Technology Group: Windows Computer Skills

Session 3 – Word Processing

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION

This is the third of 6 sessions in which you will be shown the basics of using a Windows computer.

Using your computer to produce text documents is a very common activity, so it is worth learning a few tips and tricks that can speed up your editing, and make your documents look good. Some of these tips apply not only in specific word processing programs, but generally with any text, such as in emails.

2 REVISION

Before beginning the topics for this session we will quickly review session 2 and see if you have made any changes to the way you use your computer, or have any follow-up questions.

3 WORD PROCESSING PROGRAMS

There are many word processing programs that you can use:

- **Notepad** a very basic text editing app provided with all Windows versions.
- **Wordpad** is slightly more sophisticated, but not a full functional word processor.
- **MS Word** is part of the Microsoft Office Application Suite; a licenced product of Microsoft.
- **Writer** is part of the LibreOffice Open Source suite of office programs.

MS Word and Writer have almost the same ability to produce documents, but they differ somewhat in their user interface; i.e. how menus are arranged etc. This document assumes you are using LibreOffice Writer.

We will cover some core skills, then you can continue to learn more using on-line resources.

4 A WORD PROCESSOR IS NOT A TYPEWRITER

You probably already know that with a typewriter, the typist has to be aware when approaching the right-hand edge of the paper, and manually do a carriage-return to start the next physical line. With a word processor you just keep typing and the program automatically folds the line to fit the page width.

This is just a small example of the way that a word processing program automatically replicate the skills of a manual typist, and in most cases does them better. You can make your life easier by replace your manual labour with computer power, and letting the program do the work.

If you have used a manual typewriter to any extent, and especially if you have had formal training, there are many things that you will have to 'unlearn', so that the program can take over.

5 TEXT MANIPULATION

In this section we will learn how to insert, delete, copy, cut, and paste text to rearrange your ideas easily.

Let us start by creating a new, empty document…

Open your word processor, and start typing your first best-selling novel. Type at least one paragraph containing a few sentences.

5.1 Selecting text

There are several ways of selecting sections of text.

Any section of text can be selected using the mouse by [Click]+[Drag] over the text.

Try [Click]+[Drag] on your text.

A quicker way, if you want to select a whole word, sentence of paragraph is to use mouse clicks:

- Double-click selects a word.
- Triple-click selects a sentence in LibreOffice Writer or a paragraph in MS Word.
- Quadruple-click selects a paragraph in LibreOffice Writer.

Try these out on your text

Top tip: Hold down the mouse button on the last click, and you can extend the range by dragging. For instance, if you do a double-click, but hold down the button after the second click (think of it a 1½ clicks), then drag the mouse, whole words will be selected.

Note: This works on most program that display text, for instance, you can use them to select text on a web page.

5.2 Keyboard Shortcuts

There are four keyboard shortcuts that are essential to learn. They use the 4 keys next to the [CTRL] key, so they can be typed easily with the left hand by holding down the [CTRL] key with your little finger and using your first finger on the letter key. With a little practice you will be able to do this without looking.

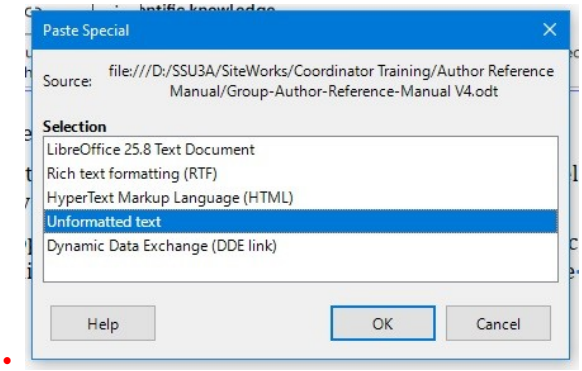
- [Ctrl]+z: Undo. Reverses the last action; very useful for restoring accidental deletions.
- [Ctrl]+x: Cut. Deletes the selected text and puts it on the clipboard, as the first stage of moving text to another place.
- [Ctrl]+c: Copy. Copies the selected text to the clipboard so that it can be duplicated elsewhere.
- [Ctrl]+v: Paste: Copies text from the clipboard to the current cursor location to complete a move or copy operation.

Try selecting text by the various methods you have learned, then moving or copying it using the keyboard shortcuts.

NOTE: These shortcuts are not specific to word processing, they are built into Windows and can be used literally anywhere. For example, they can be used in File Manager to duplicate a file, to move a file from one folder to another, or to undo the deletion of a file. They work even if the operation is not listed on a context menu.

5.3 Past Special

Text pasted in from another application (e.g. from a web page) can include invisible formatting information that can cause unwanted effects in your document. To avoid this, use 'Paste Special': Press [Ctrl]+[Shift]+v, and a dialogue of options will appear:



Select Unformatted text and click [OK]. Any embedded formatting, including paragraph breaks, will be removed from the pasted text.

5.4 Formatting Marks

As you type, the word processor is inserting formatting information into your text that is not visible in the final printed document, but you can make them visible using the ¶ (Pilcrow) button to toggle display of formatting markers on and off.

Turning formatting markers on enables you to check that you have used spaces, paragraph markers and other formatting features correctly.

6 TEXT FORMATTING

So far we have accepted the programme's defaults for font, text size, colour, line spacing etc.

Later we will look at 'Styles', which enable us to change the settings for the whole document. In this section we will see how to apply changes to individual sections of text, known as 'Direct Formatting'

6.1 Font Effects

If you select a section of text you can use buttons on the menu bar to do the following:

B (Bold): Changes the font from 'this' to '**this**'.

I (Italic): Changes 'this' to '*this*'.

U (Underline): Changes 'this' to 'this'

You can also change the font and size:



The default font of this document (Cambria) can be changed to any other font, such as Comic Sans.

Experiment with the above, and also try to find out how to change the colour of sections of your text.

6.2 Special Characters

Sometimes you want to override the rules the program uses to format your text. The most common example is to prevent a line from folding awkwardly between two words. For this we use a non-breaking space.

Common Examples are:

- Measurements: Putting a non-breaking space between a number and its unit (like 10 Kg or 5 GB) ensures the number doesn't sit at the end of a line while the unit drops to the next line.
- Titles and Names: Using it in names like Mr. Smith or New York keeps the parts linked together.
- Dates: Placing it between a month and a day (like June 5th) keeps the date intact.

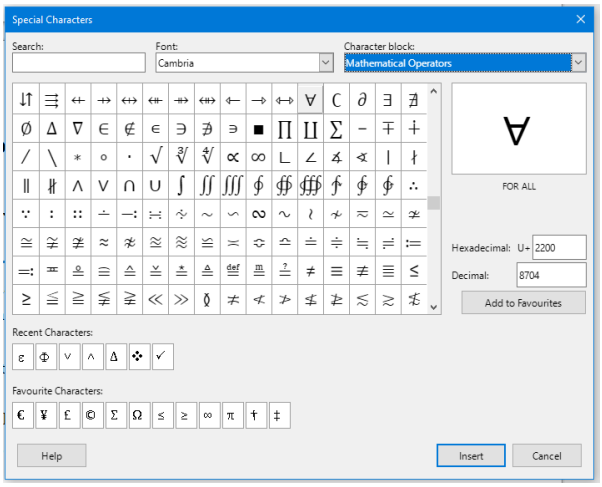
The easiest way to insert a non-breaking space is by using [Ctrl]+[Shift]+space. But you can also insert one from the format menu.

Similarly, a non-breaking hyphen can be used where a hyphenated word must be kept together, such as a double-barrelled surname.

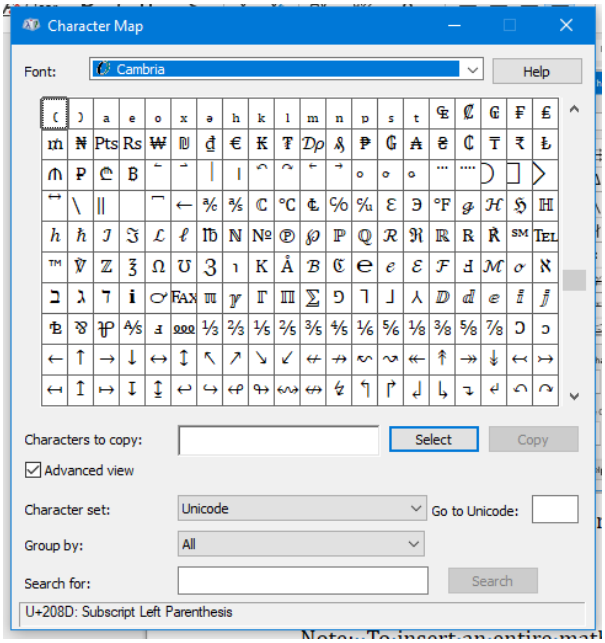
6.3 Symbols and Foreign Characters.

The standard UK keyboard lacks many characters used in foreign languages, mathematics or scientific work. These can be inserted where needed in several ways.

- From the Insert > Special Character menu.



- By copy/paste from Start > Windows Accessories > Character Map



- By numeric codes. Hold down the [Alt] key and type the numeric code for the character on the numeric keypad of your keyboard. (the number keys across the top of the keyboard won't work.) For example, the code for the Euro currency symbol (€) is [Alt]+8364. These codes are shown on the Character Map, above.

Try reproducing this: "€10= ¥1,783"

6.4 Alternative Graphics

The [Alt Gr] (alternate graphic) key on your keyboard lets you type extra characters, symbols, and accented letters that are not engraved on the main part of a key.

On UK keyboards, a few keys show a third (bottom-right) or fourth (to right) symbol. Holding [Alt Gr] while pressing that key types the extra symbol.

The [Alt Gr] key can also be used to create other accented letters and symbols that are not engraved on keys – look on-line for details.

6.5 Auto Correct

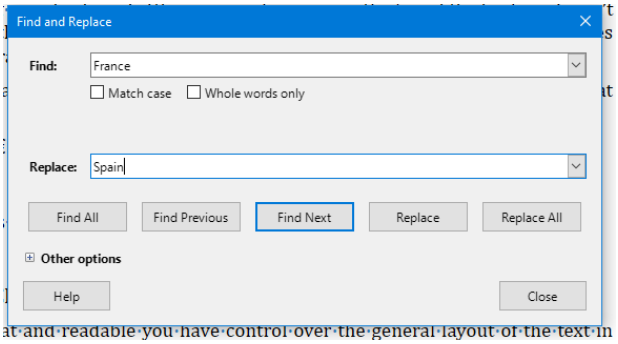
Special symbols can also be created using the Auto Correct feature:

Main menu > Tools > AutoCorrect

For example, if you type "(C)" the AutoCorrect feature will replace it with the copyright symbol: " © ".

7 FIND AND REPLACE

Find and Replace are the tools you need when you want to change your mind: Main menu > Edit > Find and Replace...



The search starts from the current cursor position, so you might want to go to the top of the document first, but if you don't it doesn't matter because when the search reaches the end of the document it offers you the option of resuming at the top.

Try searching for text in your document, then changing one word throughout.

8 PAGE LAYOUT AND SPACING

To make your document neat and readable you have control over the general layout of the text in relation to the page.

8.1 Page Layout

On the Layout tab you will find buttons for Margins, Orientation (Portrait or Landscape), Page Size (A4, Letter etc.). (also Columns, but we are not going to do those on this course).

Or, Select Format > Page style >Page to see all the settings on one form (in Word, click the small arrow icon in the bottom-right corner of the Page Setup group on the Layout tab.)

Try changing the margin settings or orientation of your page. Notice how the text is re-formatted to fit.

8.2 Headers and Footers

On the main menu, Format > Page style > Header, or Format > Page style > Footer will allow you to turn Headers and Footers on and off. The default settings are usually OK, but experimenting will do no harm.

8.3 Fields

On the Reference tab, the Fields button lists information about the document. For example, you might want to put page numbers in a footer. Place the cursor where you want to insert the field before selecting it using References > Field.

Add a footer to your page layout, and include the page number, and the total number of pages, in the format "Page xx of xx"

8.4 Watermarks

A background image, texture or text can be added to your page layout. A typical use would be to add the word "DRAFT" to a document.

To add text: on the Layout tab, select Watermark.

To add an image or texture: on the main menu, select Format > Page Style > Area

Add the words "TOP SECRET" at an angle of 45, in pink, as a watermark on your pages.

8.5 Page Breaks

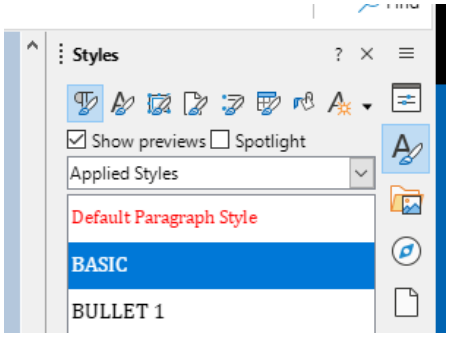
The program recognises when it has reached the bottom of a page, and starts a new page automatically. There are several settings that determine exactly when a new page is started; most of them are included in Styles, which we will be looking at later, but you can also force a new page wherever you like by inserting Page Break. Position your cursor where you want the break then, on the Insert tab, click the 

(Page Break) button.

9 STYLES

One of the hallmarks of a good document is a consistent design throughout. The best way to achieve this, easily and efficiently, is by using Styles.

Open the side-bar and click the Styles button.



(In MS Word, you access the Styles by clicking on Home tab > Styles Gallery).

From here you can create, modify and applying styles to your text. (Styles also apply to other objects such as graphics and tables, which we will look at later).

When you create a new document it will use small set of default styles. The two things you are most likely to want to do are:

- Modify an existing style
- Add a new style
- Apply the new style to existing text.

9.1 Applying a Style

To apply a Style to a paragraph, place the cursor anywhere in the paragraph and double-click the Style name. If the Styles menu is not open, you can use Main Menu > Styles to select the one you want.

9.2 Modify a Style

Right-click on the name of the style you want to modify, and select Edit Style. This opens a form that is very like the Page Layout form we saw earlier, but now the settings only apply to paragraphs formatted with this particular style.

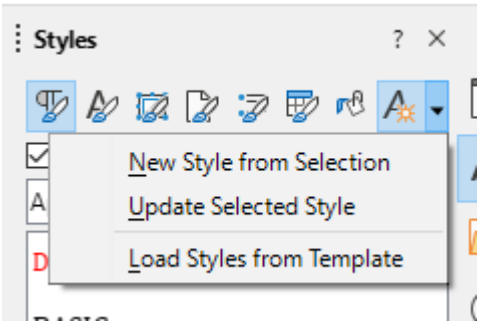
Select the Style that is applied to your text. Experiment with any of the settings. By clicking Apply after each change you can see what effect it has on your document.

The most important thing to see is that the change of style affects your whole document, so if, for example, you decide you want to change the font you can do so with one simple modification of the style, you don't have to go through the whole document editing every paragraph by hand.

9.3 Adding a Style

There are two main ways to add a new Style:

- By starting with an existing Style: On the Style menu, right-click on the style name and select New…
- By starting with an example piece of text: Manually format a section of text, select it, on the Styles menu, click the Add button and select New Style from Selection.



In both cases you will see the familiar Style form, where you can name your new Style and make any further adjustment you want.

There is a third method, which may, or may not, work, depending on the circumstances: By copying text from another compatible document (e.g. another LibreOffice Write document). If it is possible to copy the text's Style too, it will be added to your existing Styles. This may not be possible if, for example, it has the same name as an existing one.

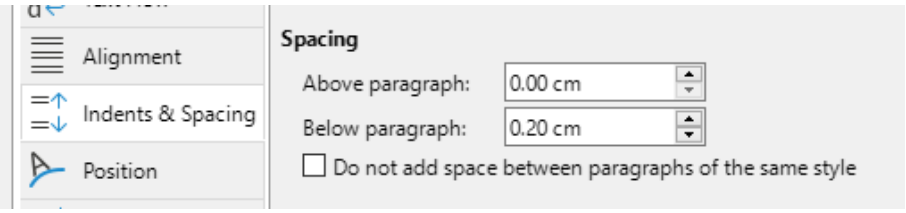
9.4 Paragraph Spacing

One of the biggest, and most common mistakes that beginners make is to use the [Return] key twice to add space between paragraphs (especially with people trained on manual typewriters). This is wrong because:

- While it may look like you have added only a single character to your document, you have actually added possibly several hundred characters, because the paragraph marker contains all the formatting information for the paragraph,, even if the paragraph is empty.
- If you change you mind about paragraph spacing, you have to go through the document and add/delete paragraph markers manually.

It is far more efficient and flexible to use the paragraph Style to set the space between paragraphs.

On the Edit Style form, select Indents & Spacing:



Here you can alter the spacing above and below all the paragraphs with this Style, across the whole document at any time. You only have to hit the [Return] key once, you can change your mind about the spacing at any time and it doesn't make your files any bigger than they need to be.

10 NUMBERED HEADINGS

Numbering headings, as in this document, requires settings to be made in several places, which can lead to some strange effects (and some frustration) if not set up correctly.

The first thing to do is to set up numbering for the whole document; use Main menu > Tools > Heading Numbering.

You will see that each level of numbering has associated with it a Heading Style. After setting up the heading numbering for the whole document, you can then use the individual Heading Styles on the Styles menu to adjust settings like font and indentation.

11 AUTOMATED TABLES OF CONTENTS

One of the great benefits of using Heading Styles is that they can be used to build an automatic table of contents.

Position your cursor where you want the table to be inserted, then, on the Reference tab, click on Table of Contents. The default settings are usually OK.

After inserting the table you will see new entries in your Styles menu, such as Content 1, Content 2 etc. These can be modified as for any other Style.

12 INSERTING OBJECTS

You can make your document more interesting by including:

- Tables, charts, and pictures, like the graphics in this document.
- QR codes and barcodes
- Standard wording (Auto Text)
- Mathematical formulas, such as $\int \frac{c}{ax+b}dx = \frac{c}{a}\ln(|ax+b|)+K$, using the Equation Editor.
- Windows containing other programs (e.g. a spreadsheet) – known as Object Linking and Embedding (OLE).

The commonly used inserts are on the Insert tab. All options are available from the Insert option on the Main menu.

Insert into your document the QR code for our website (www.southsolihull.u3asite.uk). After doing so, right-click on it and try the various Anchor options.

To do this in MS Word you need to use a Field Code. Press [F9] to generate the curly-brackets, then type the URL etc. between them. Finally, select the whole string, right-click and Toggle Code.

```
{DISPLAYBARCODE "www.southsolihull.u3asite.uk" QR \Q3}
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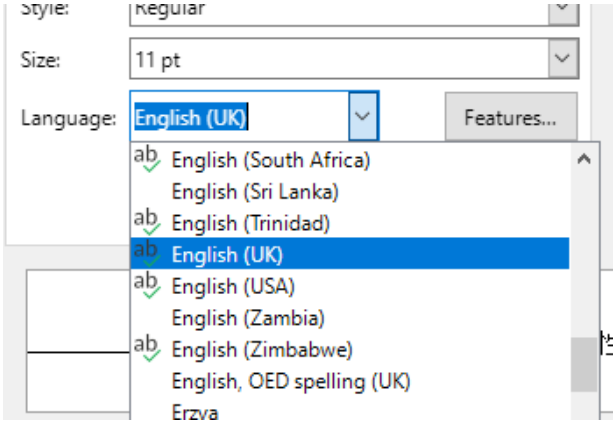
Look on-line for more information about Field Codes in Word.

13 WRITING AIDS

You can set up your document so that spelling and grammar are checked as you type. Potential errors are indicated with coloured under-scoring. A right-click on the text will offer some options to correct the error.

13.1 Spell Checking

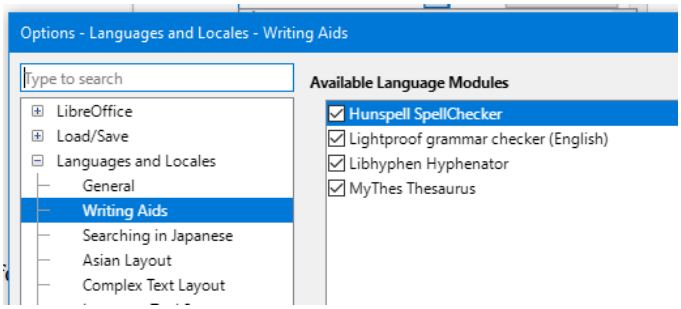
For the system to be able to spell-check your work it needs to know which language you are using. Each Style has it's own language options:



The languages for which automatic spell-checking is available are marked with a little ab logo.

13.2 Grammar

From Main menu > Tools > Options > Language and Locales > Writing Aids you will see a comprehensive list of all the options for the LibreOffice suite. You can check that you have a dictionary and grammar checker installed.



The grammar checker is limited in its scope. For instance, it will flag "This is an document", but not "Me and John went to the pub".

13.3 Thesaurus

Can't think of the exact word you want to use – no problem: type something similar, then either:

- Right click on it and select Synonym, for a quick replacement of the word.
- Select Main menu > Tools > Thesaurus for a more comprehensive dialogue.

14 SAVING AND EXPORTING

To save the current state of your document at any time, click the  (save) button.

To save a copy of the document with a different name, or in a different format compatible with LibreOffice, use: Main menu > File > Save as. You could use this to save your document in .doc format.

To save the document in a format other than a one compatible with LibreOffice, use: Main menu > Export as. You could use this to create a .pdf file of your document.

Try creating a PDF file from your document.

15 PRINTING

Many of the options you have for printing your document depend on the facilities of your printer. For example, you can only do 2-sided printing if your printer has that capability.

From the main menu, select File > Print and explore the options.

16 SUMMARY OF THE SESSION

In this session you have...

- Revised session 2.
- Discussed the difference between a typewriter and a word processor.
- Learned several ways to select sections of text.
- Learned the [Ctrl]+z, x, c and v keyboard shortcuts, and the use of Paste Special
- Seen how to format sections of text, and apply formatting to the whole document using Styles.
- Discovered how to insert special characters, symbols and foreign characters into your text.
- Used the power of Find and Replace to edit your document.
- Learned how to set up the margins, orientation, headers, footers and background for pages.
- Seen how to create numberer headings, and insert a table of contents.
- Learned a little about the other, non-text, objects you can include in your documents
- Tried out spell checking and the thesaurus
- Used options for saving and exporting your document.
- Had an introduction to the options available for printing.

17 CLOSE

Finally, here is some homework for you:

If you are an MS Word user, find out which menus and tabs you have to use to reach the equivalent of the LibreOffice Writer features we have looked at.

There are lots of settings for paragraph Styles that we haven't looked at. Experiment with Styles, especially: Next Style and Inherit from on the Basic tab.

Experiment with heading numbering and heading Styles. For example, can you number your paragraphs using Roman numbers?

Find out what your printer is capable of: 2-sided printing? Booklet printing?

If you feel like tackling some advanced topics, have a look on-line for how to do: columns, forms, mail-merge and templates.