heading* style:

- Select **Alignment** > **Centered**.
- Select **Outline level** > **Body Text**. **Outline level** corresponds to outline levels assigned to elements of your document that you will see when you select the **View** tab and choose **Outline**.

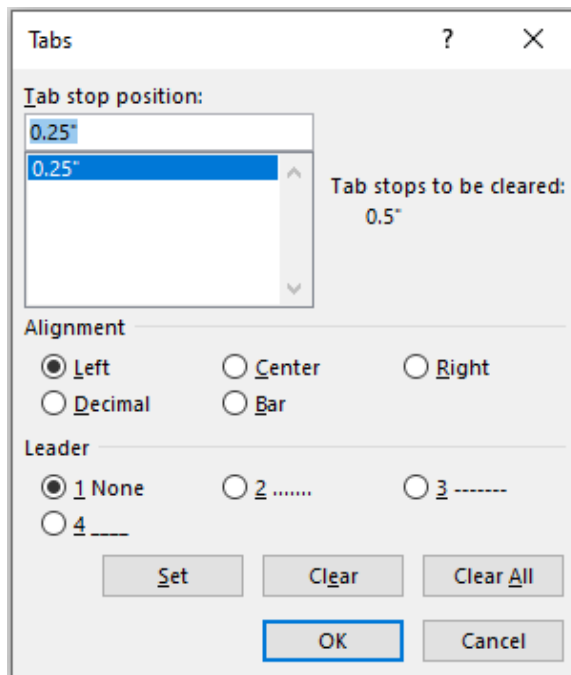
For *MS Title* style:

- Select **Spacing** > **Before:** and set to **48 pt**
- Select **Spacing** > **After:** and set to **48 pt**

9. To ensure that each *MS Chapter Heading* occurs at the top of the page, select the **Line and Page Breaks** tab, then select **Page break before**.

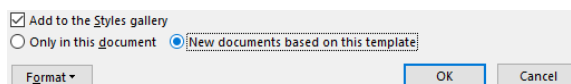


10. To set tabs, select the **Tabs** button.



Enter a tab stop position, select the alignment for the text entered after the tab, and specify a leader character if desired. Click **OK**.

11. Select **New documents based on this template** to ensure that any new or modified styles will be saved in the template and applied to all new documents that are based on it. You will need to do this each time you create or modify a style.



12. To apply changes and exit, select the **OK** button.

13. Repeat these steps for each new style you want to set up.

14. Click **File > Save** to save changes to the template.

SETTING UP DOCUMENT PROPERTIES

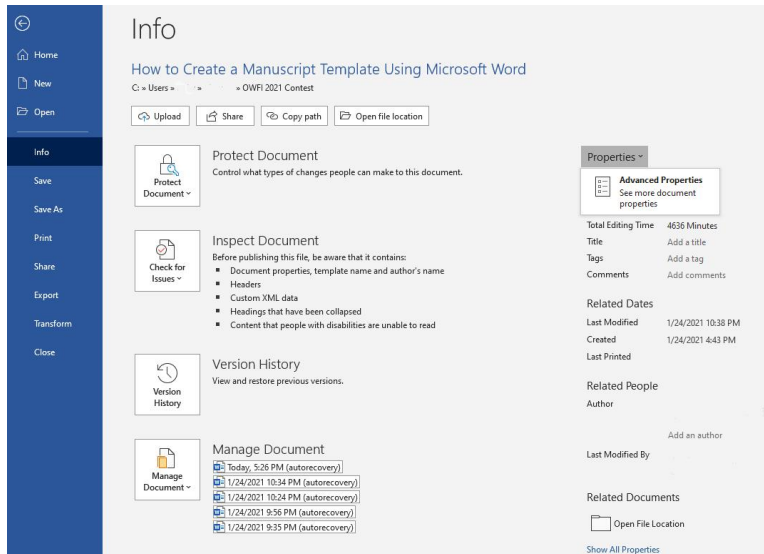
You can set up Document Properties and use them in your manuscript to make things like building Headers, Footers, and variables easier to manage and modify. Document Properties can be referenced throughout the manuscript as “field values” – in other words, you might create a property for each character in a novel, then later, if you decide to change the name throughout the manuscript, you could simply change and update the **Document Properties**.

This guide provides step-by-step instructions for setting up and using *Category Number*, *Category Name*, and *Subcategory*, as well as how to add them to the document **Header**. When submitting a manuscript for publication, you may want to set up these additional **Document Properties**:

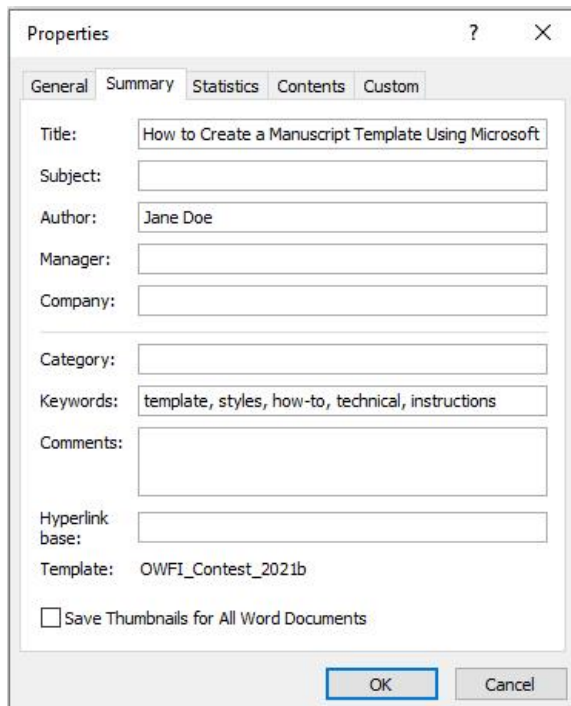
- Author Name
- Pseudonym
- Street Address 1
- Street Address 2
- City
- State
- ZIP Code
- Email Address
- Website

To set up Document Properties, complete the following steps:

1. Click **File > Info > Properties**.

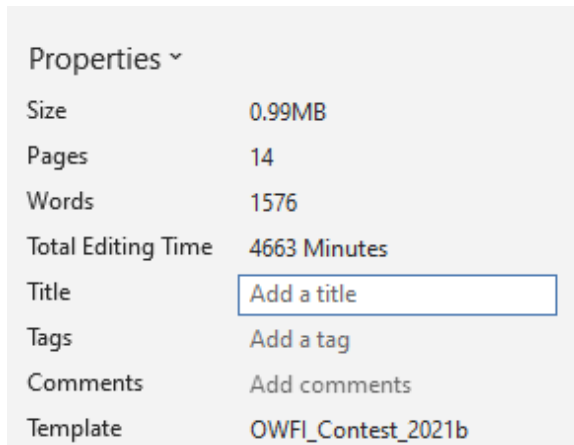


2. Click **Properties > Advanced Properties (See more document properties)**.

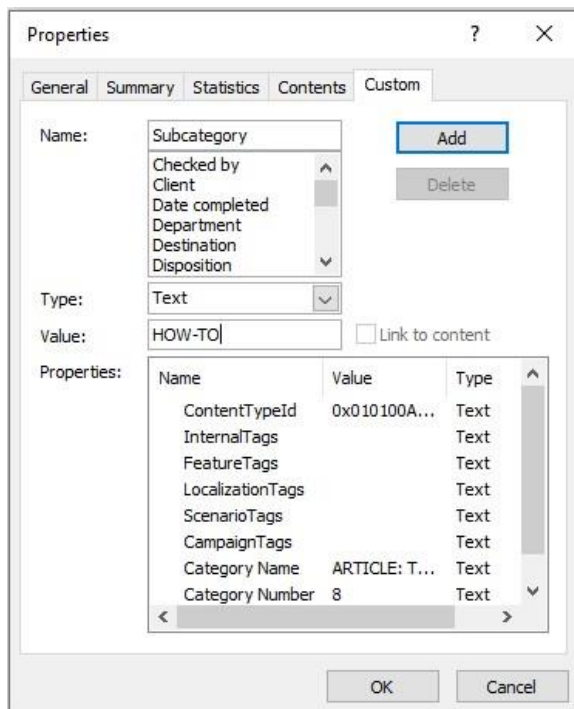


3. Enter **Title**, **Author**, and any other fields you wish to use.

NOTE: You can click on these **Document Properties** and add the **Values** directly from the **File > Info** tab, if you are not adding any additional custom **Document Properties**.

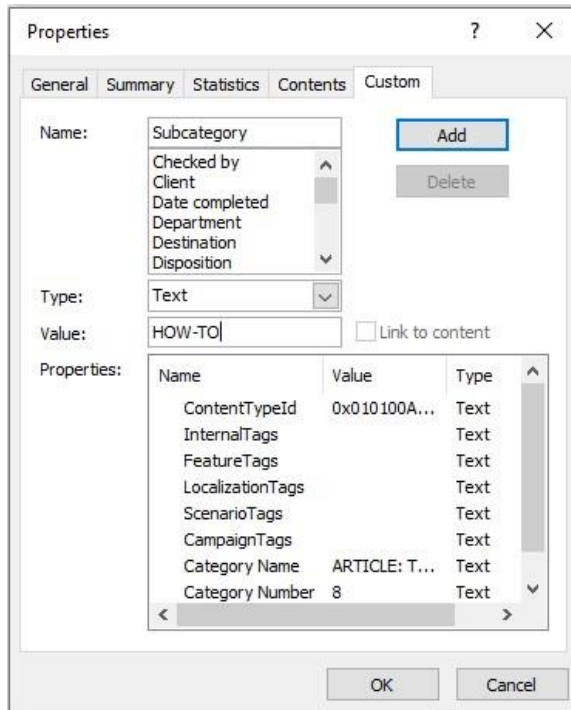


4. Click the **Custom** tab.



5. Type a **Name** for the new **Document Property** (also known as a variable or field).
6. Choose a **Type**. For this template, all custom **Document Properties** are **Text**.

7. Type a **Value**. For example, this submission will use *Category Number 8, Category Name ARTICLE*, and *Subcategory HOW-TO*.
8. Click the **Add** button.
9. When you have added all the custom **Document Properties** you need, click **OK**.



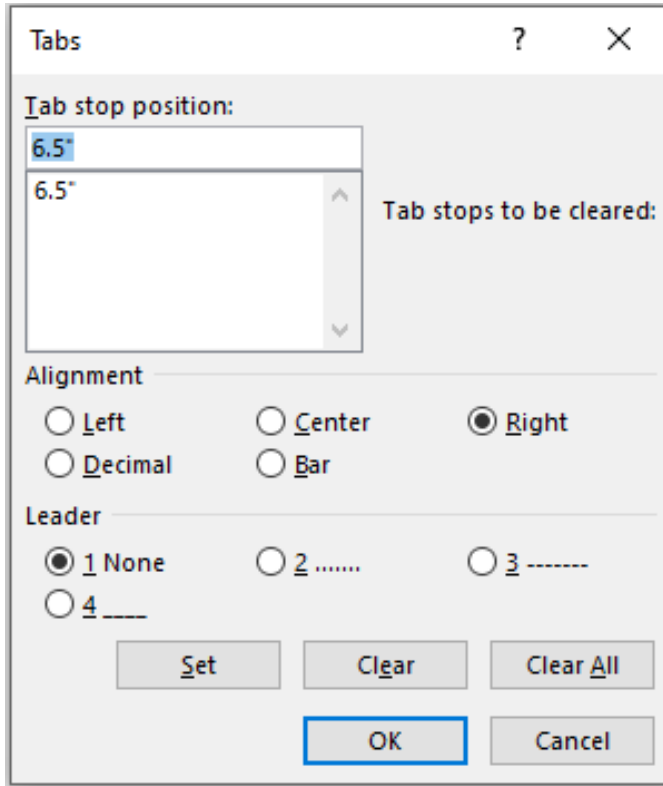
10. Click **File > Save** to save changes to the template.

SETTING UP HEADERS AND FOOTERS

Headers and Footers appear at the top and bottom of each page. You can set them up to apply to all pages, or to have a different first page and different odd and even pages to create more complex book layouts.

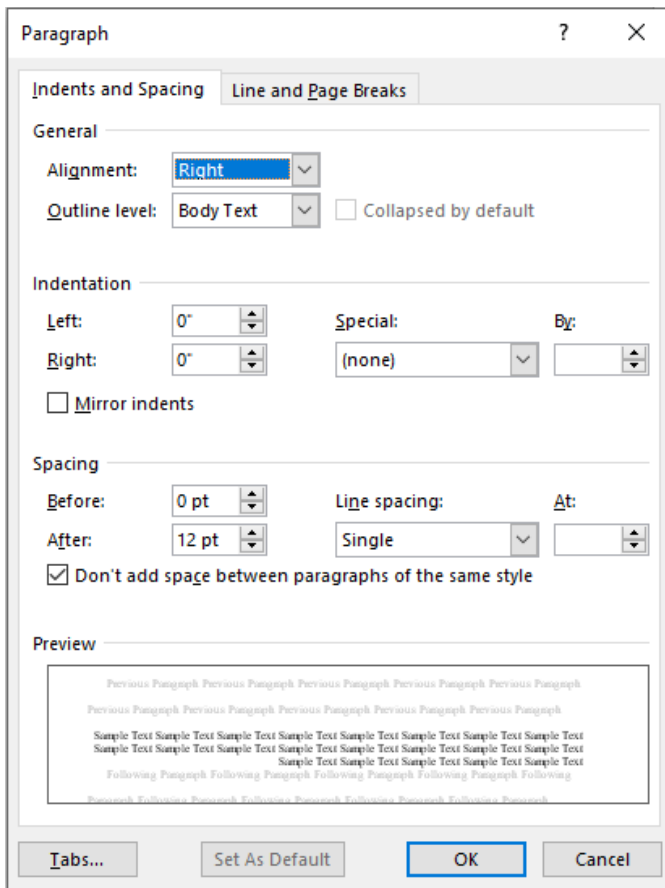
For this example, we will create a different Header for the first page, and the other Headers will apply to all pages.

1. Make sure that the **Header** style has a right-aligned tab stop set to the right margin of the document:

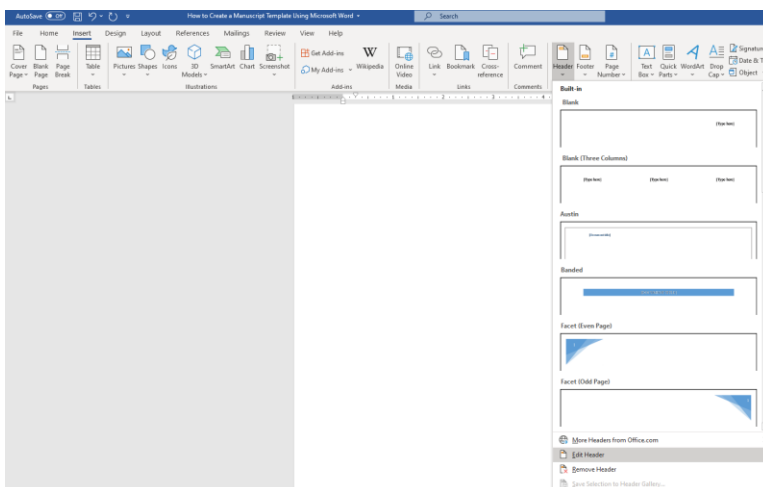


2. In the **Paragraph** dialog, set **Spacing > Line spacing** to **Single**, and in **Spacing > After** type **12 pt**.

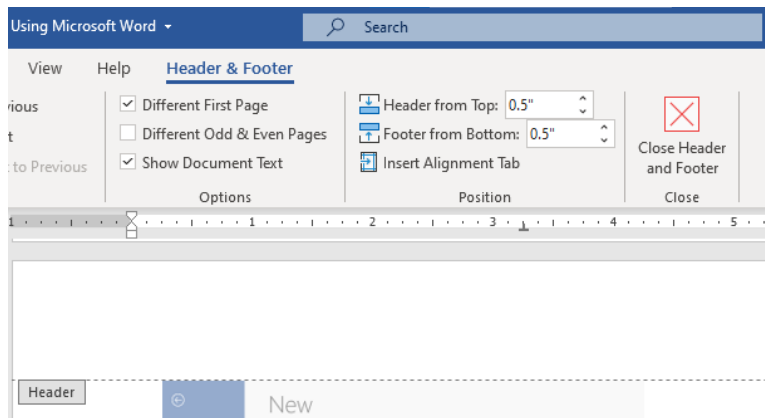
3. Select **Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style** and click **OK**.



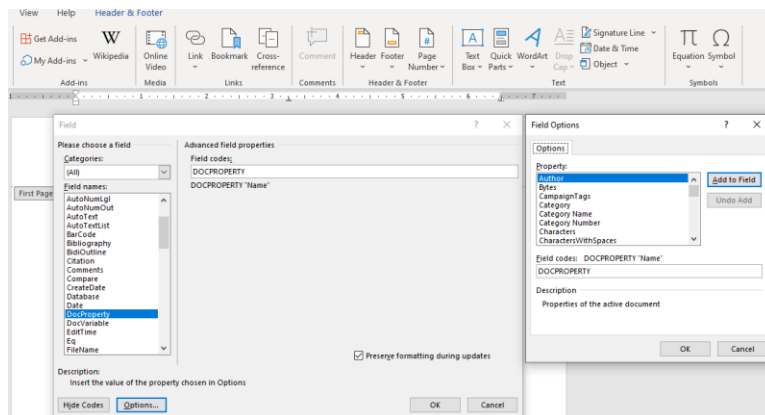
4. To create a Header, click **Insert > Header > Edit Header**.



5. Select **Different First Page** and **Show Document Text**.



6. Tab to the right margin and type **Category**:



7. From the Ribbon, click **Quick Parts > Field...**

8. Select **DocProperty**, then click the **Options** button.

9. Choose **Category Number** and click **OK**. For this example, using Category 8,

ARTICLE: HOW-TO, the first line of the Header should now look like this:

Category: 8

10. Press the **Enter** key to start a new line, then tab to the right margin.

11. From the Ribbon, click **Quick Parts > Field...**

12. Select **DocProperty**, then click the **Options** button.

13. Choose **Category Name** and click **OK**. For this example, using Category 8, ARTICLE:

HOW-TO, the second line of the Header should now look like this:

ARTICLE

14. Type a colon (:) followed by a space.

15. From the Ribbon, click **Quick Parts > Field...**

16. Select **DocProperty**, then click the **Options** button.

17. Choose **Subcategory** and click **OK**. For this example, using Category 8, ARTICLE:

HOW-TO, the second line of the Header should now look like this:

ARTICLE: HOW-TO

18. Press the **Enter** key to start a new line.

19. Tab to the right margin, then type **Word count:**

20. From the **Ribbon**, click **Quick Parts > Field...**

21. Select **NumWords** and click **OK**.

22. Type **Page count:**

23. From the Ribbon, click **Quick Parts > Field...**

24. Select **NumPages** and click **OK**. For this example, using Category 8, ARTICLE: HOW-

TO, the second line of the Header should now look like this:

Word count: 1605 / Page count: 26

NOTE: The actual number will vary; the **NumWords** and **NumPages** Document

Properties are updated as you add words and pages to your manuscript, and the updates

will show when you update fields.

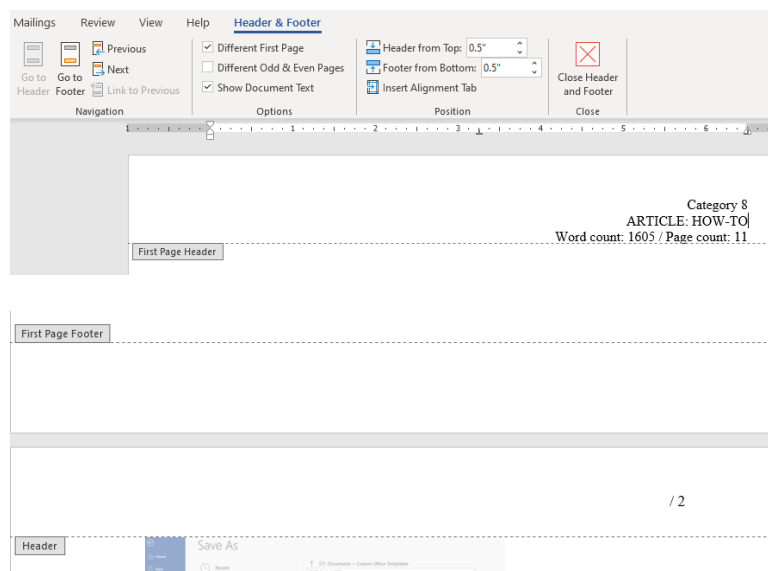
To update one or more fields, select the field(s) then press **F9**. (To select all fields, press **Ctrl+A**. You will need to select Headers and Footers from within the Header/Footer area itself.

To update *all* fields automatically before printing a document, click **File > Options > Display**, then under **Printing options**, select **Update fields before printing**.

25. Click **File > Save** to save changes to the template.

To create the Header for all other pages:

1. Go to page 2 and double-click the top of the page (in the Header area) or, from the Ribbon, click **Next**:



2. Tab to the right margin.
3. From the **Ribbon**, click **Quick Parts > Field...**
4. Select **DocProperty**, then select **Title** and click **OK**.
5. Press the Enter key to start a new line.
6. Tab to the right margin.

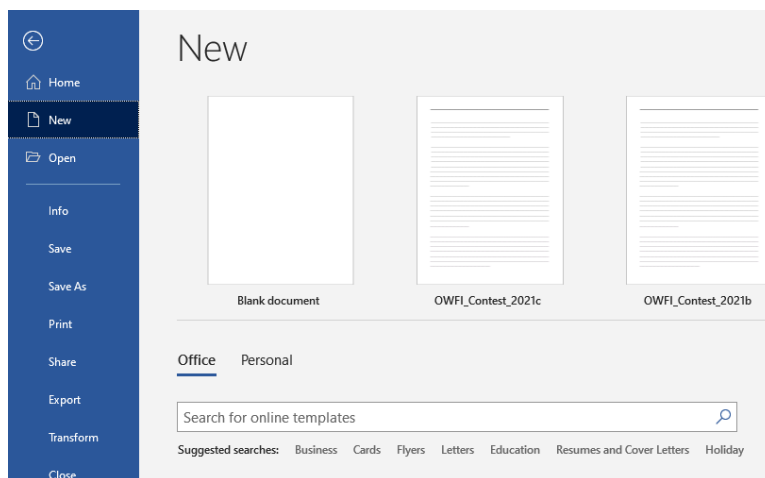
7. From the **Ribbon**, click **Quick Parts** > **Field...**
8. Select **Page** and click **OK**.
9. Click **File** > **Save** to save changes to the template.

Follow the same procedures to set up Footers at the bottom of your pages, if needed.

CREATE A DOCUMENT BASED ON A TEMPLATE

To create a new document based on the template you have created, complete the following steps:

1. Click **File** > **New**.



2. Recently used templates will appear at the top. Look for the **Office** and **Personal** tabs, with the Search box underneath. Click **Personal**.
3. Choose the template you created.

NOTE: If you saved your template in a different location than the default for Microsoft Word custom templates, locate your template file (*<name>.dotx* or *<name>.dotm*), then double-click it to create a new document based on it.

WRITE ON!

In this guide, we covered all the basic instructions needed to create and use a template in Microsoft Word, including:

- How to create a template file and where to save it;
- How to create and modify styles;
- How to use built-in document properties and create custom document properties;
- How to set up headers and footers using static text and dynamic fields;
- How to use and update fields; and
- How to use the template to create a new document.

With a few minor modifications, you can use this same template to prepare a manuscript to submit to a publisher. Remember to read submissions guidelines carefully and make all the necessary changes to the template or to the document so that your manuscript will be outstanding, not standing out like a paper airplane going down in flames as it lands with a loud thump in the publisher's trash can.