

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

Word: how to make a table of contents

A proper table of contents in Word builds itself from your headings and can be updated with one click. It also lets readers jump to a section by clicking it. The secret is to use Word's heading styles instead of just making text big and bold.

Step 1: mark your headings

1. Click in a heading line.
2. On the **Home** tab, find the **Styles** gallery.
3. Click **Heading 1** for main headings. Use **Heading 2** for sub-headings under them.

Do this for every heading in the document. If you do not like the look, right-click the style, choose **Modify**, and change the font or colour once. Every heading updates at the same time.

Step 2: insert the table

1. Click where you want it, usually after the cover page.
2. Click the **References** tab.
3. Click **Table of Contents** and choose **Automatic Table**.

The page numbers and headings appear straight away.

Step 3: keep it up to date

Word does not update the table every time you type. When you have finished editing:

1. Click inside the table of contents.
2. Click **Update Table** at the top of it. Choose **Update entire table** if you added or renamed headings, or **Update page numbers only** if only the pages moved.

Always update just before saving, printing or sending.

Common problems

- **A heading is missing:** it is probably not using a heading style. Apply **Heading 1** or **Heading 2**, then update the table.
- **Something odd appears in the list:** a line of normal text may have been given a heading style by accident.
- **Page numbers are wrong:** update the table again, as above.
- **Finding your way around:** tick **Navigation Pane** on the **View** tab to see all your headings in a list. This is handy for moving around a long document.

If you save as a PDF, the clickable links usually carry over.

When to get more help

If a table of contents looks broken, will not update, or a document made by someone else uses unusual styles, ask us to take a look.

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.