

Microsoft Word 7.0 - A Quick Guide to Using Columns

Overview of columns

You can change the way your Microsoft Word document looks by formatting all or part of it in newspaper-style columns. To determine how much of your document will be formatted into columns, you use sections. Each section can contain text formatted in a different number of columns, if you want.

MS-Word applies column formatting to the section that contains the insertion point. If you have not divided the document into sections, the entire document is a single section, and column formatting affects the entire document. If you've already inserted section breaks in your document, position the insertion point anywhere in the section you want to format.

You can also select text and have MS-Word create a new section to which column formatting will apply. When you select text, Word inserts a section break at the beginning and end of the selected text, and formats only the text in that new section into columns.

When you work in normal view, MS-Word displays only one column at a time. By using page layout view or print preview, you can see the columns as they will appear on the printed page.

Tip

You may find it easier to use a Word table when you want to arrange and adjust columns of text and numbers.

Creating columns of equal width

You can quickly format text in multiple columns. When you use the Columns button, Word changes the text to the number of columns you want.

In normal view, Word displays one column at a time. In page layout view or print preview, Word displays the columns side by side.

To create columns of equal width

1. In page layout view, do one of the following:

If your document has only one section and you want to format the entire document in columns, position the insertion point anywhere in the document.

If you want to format only part of your document in columns, select the text you want to format in columns.

If your document has more than one section, position the insertion point in the section where you want to format the text in columns.

2. On the Standard toolbar, click the Columns button, drag to the right to select the number of columns you want, and then release the mouse button.



Changing column width and the space between columns

You can use the horizontal ruler to modify the width of columns and the space between columns. If column widths are equal and you change the width of one column, Word automatically changes the width of all columns and adjusts the spacing between the columns. If column widths are unequal, Word changes only the column or spacing you are adjusting. Word automatically adjusts the width of the columns so that the text fits between the margins.

In normal view, Word displays one column at a time. In page layout view or print preview, Word displays the columns side by side.

In page layout view, drag a column marker on the horizontal ruler to adjust the column width or the space between columns.

Using the Columns command

You can specify exact measurements for the width of columns and the space between columns by using the Columns command on the Format menu. See Columns command.

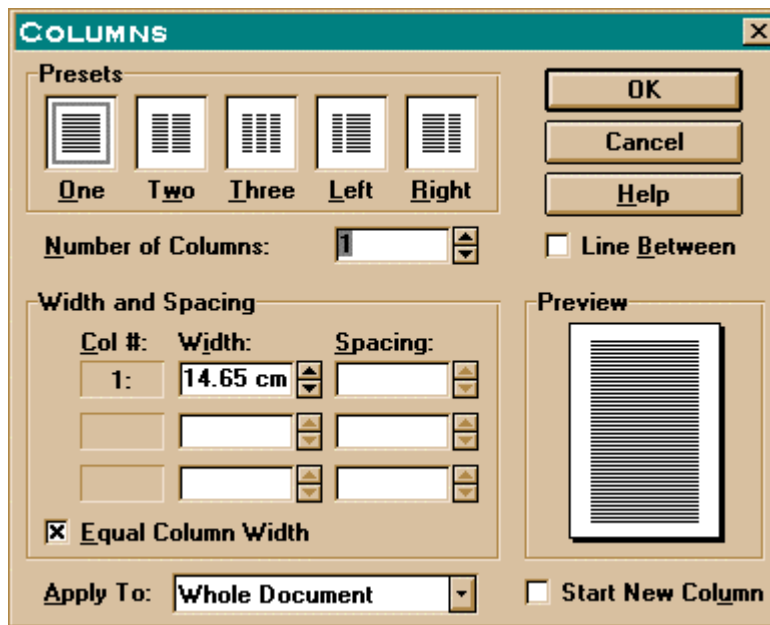
Note

When you modify columns of unequal width, you cannot drag a column marker beyond the marker of an adjacent column. Instead, you must first drag the column marker of the adjacent column to make it narrower.

Using the Columns Command

The Columns command is found on Format, Columns. You can change the format of columns using the dialog box. The Columns command controls column options, including the width of the space between columns and whether or not a line appears between columns.

To quickly insert columns of equal width, click the Columns button on the Standard toolbar.



These fields are described below and on the following page.

Allows simple column setups

Presets

Number Of Type the number of columns you want

Columns

Line Between	Prints a vertical line in the space between columns. The line is as long as the longest column on the page or in the section. You can see the vertical lines between the columns in page layout view or print preview.
Width And Spacing	Sets the width of columns and the space between columns.
Col #	Displays the column number whose width and spacing you can change. Column 1 is the farthest left column, Column 2 is to the right of Column 1, and so on.
Width	Type or select a measurement for the width of the column.
Spacing	Type or select the amount of space you want between the column and the next column to the right.
Equal Column Width	Sets equal column width for all the columns in the section that contains the insertion point, for a selection, or an entire document. If you select the Equal Column Width check box, you can change only the measurement in the Spacing box; Word automatically calculates the column width.
Apply To	Select the portion of the document to which you want to apply column formatting.
Whole Document	Applies column formatting to the entire document.
Selected Text	Inserts section breaks before and after the selected text and graphics, and then applies column formatting.
This Point Forward	Inserts a section break before the insertion point, and then applies column formatting to all text and graphics after the section break.
Selected Sections	Applies column formatting only to the selected sections.
This Section	Applies column formatting only to the section containing the insertion point.
Start New Column	Starts a new column at the insertion point by inserting a column break.
Preview	The Preview box shows the effects of the chosen formatting

before you apply it.

Balancing column lengths on a page

At the end of a section or document, the text may not be evenly distributed among columns. You can balance the text among columns by inserting a continuous section break, which distributes the text evenly.

In normal view, Word displays one column at a time. In page layout view or print preview, Word displays the columns side by side.

To balance column lengths on a page

1. In page layout view, position the insertion point at the end of the text in the columns you want to balance.
2. From the Insert menu, choose Break.
3. Under Section Breaks, select the Continuous option button, and then choose the OK button.

Note

In normal view or page layout view, a continuous section break appears as a double dotted line. If you want to begin a new page where you've inserted a continuous section break, position the insertion point after the continuous section break, and then insert a page break.