Word: Tricks to Create Stylish Documents

Discover Word Features that Help You Transform a Dull-looking Document!

This article shows you how to:
- Add artistic dividing lines and page borders
- Find and use free pictures in your documents
- Spice up your headings with effects and WordArt

Although we call it a 'word processor', words are really just the beginning of its capabilities. You can use Microsoft Word to create a poster, an invitation, a greeting card or a leaflet, but with words alone it won't be especially stylish or eye-catching.

In this article, I'll introduce you to the range of graphical options you can apply to a document, and you'll learn useful ways to transform a plain document into something far more attractive!

Garage Sale

Electronics ❖ Furniture
Clothing ❖ Artwork ❖ Toys

All proceeds to charity!

Saturday 5th July
9.00am – 6.00pm

Contents:

This article covers all the recent versions of Microsoft Word – Word 2007 up to Word 2019. If you are using an older version, you'll find that many of the same features are included, albeit with fewer or slightly-different options, via the **Insert** and **Format** menus.

A Basic Document: Words and Simple Formatting

Get the words in place first

In any document you create, it's the words that matter most. You know what you want to say, so a good first step is to get the words down and set them out in an approximation of the finished layout.

Basic formatting options

At this initial stage, there are a few simple design touches you can add: you can apply different fonts to particular sections, adjust text sizes, use bold and italic styles, align paragraphs to the centre or right, and use different-coloured text.

Plan the general layout of the page

In the screenshot to the right, you can see I've already made a start. I have the basics of a poster to advertise a forthcoming Garage Sale, and it's as simple as it could possibly be. Besides aligning everything to the centre of the page and making the heading larger than the other text, almost everything is just

> ## Garage Sale
>
> Electronics ❖ Furniture
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>
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> 9.00am – 6.00pm
> 29 Springwood Lane

as I typed it. Over the coming pages we'll explore ways in which we can turn this sort of simple start into something much more inviting and eye-catching.

You might like to treat this article as a tutorial to get some hands-on experience of using the features I'll be covering. Start Word and recreate the simple

document pictured above: switch to the **Layout** (in Word 2019/2016) or **Page Layout** tab and set the page size to A5 (**Size** > **A5**), reduce the margins (**Margins > Narrow**), centre all the text, and make the heading 48 points in size and the remaining text 20 points. The font I've used is Verdana.

Add Useful Little Touches with Symbols

If you do recreate my document, one thing that might have you scratching your head is the little star-shaped symbol I've used as a divider between the words 'Electronics Furniture' and 'Clothing Artwork Toys'. You won't find that anywhere on your keyboard!

Bullet-like symbols between words

This was added by using one of the pictorial fonts included with Windows. Rather than the usual letters, numbers and punctuation symbols you find in most fonts, these pictorial fonts have little hand-drawn signs, symbols and pictures. There are four well-known pictorial fonts named Webdings, Wingdings, Wingdings 2 and Wingdings 3, between them giving over 800 different symbols.

Since these are ordinary fonts, you could select Wingdings (for instance) on the **Home** tab of the Ribbon and start typing. But how would you know that typing a small 't' would give you a diamond shape, a capital 'J' a smiley face, or a small 'v' the star-shaped bullet I've used in my poster? Quite simply, you wouldn't! That's not a practical way to use these fonts.

Here's how I arrived at the star-shaped symbol I used:

1. After typing the word 'Electronics' followed by a space, go to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon.

2. At the far right, click the **Symbol** button and choose **More Symbols** from the menu.

Choose Wingdings

3. In the window that appears, open the drop-down list labelled **Font** and choose **Wingdings** ①.

Browse through the symbols

4. Now look through the grid of little pictures below to find a symbol you want to use. When you find it, click it once to select it ② and then click the **Insert** button at the bottom of the window. Word 'types' this symbol into your document for you.
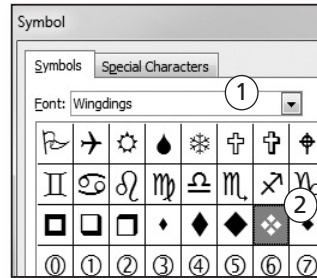
You can keep this window open

5. You can keep this Symbol window open, moving it out of the way if necessary, and continue typing, then return to it and click **Insert** again when you want to insert the same symbol again. Alternatively, close the window: you can follow the same steps again to insert the next symbol, or just copy-and-paste the earlier symbol to wherever it's needed.

You may need to do some exploring to find the type of little picture you want. If you don't see it in the Wingdings collection (which is always a good place to start), open the **Font** list at the top of the window again and try Webdings, Wingdings 2 or Wingdings 3.

These pictures may be tiny, but you can make them much larger. After inserting one into your document, highlight it and then adjust its size using the usual font-size drop-down list on the **Home** tab of the Ribbon. As an example, you might insert a tiny arrow symbol into a document, but if you then set its font size to about 500, it becomes a huge arrow that fills the entire width of an A4 page.

Split the Page Using Horizontal Dividing Lines

It's useful to be able to split a document into sections, and one way to do that is with a horizontal dividing line. In a formal document, you'd probably want something that looks fairly restrained, and Word offers some very easy options for basic dividers.
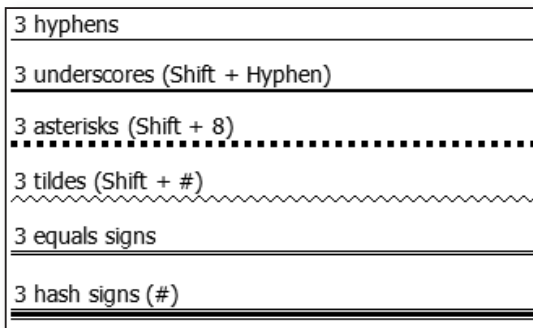
Mark out sections of the page

After starting a new paragraph, so that the cursor is flashing at the beginning of a line, you type three hyphens in a row (---) and then press **Enter**. Word automatically converts this to a thin line running the full width of the page.

*Type three hyphens and press **Enter***

This is one of six different lines you can produce: the style and thickness of the line depends on which character you type. For example, typing three under-scores and pressing **Enter** gives you a thick line. Here are the six available options:

Choose from six line styles

3 hyphens
3 underscores (Shift + Hyphen)
3 asterisks (Shift + 8)
3 tildes (Shift + #)
3 equals signs
3 hash signs (#)

These lines certainly have their uses, but they won't do much to brighten our lifeless-looking Garage Sale poster. We need something less formal, and fortunately Word 2010 and 2007 also offer a collection of more-artistic dividers (although these have been removed from Word 2013 and later). Position the cursor at the beginning of an empty line and then follow these steps:

Not exciting enough?

1. On the **Home** tab of the Ribbon, in the 'Paragraph' section, click the tiny arrow beside the **Borders and Shading** button.

2. At the bottom of the menu, click on **Borders and Shading**.

Artistic dividing lines

3. In the bottom-left corner of the window that appears, click the **Horizontal Line** button.

4. In the window that opens, you will see a long list of horizontal dividing lines of various shapes, styles and colours. When you find the one you want to use, click it once to select it and then click the **OK** button. Word inserts the line into your document (spanning the full width of the page) and closes this little window.
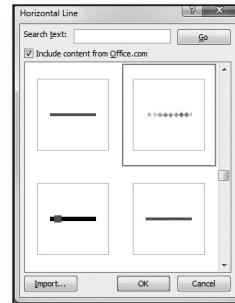
If you don't like the line you've chosen after seeing it in your document, press **Ctrl+Z** (the shortcut for 'Undo') to remove it, then click the **Borders and Shading** button on the Ribbon followed by the **Horizontal Line** button again to choose a different line style.

Adjust the line's height and width

The horizontal line is actually a picture, and you can adjust its size and position. If you click the line to select it, a dotted border will appear around it with eight little blobs. You can adjust the thickness (height) of the line by

dragging the blob in the centre of the bottom border upwards or downwards; adjust its width by dragging the centre blob at the right edge left or right. Also like a picture, you can align the divider to the left, centre or right of the page using the three alignment buttons in the 'Paragraph' section of the Ribbon's **Home** tab.
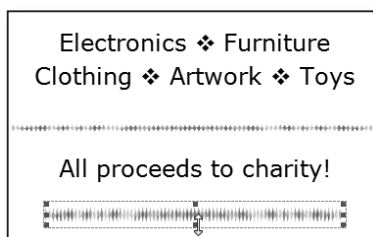
Add Artistic Borders to Frame the Page

There's something about a page border that instantly turns a document into a design, drawing the eye into it, and that's exactly what we need for items like our poster. Again, Word can frame the page with borders ranging in style from plain to exotic:

Borders improve the page's appearance

1. Switch to the **Design** tab (Word 2013 or later) or the **Page Layout** tab (Word 2010/2007) of the Ribbon and, in the 'Page Background' section, click on **Page Borders**.

2. Now you'll be looking at the action-packed dialog pictured in the screenshot on the next page. There's a variety of options you can choose here: select a style such as **Box** at the left (choosing 'None' gives you no border), a line style from the **Style** list, and a line-colour and thickness from the **Color** and **Width** boxes. The Preview section to the right shows how your chosen combination will look. There are also four little buttons below and beside the preview: you can use these to turn the individual edges of the border

Choose line style, colour and thickness

on or off: for instance, if you want borders down the sides but not at the top and bottom, click the two buttons beside the preview to turn off the top and bottom borders.
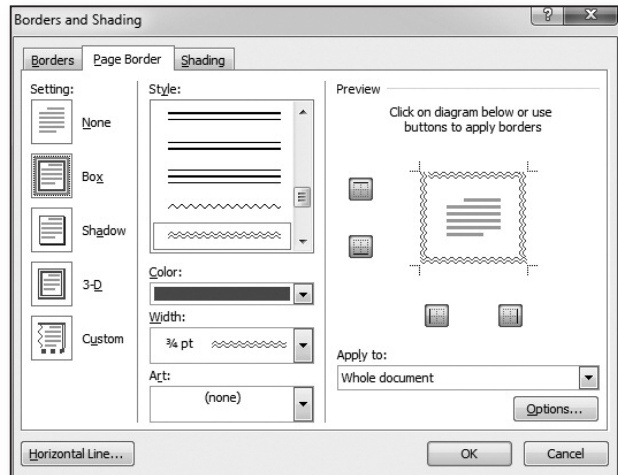
Add the border to the page

3. Let's assume you're happy with the combination of settings, style, colour and width you've chosen. Click **OK** and Word will add the border to your page, closing this dialog in the process. If you decide you're not so keen after seeing the border in place, click the **Page Borders** button again to reopen the dialog and make adjustments.

Try a more artistic border!

4. In the case of our poster, it looks a little better now, but it's hardly attention-grabbing! Fortunately, we haven't exhausted the page-border options yet: below the Style, Color and Width boxes, open the

drop-down list labelled **Art** and you'll find a large collection of little pictures which can also be used to form the page border. When you choose one of these 'Art' pictures, the 'Setting' and 'Style' options are disabled, but you can still adjust the **Width** (the thickness of the border) and – in some cases – choose a colour.

## Eye-catching Headings Using Text Effects

In all versions apart from Word 2007, there's a wonderful feature named 'Text Effects'. Just select some text, and with some enjoyable experimentation you can apply outlines, shadows, reflections and glows to create some stunning results. It's not a feature to use with small text – it will just tend to look messy – but it's the ideal way to create a snazzy caption or heading.

Best used with larger text

After selecting the heading you want to transform, switch to the **Home** tab on the Ribbon and click the **Text Effects** button in the 'Font' section.

Use a preset style…

At the top of the panel that appears, you'll find a choice of preset styles: if you hold the mouse over one of these, Word will temporarily apply it to the text you selected, letting you see how it looks. To use one of these preset effects, just click it.
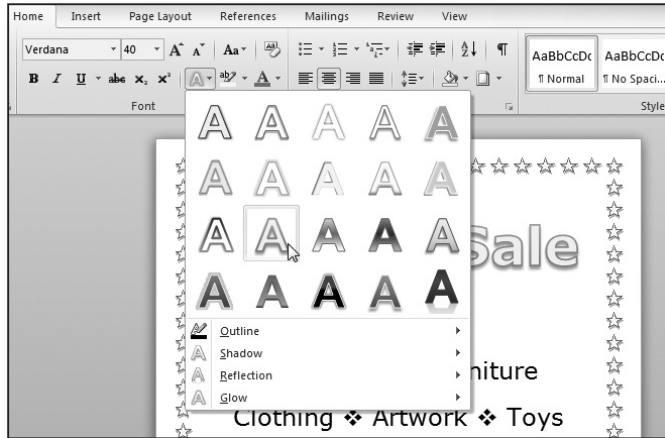
… or combine different ingredients yourself

If none of the presets grabs you, you can mix-and-match to create your own effect. At the bottom of this Text Effects panel, combine options from the **Outline, Shadow, Reflection** and **Glow** menus to choose how the text should look. This is where the experimentation comes in: you may well find a 'Reflection' you like and then add a 'Shadow' which spoils the effect completely, but retracing your steps and trying something different is easy (and remember that **Ctrl+Z** will always undo the last change you made).

WordArt: Turn Text into Artwork!

If you use Word 2007 and you're disappointed not to have the Text Effects feature explained above, don't worry! There's another feature that's possibly even better, and it's included (with some differences) in Word 2007 as well as all later versions.

*Create attention-grabbing headings*

It's called 'WordArt' and, as its name suggests, it creates works of art from plain text. To use it, follow the appropriate steps below for your version of Word.

Word 2010 and later:

1. In your document, select the text to be transformed into a piece of WordArt, then switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon and click the **WordArt** button in the 'Text' section.

2. In the panel that opens, click any of the WordArt styles that takes your fancy. Don't worry too much about your choice at this stage: along with much else, this can be changed in later steps.
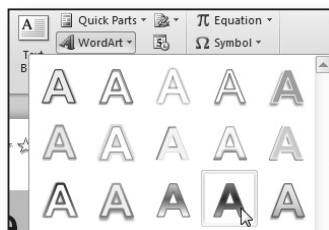
Choose a basic style

3. Word now converts your text into a piece of WordArt with the style you chose. Make sure the **Drawing Tools** > **Format** tab is selected on the Ribbon and you can begin to fine-tune the design using the options in the 'WordArt Styles' section.

4. The **Quick Styles** button lets you choose a different style from the one you picked in step 2. The **Text Outline** and **Text Fill** buttons change the outer and inner colours of the text. The **Text Effects** button offers the same options we saw on page 9, but

Transform it in any way you like

with three exotic additions: **Bevel**, which adds button-like 3D edges to certain styles; **3-D Rotation**, which twists and turns the text in a variety of ways; and the marvellous **Transform** which warps the text into all sorts of amazing shapes. Again, all these options are candidates for experimentation, but the process should be enjoyable.

Word 2007:

Pick a basic style

1. In your document, select the text to be transformed into a piece of WordArt.

2. Now switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon and click the **WordArt** button in the 'Text' section. In the panel that appears, you'll see the colourful selection of WordArt styles that are included in Word 2007. Choose a style you like by clicking it. (Don't agonise over this for too long – you can choose something different later!)

Choose font and size

3. Now a window will appear containing your selected text. In this window, you can choose a font, text size and style (bold/italic) to use, although you may like to stick with the suggested settings, and you can edit the text if needed. Click **OK**.

4. Now Word replaces the ordinary text you selected in your document with this WordArt creation.

Customise its appearance

5. Word also switches to the **WordArt Tools** > **Format** tab on the Ribbon, and you can use the many options on this tab to change or fine-tune the WordArt. In the 'WordArt Styles' box you can see the same range of styles you saw in step 2 and pick something different if you like. The **Edit Text** button reopens the window you saw in step 3 to let you change the font and size (and the text itself if you wish). You

can change the inner and outer colours of the text using the **Shape Outline** and **Shape Fill** buttons, and when you're ready to get really creative, experiment with the options on the **Change Shape** and **3-D Effects** menus.

Clip Art: Add Free Drawings and Photos

One obvious way to add a touch of spice to a poster, card or invitation is to add a picture. And there's no need to worry if you don't have much of a collection – Microsoft Word should be able to find whatever you want!

Use the built-in 'clip art gallery'

With a couple of clicks you can reach Word's 'clip art gallery', a huge collection of pictures you can use for free in your documents. Some of these are stored on your own system, and many more are kept on Microsoft's website, but Word allows you to search through the entire collection in one place. Each picture has an associated collection of keywords, and the trick is to search using keywords that are most likely to find what you need.

Search by typing keywords

To begin, click at the point in your document where you'd like to place a picture, then follow these steps:

Word 2013 and later:

1. Switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon and click **Pictures** > **Online Pictures** (in Word 2019) or the **Online Pictures** button (in Word 2016/2013).

2. In the window that opens, click in the search box at the top of the panel and type a keyword or phrase that describes the picture you want, such as **garage sale** or **flowers** ①.

3. Press **Enter** to search, and the window will fill with small versions of pictures that matched your search term – a combination of hand-drawn artwork ('clip art') and photos.

If you particularly want a clip art picture, or definitely need a photo, you can click the word **Type** ② below the search box and choose **Clipart** or **Photograph** respectively to see only that type of picture.

4. Look through the pictures to find one you think you want to use, click it once to select it and then click the **Insert** button ③ at the bottom to insert it into your document. (If you don't see any pictures you like, click in the search box again, type different keywords and press **Enter** to try another search.)

Word 2010 and 2007:

1. Switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon and click the **Clip Art** button. You'll see a Clip Art panel at the right of the Word window.

2. In the **Search for** box, type a keyword or phrase that describes the picture you want.

Make sure Word will search for pictures

3. Next, open the **Results should be** list and make sure Word is set to look for pictures. In fact, there are two different types of pictures: there are 'Illustrations' (or 'Clip Art' in Word 2007) which are hand-drawn, cartoon-like pictures, and there are 'Photographs'. Depending on what type of picture you want to find, make sure there are ticks beside one or both of these. You don't need ticks beside

'Videos' or 'Audio' ('Movies' or 'Sounds' in Word 2007), but it doesn't matter much: there are comparatively few of either in the collection, and you could simply ignore any that turn up in your search results.

4. In Word 2010, keep a tick beside **Include Bing content** to ensure you're searching the large online collection along with the small collection on your own PC. In Word 2007, make sure **All collections** is selected in the **Search in** box.

5. Now click the **Go** button to start searching. Straight away, you should see the panel begin to fill with small versions of pictures that matched your search term (and more will gradually appear further down the list as they're delivered from Microsoft's website).

Start the search

6. Now have a look through this scrolling panel to find a suitable picture. When you find one you think you want to use, click it once to insert it into your document. (If you don't see any pictures you like, try clicking in the **Search for** box again, typing different keywords and clicking the **Go** button to search again.)

Click to insert

When you insert a picture into your document, you'll finally see it at full size, and it may be huge! You can resize it (as I'll explain in a moment), but perhaps you're not so keen on it now that you can see it properly? If this is the case, either click it once and press **Delete** to remove it from the document or press **Ctrl+Z**.

When the picture lands in your document, it will have a border around it and eight little blobs. (If you click elsewhere in your document these will disappear;

Resize the picture

just click the picture to bring them back.) To resize the picture, move the mouse to the blob in the bottom-right corner and drag up-and-left (to make the picture smaller) or down-and-right (to enlarge it).

At the moment your picture is probably stuck to the left margin of the page. It behaves rather like text in that you can use the buttons in the 'Paragraph' section of the **Home** tab to align it left, centre or right, but currently that's all you can do.

Move the picture freely around the page

If you'd like to position the picture freely, anywhere on the page, and have any nearby text skip out of its way, you can do so. With the picture selected, so that you can see the border and blobs around it, switch to the **Picture Tools > Format** tab on the Ribbon, click the **Wrap Text** button (**Text Wrapping** in Word 2007) and choose **Square**.

Now move the mouse pointer into the middle of the picture, hold down the left mouse button and drag the picture to wherever you want to place it in your document.

Rotate the picture

One extra thing you might like to do is rotate the picture. When you've clicked it to select it, you'll see a little circle above it: move the mouse pointer on to this circle, press and hold the left mouse button, and then drag the mouse clockwise or anticlockwise.

Perhaps you'd prefer to use one of your own pictures? If so, switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon, click **Pictures** (Word 2013 or later) or **Picture** (Word 2010/ 2007) and then browse to the picture you want to use and double-click it to insert it into your document.