

Word, Excel & Microsoft 365 | Advanced | 2 min read

Word: how to mail merge letters and labels

A mail merge lets you write one letter and have Word fill in each person's name and address from a list. It saves hours when you are sending the same letter to many people or printing address labels.

Ribbon names differ a little between versions, but everything lives on the **Mailings** tab.

Prepare your list first

The list is usually an Excel spreadsheet. Before you start:

- Put column headings in the first row, such as Title, FirstName, Surname, Address1, Postcode.
- Have one person per row, with no blank rows or merged cells.
- Format postcode and phone number columns as **Text** so leading zeros are not lost.
- Save and close the spreadsheet.

Set up the merge

1. Open a new Word document and click the **Mailings** tab.
2. Click **Start Mail Merge** and choose **Letters** (or **Labels** or **E-mail Messages**).
3. Click **Select Recipients**, then **Use an Existing List**, and choose your spreadsheet. If asked which sheet, pick the one with your data.
4. Type your letter. Where you want a name, click **Insert Merge Field** and choose the heading, for example FirstName.
5. For an address block, click **Address Block**. For a greeting, click **Greeting Line**.

Check and finish

1. Click **Preview Results** and use the arrows to flip through the records.
2. If one looks wrong, fix the spreadsheet and reopen the merge.
3. Click **Finish & Merge**, then **Edit Individual Documents** to produce a new document with every letter in it. Check it before printing. Choose **Print Documents** to send it straight to the printer.

Sending by email works with classic Outlook installed. It may not work with other mail programs or the newer Outlook.

Common problems

- **Postcodes lose a zero or dates look odd:** the spreadsheet formatting is the cause, so change the column to Text.
- **You get a message about data sources:** the spreadsheet may have moved or be open elsewhere. Close it and try again.

On a Mac the **Mailings** tab works in the same way.

When to get more help

If your first merge is for something important, such as invoices or customer letters, contact us and we can walk through it with you before you print anything.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.