

How to Create an Automatic Table of Contents in Word

1. Revise Your Heading Styles

An automatic Table of Contents in Word is based on your use of heading styles. It uses the headings you have defined in your document to create a ToC, and it figures out what a heading is by checking for your use of heading styles. The formatting of the headings you will need (Heading 1, Heading 2, and Heading 3) are incorrect by default in any given Word document, so you will need to revise the formatting of those headings in order to use them to define your headings.

In the Home tab in Word, there is a group called "Styles." This group defines what your styles look like. You will find Heading 1, Heading 2, and Heading 3 there. Right-clicking on a style will give you a context menu with the option "Modify..."

Click "Modify" for each heading type, one at a time, and use the Modify Style pop-up to make these changes:

Heading 1:

Change font to Times New Roman, size 12, bold, and black

Choose the Centered alignment

In the bottom left corner, click the Format button, and then click Paragraph

Change the Spacing Before and After to 0, and change the Line Spacing to Double

Press OK

Heading 2:

Change font to Times New Roman, size 12, bold, and black

Choose Left alignment

In the bottom left corner, click the Format button, and then click Paragraph

Change the Spacing Before and After to 0, and change the Line Spacing to Double

Press OK

Heading 3:

Change font to Times New Roman, size 12, bold, italicized, and black

Choose Left alignment

In the bottom left corner, click the Format button, and then click Paragraph

Change the Spacing Before and After to 0, and change the Line Spacing to Double

Press OK

2. Define Your Headings

If you have already written at least a chapter of your thesis/dissertation, you can now go through and define your headings for Word to use in the ToC. Highlight your first level 2 heading, then go up to the Styles group and select Heading 2. Your heading should now be aligned left, bolded, 12 pt Times New Roman, black, and double-spaced. To know if you have successfully defined your

heading, you can hover your cursor over the heading; if a heading style has been applied, a collapsible arrow will appear to the left of the heading.

Make sure that the paragraph that follows your heading is not included in the heading. You will know if this is the case if the entire paragraph changes to bold. To separate the paragraph from your heading formatting, put your cursor at the end of your heading, press Delete until your heading and paragraph are on the same line, and then press Enter. This will separate them into two separate headings. You can then highlight the paragraph and choose the "Normal" style from the Style group, and revise the font back to 12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, in order to remove that paragraph from your list of defined headings.

Go through the entire document, highlighting each Level 2 and Level 3 heading and selecting the correct heading style for each one.

2a. How To Format Level 1 Headings to Appear Correctly in the ToC

Level 1 headings are a little more complicated than level 2 and level 3 headings. If you highlight your level 1 headings and choose the Heading 1 style, you will accidentally create two headings: for example, "Chapter 1" and "Introduction" will be two separate headings, and will appear separately in the ToC. You want them to appear on the same line in the ToC, separated by a colon. This requires a work-around.

In order to make your headings appear on the same line in the ToC, separated by a colon, you have to make Word believe that they appear in the text on the same line, separated by a colon. You can do so by following these steps:

- A. Add a colon to the end of Chapter 1 (Chapter 1:), and then highlight that colon and change the font color to white to hide it.
- B. Put your cursor after the hidden colon and press Delete to bring the chapter title up to the same line as the chapter number.
- C. With your cursor still after the colon, press Shift+Enter to move the chapter title to the next line without breaking the formatting between the chapter number and chapter title.
- D. Highlight the chapter number and chapter title and press Heading 1 in the Styles group.

Now, as long as you follow the directions in the "Create the Table of Contents" section below, your chapter titles will appear correctly in both the text and the ToC.

3. Create the Table of Contents

Now that you have defined your headings, you can pull from those headings to create your Table of Contents. Click your flashing cursor onto the page where you would like to add your ToC, and then click into the References tab. Click on "Table of Contents" and choose "Custom Table of Contents."

In Print Preview, "Show page numbers" and "Right align page numbers" should be selected, and "Tab leader" should be dots.

In Web Preview, if "Use hyperlinks instead of page numbers" is selected, un-select it.

In General, "Format" should be "From template" and "Show levels" should be "3."

Click "Modify" in the bottom left corner, and make the following changes to TOC 1, TOC 2, and TOC 3 by clicking "Modify" on each heading type one at a time.

Font: Times New Roman, size 12, not bolded or italicized, black (not "Automatic")

Spacing: Format-->Paragraph, Before 0, After 0, Double spaced

When finished adding these formatting instructions, press OK, and your Table of Contents should appear on the Table of Contents page.

4. Update Your Table of Contents with New Material

As you write more or make changes to your document, you will need to update your Table of Contents. To do this, right click on one of the entries in the Table of Contents, then click Update Field. Choose "Update Entire Table," and then press OK. As long as all of your

Remember:

- Make sure that your Abstract, List of Figures, and List of Tables headings have Heading 1 styles to include them in the ToC. (If you are using the Word template provided by Rowan, you will need to [unlock the Developer tab](#) and go into Design Mode to delete and replace those headings in order to add the Heading 1 style.)
- Make sure that the heading "Table of Contents" appears a double-spaced line above the first entry in the ToC, but do not give it a Heading 1 style, since it shouldn't appear in the ToC.
- Make sure that your References and Appendix letters and titles have Heading 1 styles to include them in the ToC.
- After all of this, go through your document to check that every first, second, and third-level heading has the correct Heading Style. Any heading you do not give a heading style will not appear in the ToC, so checking individually will make sure that nothing is missed.