



# Create and Use Templates

by  
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Do you find yourself doing the same typing and/or formatting for each new document, spreadsheet, or presentation you create? Why not do it once and save it as a template that can be reused time after time.

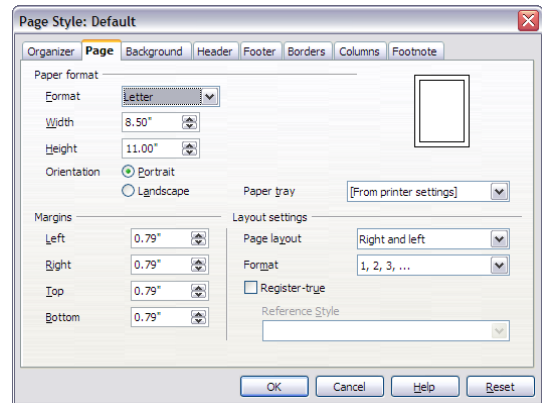
For example, I find that I do not like the wide margins that are a part of the normal new document. Nor do I want to use the font that is part of the normal new document. I like to separate my paragraphs using white space instead of indenting new paragraphs. That may not be a whole lot but I found myself making these changes document after document so I looked for an easier way to do it. The answer is to create a template.

Start by opening either MS Word or OpenOffice Writer. This will create a copy of the default new document.

## Using OpenOffice Writer

Click on Format|Page and select the Page tab. You will get the dialog shown here. Under Paper format the normal settings will be shown as they are on the right. I typically choose smaller margins for my documents because I tend to ramble on spelling out the details as best I can. Therefore I would set the margins to 0.5" on all four sides.

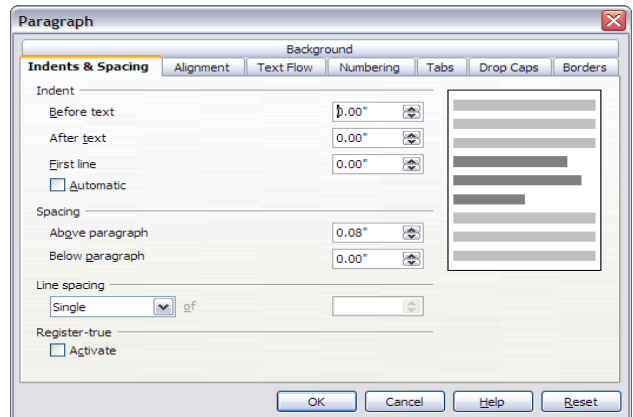
Next I would use the font toolbar to change the font to the one I wish to use as my default font. In this case I will choose **Comic**



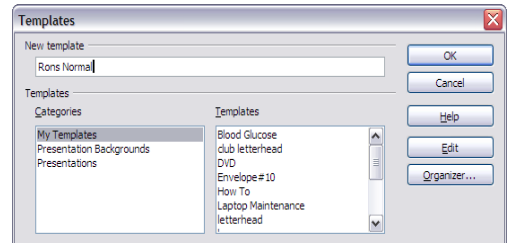
**Sans MS** from the list of fonts available on my

computer. I have noted that this font is a bit taller than the Times New Roman I am currently using and the lower case characters in particular are a higher percentage of the height of the capitals. This makes it easier to read. The standard font is 12 point Times New Roman but I will set my font to 11 point.

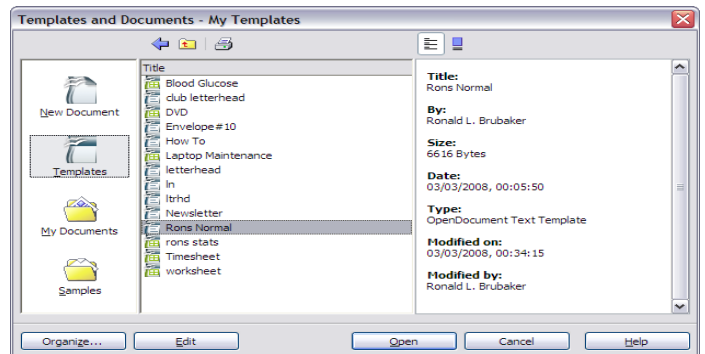
Finally, to leave extra space between paragraphs I normally insert some extra spacing above the first line of each paragraph. You can do this using the Format|Paragraph menu and the Indents & Spacing tab. Under spacing you have the choice of inserting space above or below the paragraph. I normally use 0.06" or 0.08" above the paragraph.



Finally, we need to save this new format as a template. Use File|Templates|Save... to bring up the Templates dialog. Type in a name such as Rons Normal. Make sure that My Templates is highlighted and press OK to add it to the list of templates shown in this dialog. Close your current document, without saving it as a document.



To create a new document using your new template select File|New|Templates and Documents. The dialog that appears will look like the one shown on the right. If necessary click on the Template button to bring up the list of templates you have created. Once you have clicked on a template name information about this template will appear in the right-hand pane of the dialog.



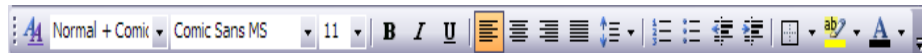
No matter how simple or how complex your

template is you will use the same two dialogs to save it and to create new documents using it. I would note that it is much more difficult to describe how to do all this than it is to actually do it, particularly after you have done it a few times.

## Using Microsoft Word

Click on File|Page Setup to bring up the Page Setup dialog. The Margins tab will allow you to set the margins to whatever you want to use. Microsoft must own some paper companies because their default settings are huge. I will trim them down to 1/2" for this demonstration. Click on OK when finished.

Next, from Words Font toolbar select the font you wish to use as the standard font. I'll use 11 point **Comic Sans MS** as I did above. Its a somewhat goofy font but I like it and it is surprisingly easy to read.



To provide some extra whitespace between paragraphs select Format|Paragraph and use the dialog under the Indents and Spacing tab. About midway down the dialog you will find Spacing with options for Before or After the paragraph. I note that where Writer uses the dimension in inches Word uses points. Since we are using an 11 point font I would use 6 points to add approximately a half line of space between the paragraphs.

That completes the settings for our template, all that remains is to save the template. To do this do a normal File|SaveAs to bring up the Save As dialog. Ignore the Save in list at the top and go to Save as type: at the bottom. Pull down the list and select Document Template (\*.dot). Then enter the file name you wish to use after File name: in the box above the type name. Click the Save button to save the template.

That's it, once you have saved the dialog close the document and prepare to open a new one by selecting File|New from the main menu. Whenever you ask Word to open a new document (at least in the 2003 version I have) it shows a pane on the right of the text input pane labeled New Document. By now you should know that normally you click Blank document to start a new document. To use a template click on "On my computer..." under the Templates title. This will bring up the Templates dialog, which should show the available templates, including the default Blank Document and any others you have created. In this case click on the name you just saved (e.g. Rons template.dot) and viola there it is.

Type a few one word paragraphs and confirm that it is using the margins, font, and whitespace you have specified for your template. That's all there is to it. Start with something simple and work your way up to the more complex documents.

## Suggested Exercise

Create your own letterhead stationary. Adjust the margins to be appropriate for a letter. Place your name, address, phone number etc. at the top of the document and format them so they look really nice. Where the body of the letter will start change the font and whitespace to suit your preferences. Save the whole thing as a template. The next time you need to write a letter call up a copy of your letterhead template and have at it.

