

Writing Neat-looking Letters? Give them Neat-looking Envelopes to Match!

This article shows you how to:

- ✓ Print smart envelopes quickly whenever you need them
- ✓ Set up and print an envelope in Microsoft Word
- ✓ Save a pre-prepared 'envelope document' for easy reuse

With Microsoft Word, letter-writing is a doddle. It takes almost no effort to write a formal letter that looks smart and neat. But when it comes to the envelope, many of us spoil the effect by writing the address by hand.

Perhaps we're not sure where to start, or we're not even aware that Word can handle envelopes too. It certainly can, and in this article I'll show you how to produce an envelope as smart as the letter inside it. I'll also show you how to save and reuse a special 'envelope document' that makes all future envelope printing quick and simple.



-
- **Two Things to Check Before You Start** W 532/2
 - **Step by Step: Setting Up Your Envelope** W 532/3
 - **How Does it Look? Try a Test Print** W 532/9
 - **Save Your Envelope to Reuse in Future** W 532/12
 - **Quickly Print an Envelope When Needed** W 532/13
-

Two Things to Check Before You Start

There are a couple of things you'll need to know during the setup of your envelope, and it makes sense to sort those out in advance if you can:

Standard 'DL' envelopes or something else?

- **What size envelope are you using, and is it compatible with your printer?** For ordinary letter-writing on A4 paper, you're probably using the standard 'DL' envelope, which is roughly the same width as the paper and one third its height (taking a sheet of A4 folded twice). Assuming that's the case, there's nothing else to check – your printer is certain to handle DL envelopes.

Check their name or dimensions

However, if you think you might be using a different-size envelope, check its name and/or dimensions because you'll need to know these a little later. It would also be worth making sure your printer is compatible with these envelopes: your printer's manual should list the various types and sizes of paper, card and envelopes it can handle.

Check how to insert envelopes into your printer

- **How should envelopes be inserted into your printer?** Perhaps surprisingly, Microsoft Word itself should be able to tell you how to insert blank envelopes into your printer – face up or face down, short edge first or long edge first, and so on – and I'll show you how to check this information along the way.

Nevertheless, if you have your printer's manual handy, it would be worth having a look at its section on envelope printing to see if there's anything else worth knowing. Some printers have a separate 'envelope tray', for instance, and insist that you place the envelope in that rather than the usual paper tray. Since envelopes have gummed flaps or self-seal strips which could get caught up in the works, it pays to know how your printer wants things to be done!

Later on in this article, I'll give you a handy tip which ensures that this 'how to insert' information is always right under your nose whenever you need to print an envelope in future, saving you the need to reach for your printer's manual every time!



Step by Step: Setting Up Your Envelope

Have you just finished writing and printing a letter? That's the most common time you'd need an envelope, in which case Microsoft Word is already running and your printer is already switched on. If so, follow these few quick initial steps:

Getting started

1. If you've typed the recipient's name and address at the top of your letter, you may like to highlight it and press **Ctrl** + **C** to copy it to the clipboard. (This doesn't matter too much, but it will save you having to type it into your envelope later on.)
2. If you haven't saved your letter and you want to keep a copy, do that now.
3. Close your letter by pressing **Ctrl** + **W**, then create a new blank document by pressing **Ctrl** + **N**.



Perhaps you haven't just written a letter. In that case, follow these few steps to get started:

1. Switch on your printer.
2. Start Microsoft Word.
3. In Word 2010 you'll immediately be looking at a new blank document, which is exactly what you want. In Word 2013 or later you'll probably arrive at the 'Start screen' instead: on this screen, click on **Blank document** to generate a new empty document.

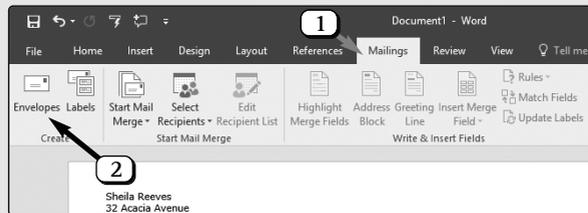


Word is running and your printer is on



Now, whatever you were just doing, you're looking at a blank document in Word, your printer is switched on and waiting expectantly, and you're ready to set up your envelope. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Switch to the Mailings tab on Microsoft Word's Ribbon (1).
2. In the 'Create' group at the far left, click the Envelopes button (2).



Type or paste the recipient's address

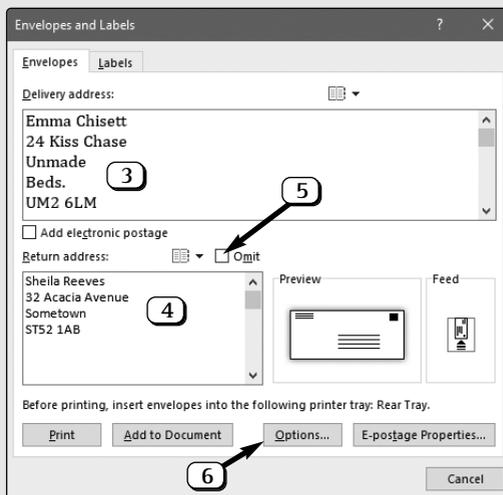
3. Now you'll see the 'Envelopes and Labels' dialog pictured in the screenshot on the opposite page. Click in the large box at the top headed **Delivery address** (3) and either type the name and address of the letter's recipient or, if you followed my earlier advice of copying those details to the clipboard from your letter, just press **(Ctrl) + (V)** to paste them into the box. (Don't worry if the font looks unusual or the text size is larger or smaller than you'd like, we'll sort those details out later.)



Perhaps at this stage you don't actually need to print an envelope, but you'd like to set up the 'envelope document' I mentioned earlier so that you'll have it to hand whenever you do need one? If so, just type anything address-like into this box as a placeholder – your own address perhaps, or a fictitious one.

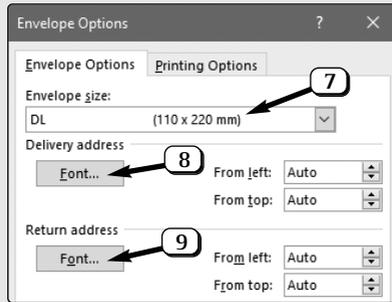
- Now we reach the smaller box below, headed **Return address**, and here you have a choice. In some countries it's traditional to include your own address in the top-left corner of the envelope – rather a good idea, but one that's never caught on here in the UK. It's up to you whether you do this or not. If you would like to do it, type your own name and address into this box (4) and make sure there's no tick in the **Omit** box (5); if you'd prefer not to, tick the **Omit** box (5) instead.

Do you want to include your return address?



- Next we need to check (and perhaps change) the settings for our envelope, so click the **Options** button (6). This opens a dialog titled 'Envelope Options'.
- The most important thing to check in this dialog is the **Envelope size** box at the top (7): does it show the size of envelope you're planning to use? If not, open the drop-down list and choose the correct size and/or name (such as DL).

Choose the correct size of your envelopes



Adjust the fonts
for the addresses

7. A little lower down you'll see two Font buttons, one to set the font for the delivery address (8) and one for the return address (9). If you're not keen on the font and/or text size that was used for either or both of these addresses when you typed them earlier, click these buttons to change them. In each case, a Font dialog will appear in which you choose the font settings you want and then click OK.



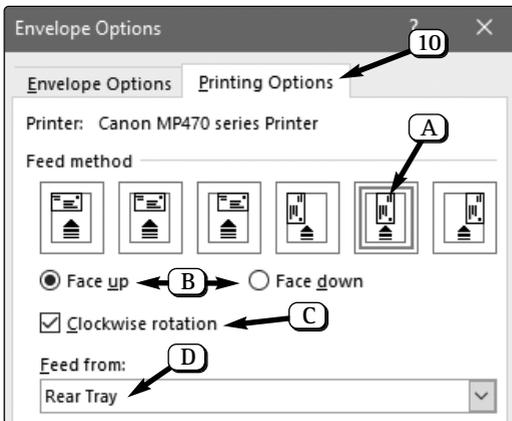
It's best to use the same font for both addresses and to pick an easily-readable font such as Calibri, Verdana, Tahoma or Arial. A size of 10 or 11 should be fine for the delivery address; the return address (if you chose to include it) should be smaller, at about 7 or 8.

In both cases, stick to the 'Regular' font style rather than bold or italic, leave the font colour as 'Automatic' and don't use any of the underlining options or text effects.

Check how
envelopes feed
into your printer

8. Now switch to the **Printing Options** tab of this dialog (10). I mentioned earlier that Word usually knows how envelopes should be inserted into your printer, and this tab tells you how Word is expecting to print them:

- The six little icons below **Feed method** tell you whether a long edge or short edge feeds into the printer, and whether the envelopes should be at the left, centre or right of the tray. One of these icons will have a selection box around it (A), indicating that this is the method Word is expecting you to use. **Long edge or short edge first?**
- Below this, Word tells you whether the envelope should be face up or face down when you place it in the tray (B). **Face up or down?**
- The **Clockwise rotation** checkbox (C) applies only if a short edge of the envelope feeds into the printer. If ticked, the envelope should be turned with the flap to the right; if not ticked, the flap should be to the left. **Which short edge first?**
- The **Feed from** box (D) tells you which of your printer's trays should be used to insert envelopes. **Printer tray**



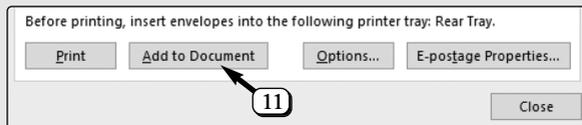
If you've looked at your printer's manual, you should find that this information tallies with what you read there. If it doesn't, it's best to assume the manual is correct and change these options to match it. If you haven't



checked the manual, however, don't worry: make a mental note of how Word tells you to insert the envelope here, and we'll see if it works later!

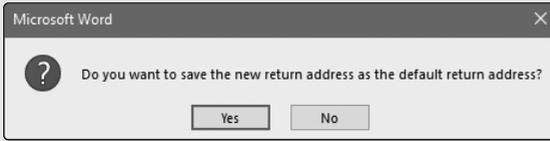
Add the envelope to your Word document

9. Click the OK button at the bottom of this 'Envelope Options' dialog.
10. This takes you back to the larger 'Envelopes and Labels' dialog you were using earlier. At the bottom of this dialog, you'll see a tempting-looking 'Print' button, but we're going to ignore that. At this stage, we don't know quite how the envelope looks – you may want to adjust the fonts, text sizes, and positioning of the addresses – and you may also want to take up my suggestion of saving a ready-to-print 'envelope document' to make all this simpler in the future. Therefore, click the **Add to Document** button **(11)**.



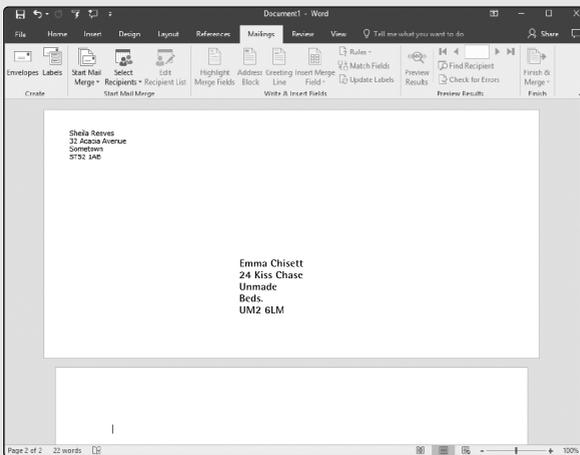
Allow Word to save the return address

11. As soon as you click the **Add to Document** button, you may see the question pictured below. This only appears if you chose to include your return address on the envelope in step 4 above. Word is offering to store your address and insert it into that box for you automatically in future. It makes sense to say **Yes**, but it may not matter: if you take up my suggestion of saving an 'envelope document' for future use, you'll rarely (if ever) have to navigate these dialogs again anyway.



12. Now you're returned to your Word document where you'll see that, above the blank A4 page you started with, a new envelope-shaped page has appeared containing the address details you entered.

A new 'envelope page' in your document



How Does it Look? Try a Test Print

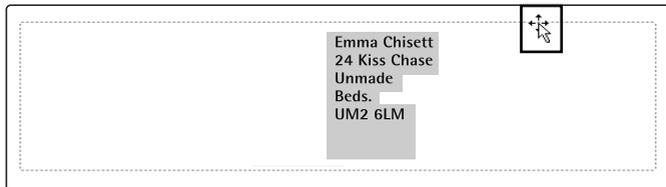
This new 'envelope page' should be laid out neatly enough (there's not a lot to it, after all!), but this is the first time you've seen it after choosing fonts and text sizes. Perhaps you can tell straight away that the text size of the delivery address is too small, or the size of the return address is too big? Or perhaps you wish you'd chosen a different font?

Not keen on the fonts?

If so, that's easy to put right. Highlight the address you want to change, switch to the **Home** tab of the Ribbon and use the usual options in the 'Font' group to make any changes you like, just as you do in any other Word document.

Need to move the delivery address?

One thing you'll notice if you highlight the delivery address is that a dotted outline appears around it. This is because Word has placed this address into a text box. If you do change the font or text size of this address, you may feel that the address is now a little too far to the left or right on the envelope. Again, that's easily fixed: move your mouse pointer on to the top edge of the dotted box, which causes the pointer to gain a crossed-arrow shape. When it does, press and hold the left mouse button and drag this text box to wherever you'd like it positioned on your envelope.



Try printing your envelope

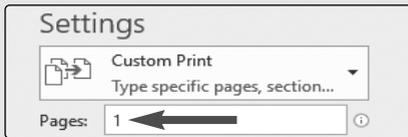
Now, as far as you can tell, the envelope looks as it should, so let's try printing it. This is partly to check the layout on paper (although it should exactly match what you see on the screen) and partly to check whether envelopes really should be inserted into your printer the way you think they should!

Insert a blank envelope into your printer the way you believe it should be done and then follow these steps:



1. Click the **File** tab at the far-left of the Ribbon and choose **Print** or, more simply, press **Ctrl** + **P**.
2. Now there's an important change to make. At the moment the document consists of two pages – the

envelope and the currently-blank A4 page below it – and we only want to print the envelope. In the ‘Settings’ section of the Print screen that has appeared, click in the box beside Pages and type 1 (the number one) to tell Word to print only the first page of the document.



3. If you want to adjust your printer’s settings (perhaps to change the print quality), click the **Printer Properties** link a little higher up and do that, clicking **OK** afterwards.
4. Finally, click the large **Print** button at the top-left of this Print screen to print your envelope. As this happens, the Print screen disappears and you’ll return to your document.

Tell Word to print the first page only!

Click Print

How has it turned out? Hopefully everything has gone according to plan and – crucially – the addresses are on the front of the envelope, not the flap, and the right way up! If so, you’ve produced a useable envelope and you can pop your letter into it.

But perhaps things have gone haywire. You may discover that you actually needed to insert the envelope the other way up (or the other way round). If so, you’ve sacrificed an envelope, but at least now you know how to insert it in future!

All correct?

Besides the basic question of whether the envelope was inserted correctly, you can now see how the fonts and the positioning of the delivery address look. If you want



to make changes now, you can do so on the **Home** tab of the **Ribbon** as I mentioned on page 10.

Save Your Envelope to Reuse in Future

Finished

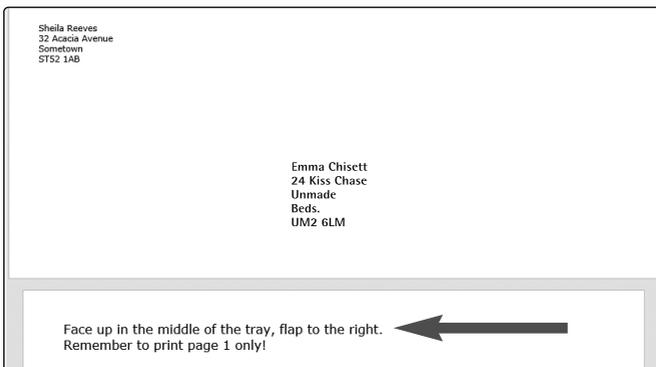
At this stage, you have an envelope on the screen in front of you which looks as it should, and you've also printed an envelope to use (if you needed one). You could simply close this document and/or close Microsoft Word and call the job done.

Keep this document to use again

However, that would leave you repeating similar steps next time you need an envelope, and there's no need to go to all that trouble. A more practical option is to save this document so that you can use it again.

Keep a note of how to print an envelope

Before you do this, here's the quick tip I mentioned earlier. Below our envelope page in Word there's a blank A4 page. We'll never want to print that page, but we can put it to good use. At the top of that page, type a sentence or two which tells you how to insert envelopes into your printer. This way, whenever you print an envelope in future, you'll have this information right in front of you to ensure you get it right first time!



Now you're ready to save the document. Press the **(F12)** key on your keyboard, which displays the **Save As** dialog. In this dialog, navigate to the folder in which you want to save this document. The dialog is probably showing your Documents folder initially, and that's a good enough place, but you may prefer to save it elsewhere (or you may like to create a new folder named 'Envelopes' to keep all your envelopes together and make them easy to find if you decide to use the extra tip I mention on page 14).

Save the document

Type a name for this document, the obvious being 'Envelope', and then click the **Save** button.

That's it – you're done, and you can close this document (by pressing **(Ctrl) + (W)**) and work on something else, or close Microsoft Word.

Done

Quickly Print an Envelope When Needed

To set up and print your first envelope, you followed a total of 16 steps and had to dodge your way through several dialogs to produce a single printed envelope. You can do all that again next time you need one, but hopefully you followed my advice of saving the finished result for reuse.

Easily use the envelope document you saved

If you did, you can follow these few simple steps each time you need to print an envelope in future:

1. Start Microsoft Word. In Word 2019, click on **Open** then **Browse**. In Word 2016, click on **Open other documents** then click **Browse**. In Word 2013, click on **Open other documents** followed by **Computer** and then **Browse**. In Word 2010, click the **File** tab followed by **Open**.
2. Navigate to the folder in which you saved your 'Envelope' document and double-click it to open it.



Replace the delivery address

3. When the document appears in front you, highlight the delivery address it currently contains and then type (or paste from the clipboard) the new name and address you need for this envelope.

4. Insert a blank envelope into your printer's tray (perhaps using the note you typed into the A4 page of this document to jog your memory about how to do that!).

Print the first page of the document

5. Choose File > Print or press **(Ctrl) + (P)** to go to the Print screen. As you did on page 11, click in the Pages box and type the number 1 (to ensure you print only the first, envelope-shaped page), adjust your printer's settings if necessary and click Print.

Save Envelopes for Frequently Used Addresses!

You can see straight away that the steps for printing future envelopes are far quicker than those for creating your first envelope, thanks to having saved that 'envelope document'.

Save envelopes for regularly-needed addresses

However, why not speed things up a little more? If there are people you write to regularly, save their ready-made envelopes too! After typing someone's name and address into this document, press **(F12)** to display the Save As dialog and save the document with a name like 'Envelope, John Smith' or 'Envelope, Lloyds Bank'.

Just open and print

This way, next time you write to one of these people again, you can simply open their personal 'envelope document' and go straight to printing its first page. Admittedly this uses more space on your hard disk, but even 100 of these envelope documents would use very little – and this kind of time-saver is an ideal way to use that space anyway!