"How do I create a table of contents in Word?"

A table of contents helps readers navigate long documents but is very time-consuming to create and update manually, particularly if you have added or removed content.

The good news is that you can use Word to add an **automatic** table of contents to your document in just a few clicks of the mouse. Use this guide to find out how.

Preparing to create a table of contents

Before creating a table of contents, you must first apply **Heading styles** (e.g. *Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3*) to the chapter headings within your document. This tells Word what to include in the table of contents. You can use our guide **"What are Heading styles and how do I use them in Word?"** if you need help with Heading styles.

Creating a table of contents

1. To create a table of contents, first apply *Heading* styles to your document.

2. Click where you want to insert the table of contents.

3. Click the **References** tab, then click **Table of Contents**.

4. At the bottom of the list, click **Custom Table of Contents…**
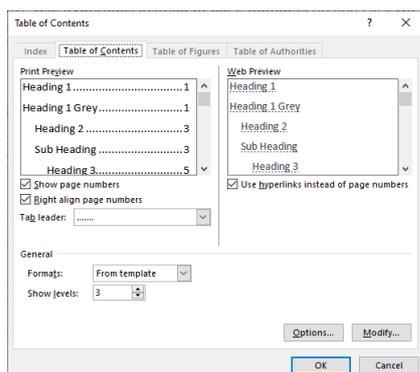
5. Set up your table of contents:
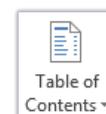
   - **Tab leader**:   The dots, dashes or line that leads to the page number.

   - **Format**:   The font and layout of the table of contents (you can change this later).

   - **Show levels**:   The number of heading styles to include in the table of contents.

   - **Use hyperlinks instead of page numbers:** Leave checkbox selected.

⚠️ When you have completed your dissertation or thesis and are ready to submit and upload, save your file as a PDF. The PDF file uses Words hyperlinks to navigate within the PDF document quickly. Don't like the Table of Contents style? Click on the Table of Contents, open the **Styles Pane**. Scroll to find **TOC1**, right-click and select **Modify**. Make changes required. You will have to do this for all TOC levels used within the Table of Contents. See our guide, "How do I create a table of contents in Word?"

   - Click **OK**.

Removing your table of contents

Click the **References** tab, **Table of Contents**, and then **Remove Table of Contents**.

Updating your table of contents

Every time you make changes to your document, remember to update your table of contents to reflect the changes.

1. Right-click your table of contents and click **Update Field**.

   – Or click your table of contents and press the **F9** key.

2. Select **Update entire table** and click **OK**.
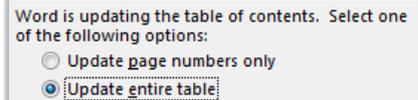
Changing the look of your table of contents

The format of your table of contents is controlled by styles called **TOC 1** to **TOC 9** – which relate to **Heading 1** to **Heading 9,** respectively.

1. Click the **Home** tab, then click the **launcher arrow** at the bottom right of the **Styles** group.

2. Scroll to find **TOC 1** in the **Styles** pane.

3. Right-click **TOC 1**, then click **Modify**.
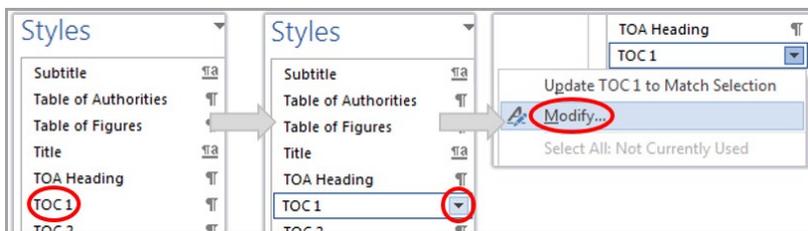
4. Make your changes in the **Modify Styles** window, and click **OK**.

5. Repeat this for other heading levels you need (*TOC 2 = Heading 2, TOC 3 = Heading 3, etc*).

Further information and help

If you want to learn about any Microsoft product in more detail you can use Microsoft's Office Support for tutorials, videos and helpful hints.

   – For essay formatting requirements, e.g. margins and line spacing, please check with your School.

   – Click File from the Ribbon, then question mark (top right) or press F1 at any time for help within Word. Search for keywords, e.g. headings.

   – You can also use MyIT to log calls with the University's IT Service Desk: https://myit.abdn.ac.uk