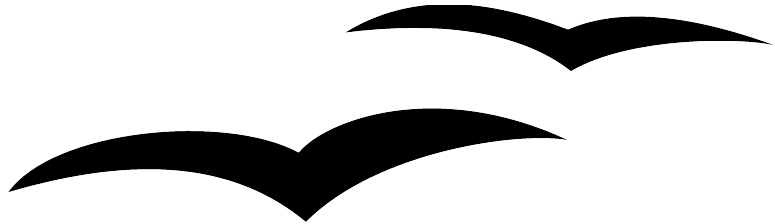


Writing a Thesis with OpenOffice.org



Diplomarbeiten mit StarOffice
[20010225]
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Feedback

Please direct any comments or suggestions about this document to: grsingleton@OpenOffice.org.

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<Werner Roth> The original German Language document

<G. Wey> First draft of English Language document

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Modifications and updates

Version	Date	Description of Change
[0.0]	[2005-02-28]	[gw: Initial English Language translation]
[0.1]	[2005-03-31]	[wtm: Initial English Language edition issued for comment]
[0.2]	[2005-02-28]	[grs: Initial edit and proofing]
[0.3]	[2005-02-28]	[wtm: Final edit and proofing]

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Overview

Creating a text document of 50 pages or more should usual be done using a text processing program with DTP (desktop publishing) capabilities. OpenOffice.org Writer provides these facilities with its Style and Template features. It is desirable to have a good understanding of the text processing capabilities of your program. By covering all the *required* functions, this document attempts to save you from getting bogged down in trying to learn every detail of OpenOffice.org Writer before starting on your thesis. Some topics will be treated in detail while many will be referred to the [User Guide](#).

This document addresses readers who have an idea what OpenOffice.org is about. However, even an absolute beginner should be able to conquer the difficulties by frequently referring to the *User Guide* and the Help facility of OpenOffice.org.

Writing a Thesis with OpenOffice.org

General Procedure

Before keying in a thesis, a rudimentary knowledge of OpenOffice.org Writer is required. Terms such as paragraph styles, page styles or templates should be familiar. The thesis must be planned in advance. Such things as inserting graphics and lists and the document structure must be decided. As far as possible, do a dry run with short dummy text or similar material. Referring to the *User Guide* or even to related newsgroups can be very helpful.

When problems occur, it is frequently due to lack of prior planning or knowledge. That means some principles of OpenOffice.org Writer were not known or understood or Writer was used while wearing an MS Word hat. This is naturally not too serious but often leads to unnecessary effort or in the worst case to problems.

OpenOffice.org Writer contains a lot of Desk Top Publishing (DTP) functionality. For one thing, text is easily controlled. Particularly, things can be done the way one wants to do them. This has two drawbacks: One has to know what one wants, and the document has to be organized. The incredible advantage is that one can write the thesis from A to Z without the need of inserting hard page breaks, size-adjusting graphics, etc. And in the end, the thing looks just as it was intended.

Security of Data (Backups)

Only a few general comments are indicated for this topic. Frequent saving and backing up is only sensible, when dealing with data which may have taken hours to generate. Potential problems with the various file formats cannot be totally ruled out.

- In the **Tools** menu, select **Options > Load/Save > General**, check *Always create backup copy* and *AutoSave every xx Minutes* (substitute 5 or 10 for for xx as desired), then select *Text document* under heading **Document type**.
- Save your work several times a day onto an external data medium. In doing so, keep more than just the last-saved update. The reason for this is that hardware or software could already have written corrupted data onto the hard drive while otherwise working fine. Only when opened afresh after a completed work session will Writer greet you with the friendly message that the file cannot be read anymore. A recommended strategy is to place a number of diskettes on a shelf, pull the bottom-most out, save your data and store the diskette on top of the heap. As an alternative, label the diskettes by weekdays and use them accordingly.
- Be sure to create and save different data types separately. For example, an embedded object, such as a graphic, should be stored safely, or better, not be embedded in the first place but linked instead. This has the advantage that even a larger thesis can be saved daily onto a diskette and stored. This is achieved by saving only the updated data on a daily basis and powering up the CD burner once a week.

Printer

If different printers are to be used from time to time, then you should always finalize your document in Postscript format. Never submit your work to another printer in OpenOffice.org Writer file format, as Writer would then adapt the document to be compatible with that printer's configuration. This could, at the very least, result in different line and page breaks, which would probably not be desirable. Information on Postscript in conjunction with OpenOffice.org Writer can be found in the OpenOffice.org Writer Help. From the menu select **Help > Contents**: At the Index tab type in "Postscript".

Windows users will need a PostScript printer driver such as the Apple LaserWriter driver. Unix/Linux users probably have PostScript already installed, and can use the "Generic Printer".

Master Document

OpenOffice.org Writer can use Master Documents to make document management easier. A Master Document incorporates each chapter of a book as an individual OpenOffice.org Writer file. Using a Master Document for a normal thesis is not usually necessary as OpenOffice.org Writer is stable and sufficiently powerful to manage even quite large documents. Using a Master Document is more appropriate when a work has several authors, or where individual chapters are created separately, and then must be incorporated into a complete work.

Templates

Thanks to the *Template* concept in OpenOffice.org Writer, a thesis can be written chapter by chapter and, towards the end, joined into a big document. Before starting with the actual writing, one should experiment with a lot of dummy text to come up with a desired layout. Once this has been determined, it should be translated into an appropriate array of page, character and paragraph styles and saved as a template file.

Now the template file can be used as the basis for each chapter of the thesis. If during the work, layout changes are desired these can be incorporated into the template. Next time a chapter is opened the changes to the template will be noted, and can be accepted or rejected as required.

Page Structure, different types of Page Numbering

The title page needs neither header nor footer. The subsequent Table of Contents – which may extend over more than one page – uses Roman page numbering, followed by the actual body of the document, which has Arabic page numbering and the chapter title in the header.

OpenOffice.org Writer and the use of page styles requires a bit of advanced planning. This has the advantage that the text layout can be altered for the whole document at any time.

The actual page style is indicated in the Status Bar in the second box from the left as shown in Illustration 1, *Default* in this case. By double clicking in this box, the page style can be modified, while right-clicking allows changing to a different page style.

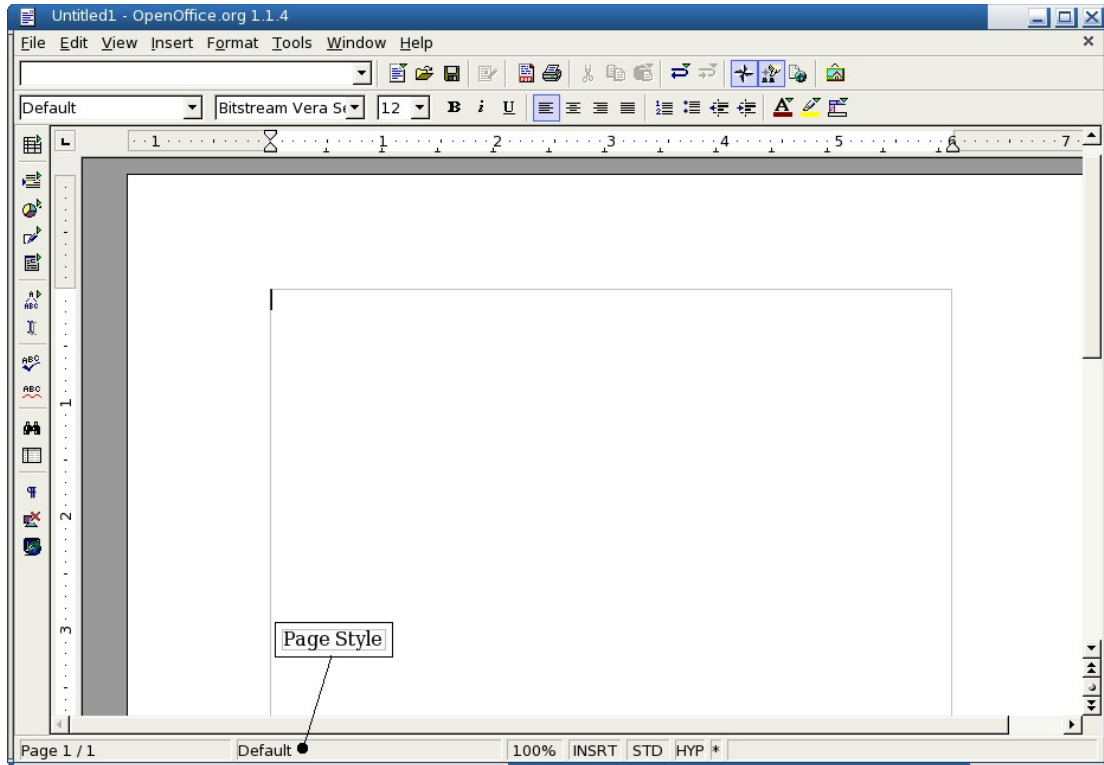


Illustration 1: View of an OpenOffice.org Writer screen in edit mode

Page styles are best modified by opening the Stylist (by selecting **Format > Stylist** or simply by pressing F11). Notice the five icons at the top of the Stylist. Select *Page Styles*. Right-click then on the style in question and click *Modify...*. This opens the *Page Style* dialog box which allows the style to be modified at will, as shown in Illustration 2.

By opening the individual tabs, one can modify the various attributes of the page style. Look into these tabs to get an idea what is available. For example looking at the tab *Organizer*: As Illustration 2 shows, the page following a page based on the style *First Page* is based on the style *Table of Contents*.

After the style *First page* has been modified to suit your needs and taste, the second and subsequent pages will automatically be based on the style *Table of Contents* until you decide to again assign a different style to a new page, as would be the case when the actual document text begins.

Usually, the *Table of Contents* pages will be numbered by Roman numerals. For this, open the *Page Style* dialog box in a *Table of Contents* page, click on the *Page* tab and, in **Layout Settings > Format**, select Roman numerals (lower-case or upper-case) as shown in the *Format* edit box of Illustration 3.

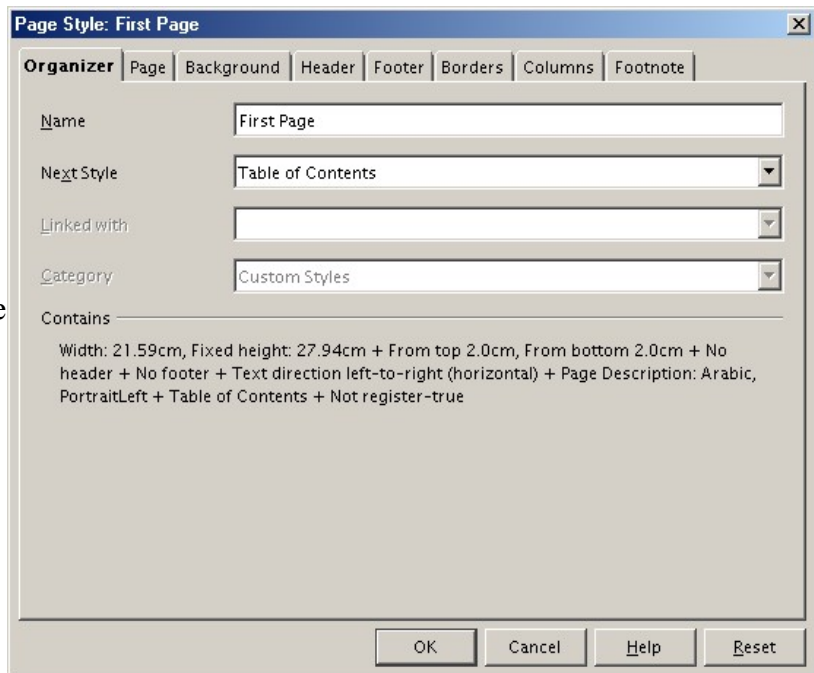


Illustration 2: Page style dialog box, Organizer tab opened

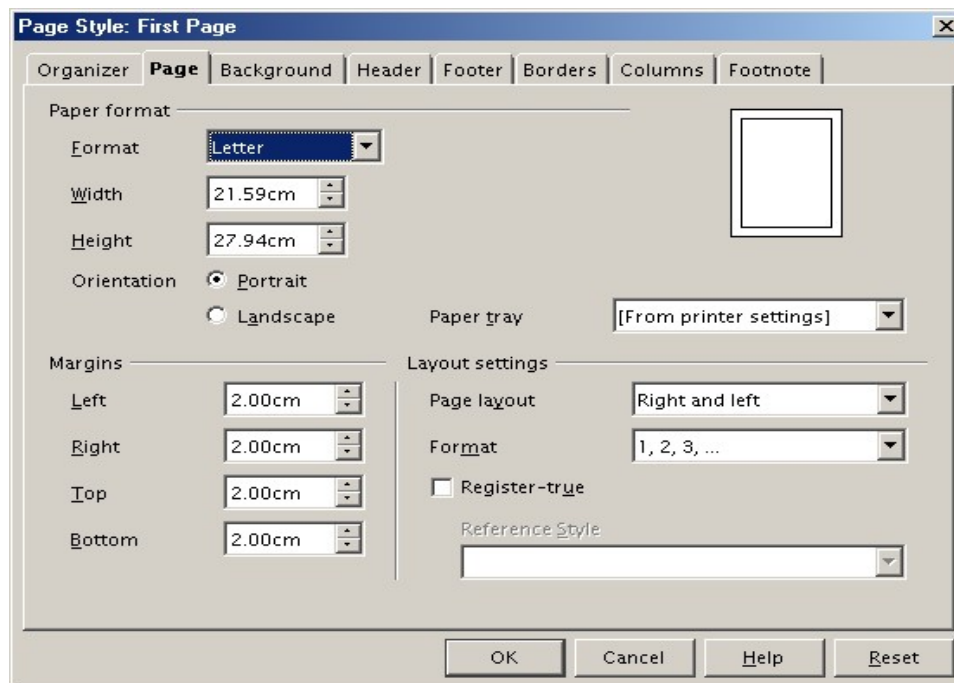


Illustration 3: Page Style dialog box, Page tab opened

Furthermore, by opening the tab *Header*, add a header to indicate that this page is a *Table of Contents* page.

The page style change from the last Table of Contents page to the first normal text page cannot be as conveniently, i.e. automatically, accomplished as the change from style *First Page* to style *Table of Contents* because a Table of Contents can, of course, extend over two or more pages. The solution is to insert a manual page break at the end of the Table of Contents and selecting for this new page a style that defines the formatting of a regular text page. This is achieved by choosing **Insert > Manual Break...** and then, in the *Insert Break* dialog box, selecting **Page break** as *Type* and **Default** as *Style*, as shown in Illustration 4. (This assumes that the style **Default** has been tailored to define all the desired attributes and formats of a regular text page.)

Note: Page breaks in OpenOffice.org Writer are controlled with paragraph formats. If a change to a page break is required, place the cursor into the paragraph just below the page break (i.e. the paragraph below the thin, blue line) and choose **Format > Paragraph... > Text Flow**. This brings up the *Paragraph* dialog box. The various page attributes such as the page style or the page number to be displayed, say, in the footer, can then be modified.

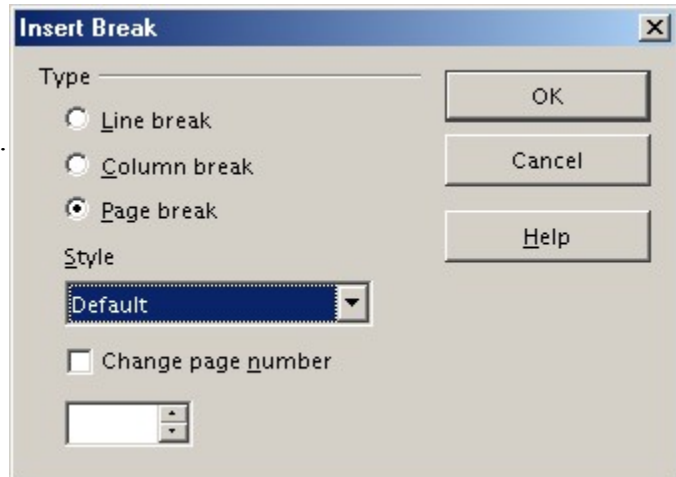


Illustration 4: Insert Break dialog box

Text Section of a Page

The layout of the text section of a page is defined under the heading *Page* in the *Page Style* dialog box. (Refer to the paragraph, “Page Structure, different types of Page Numbering” and Illustration 2, on how to open this dialog box.) Note that under the heading *Margins*, only the text section is defined, headers and footers are placed into the margin areas by OpenOffice.org Writer. Example: Assume a bottom margin of 4 cm height, containing a footer for indicating the page number, is desired. To achieve this, specify 2.00 cm as page bottom margin, the click on the heading *Footer* of the *Page Style* dialog box, specify 1.5 cm as *Spacing* and 0.50 cm as *Height* of the footer. This results in the bottom margin layout shown in Illustration 5.

By returning to the *Page* display of the *Page Style* dialog box, it can be seen that the page layout can be selected as *Right and left* or as *Mirrored* (beside *Only right* and *Only left*). If the thesis is to be organized like a book, *Mirrored* would be selected. In this case, *Same content left/right* check boxes would have to be unchecked in the *Header* and *Footer* display of the *Page Style* dialog box. However, unless it is a prescribed requirement, it is considerably easier to stick with a single-page layout as a double-page layout calls for considerably more effort.

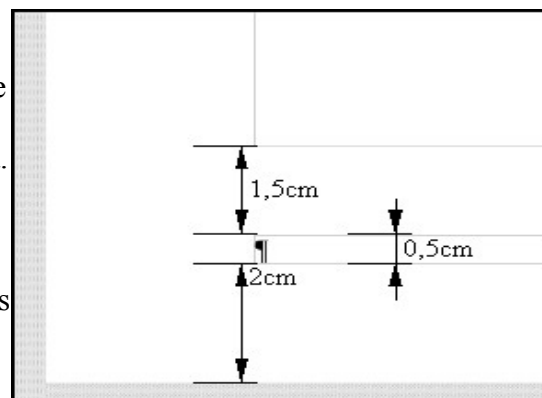


Illustration 5: Insertion of Footer in bottom margin

Pages in Landscape Orientation

If some pages in the document require a different page layout or orientation, then – and this should be obvious by now – page styles come to the rescue again. As an example, look at a page that requires landscape orientation. Create a new page style by opening the *Stylist* (pressing F11), give it a fitting name (e.g. *Landscape*) and, after clicking tab *Page*, select *Landscape* as the orientation.

Use **Insert > Manual Break** at the appropriate location in the document and select the page style *Landscape* from the style dropdown so that it applies to the new page. At the end of the section requiring landscape orientation, another manual page break is called for and the page style has to be returned to *Default* or *Standard* or whatever.

A new Chapter starts with a new Page

The actual page style can be set with paragraph styles. A good example would be starting a chapter with a new page. For this, one instructs paragraph style *Heading 1* to start a new page. In **Paragraph Style > Text Flow**, check *Enable* in section *Breaks*, as shown in Illustration 6. If required, a change in page style can also be achieved using this method.

Change in Page Numbering

If, at any point in the document, page numbering should start anew again it should always be done via **Insert > Manual Break... > Page break**. If instead the page number were changed by correcting the number in the field command *Page number* it would not be reflected by OpenOffice.org Writer's page count mechanism, in the Table of Contents. If the first page of the document is to have a page number other than 1 then the paragraph style of the first paragraph has to be accordingly adjusted: Place the cursor into the first line, select **Format > Paragraph**, tab *Text Flow*, in section *Breaks* check *Enable* and *With Page Style* and, finally, set the desired page style and page number.

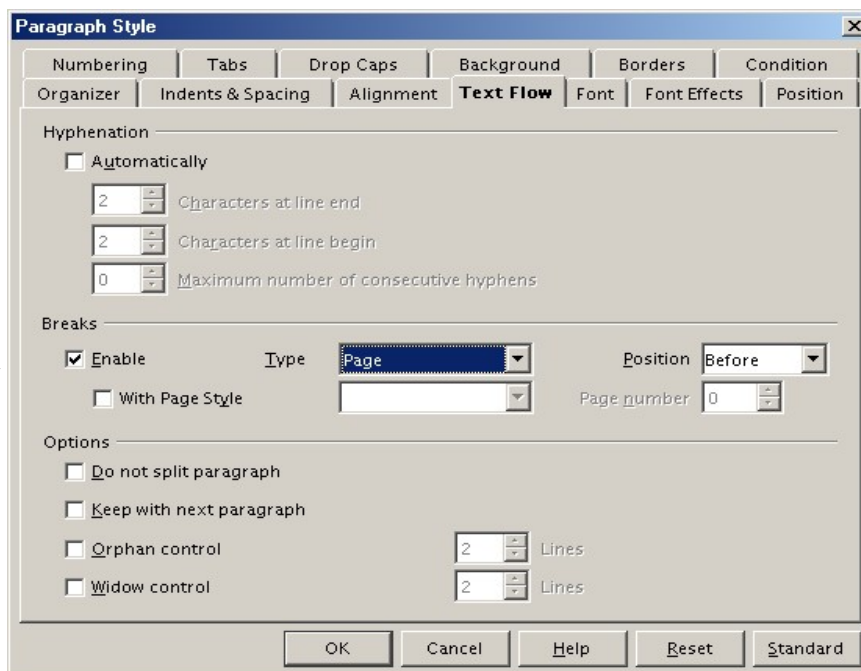


Illustration 6: Paragraph Style dialog box, Text Flow tab open

Headings

The next few sections deal with manipulating paragraphs with paragraph styles. Paragraph styles in OpenOffice.org Writer are hierarchically organized. One can see the hierarchy of all paragraph styles if one sets the Stylist view to *Hierarchical* as shown in Illustration 7.

One can see in Illustration 7 that all paragraph styles are based on paragraph style *Default*. This means all paragraph styles “inherit” the settings of paragraph style *Default* unless one or more settings have been modified in a particular paragraph style or in one of its parent paragraph styles.

Example: Assume the font of paragraph style *Default* is *Times New Roman* whereas the font of paragraph style *Heading* (the parent of all heading styles) has been set to *Arial*. If you now change the font of the (hierarchically topmost) paragraph style *Default* to *Garamond*, then this change is inherited by all paragraph styles in the paragraph style branch *Text body*. However, in all **heading** paragraph styles, the font *Arial* is retained as it has been set before.

If it is desirable to change the font (or any other characteristic) of **all** heading styles, then you simply make this change in the parent paragraph style *Heading*. A paragraph style can be modified by use of the stylist: Select the style and, via the context menu, select *Modify...* Alternatively, place the cursor in any paragraph with this paragraph style and, by right-clicking, call up the context menu and select *Modify...*

To Number or not to Number Headings

OpenOffice.org Writer can, of course, automatically number all chapters and sections. For this, each chapter has to be assigned one of the heading paragraph styles, *Heading 1* to *Heading 10*. The numbering is then activated via **Tools > Outline Numbering**. Of course, there are introductions, literature lists and appendices which are supposed to be treated as headings but either not numbered at all or numbered in a different way.

The solution for this problem is cloning a paragraph style. Say, the introduction is to have paragraph style *Heading 1* but without numbering. Referring to Illustration 8 below, set the cursor into paragraph *Introduction* and assign paragraph style *Heading 1* to it with a double-click in the Stylist. Then click icon *New Style from Selection* and give it an appropriate name, e.g. *Heading 1 without numbering*.

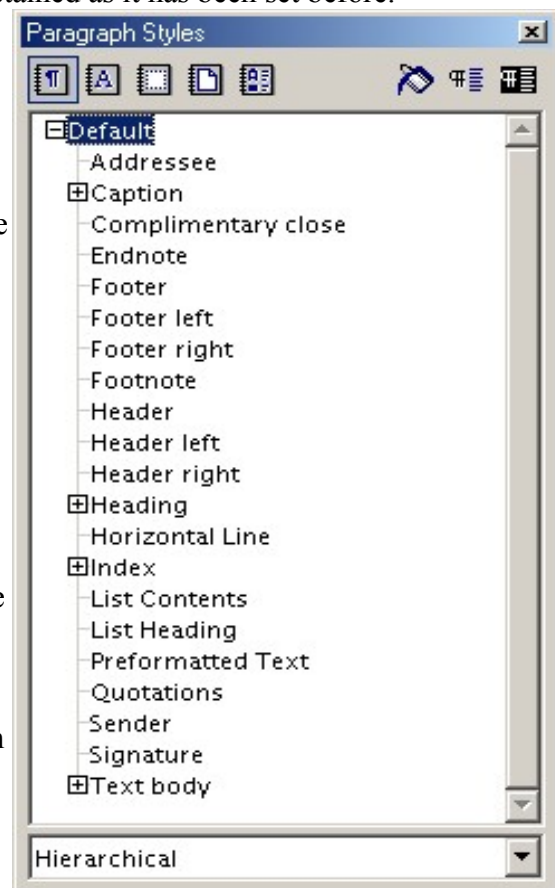


Illustration 7: Paragraph Styles dialog box

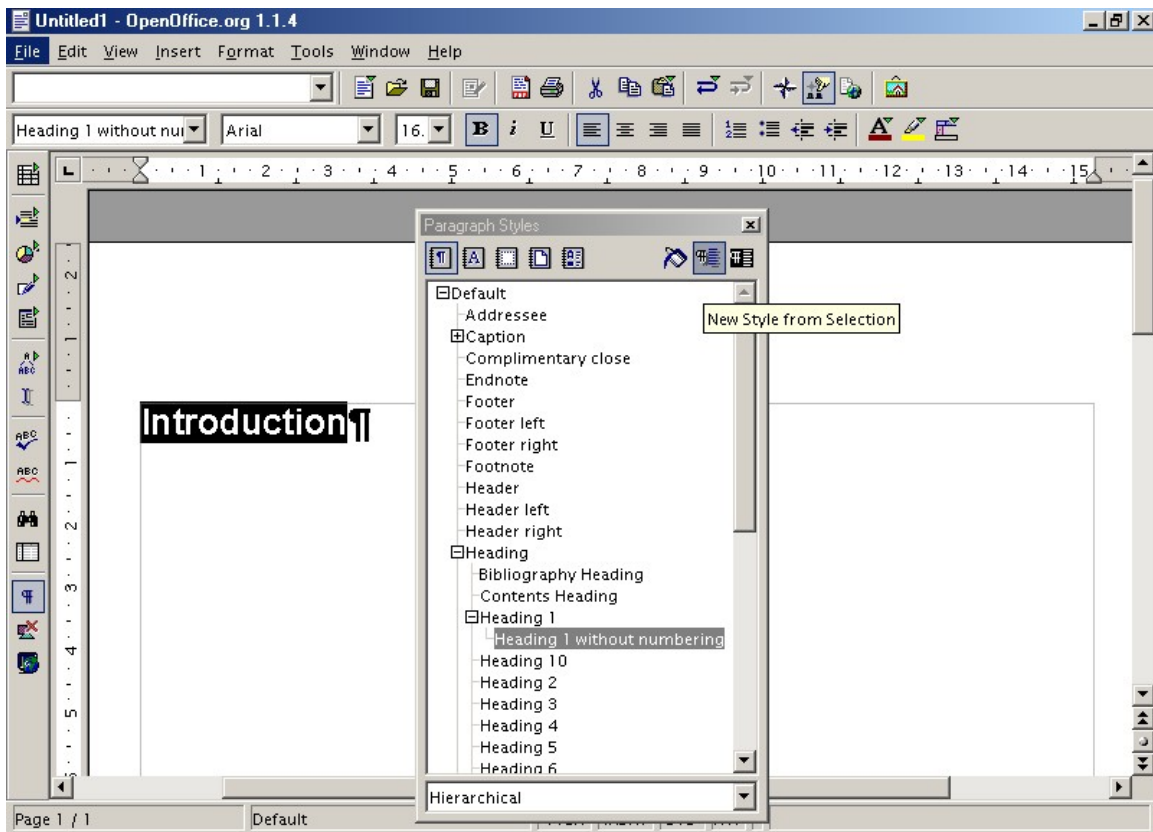


Illustration 8: The application of Heading 1 to a document

Note that style *Heading 1 without numbering* is now a “child” of style *Heading 1*. Thus, any modification made to style *Heading 1* will automatically be reflected in style *Heading 1 without numbering* as shown in Illustration 9 below.

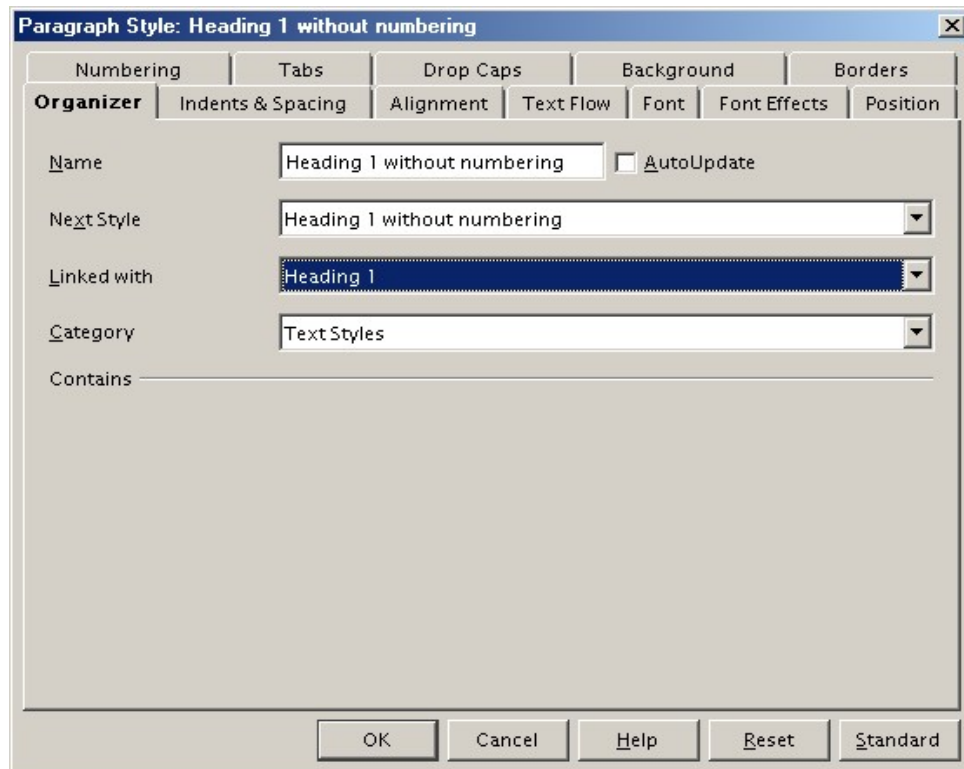


Illustration 9: Paragraph Style, Heading without numbering

Numbering of Appendices and Adding them to the Table of Contents

Page numbering of pages containing appendices is continual. However, chapter numbering is not included for appendices. This means you should apply the above-described trick of using paragraph style *Heading 1 without numbering*. Numbering of appendices is most conveniently done by use of a *number range* as described below. You insert the word *Appendix* at the start of the appendix, change the paragraph style to *Heading 1 without numbering*, select **Insert > Fields > Other...** and then tab *Variables*. Refer to Illustration 10.

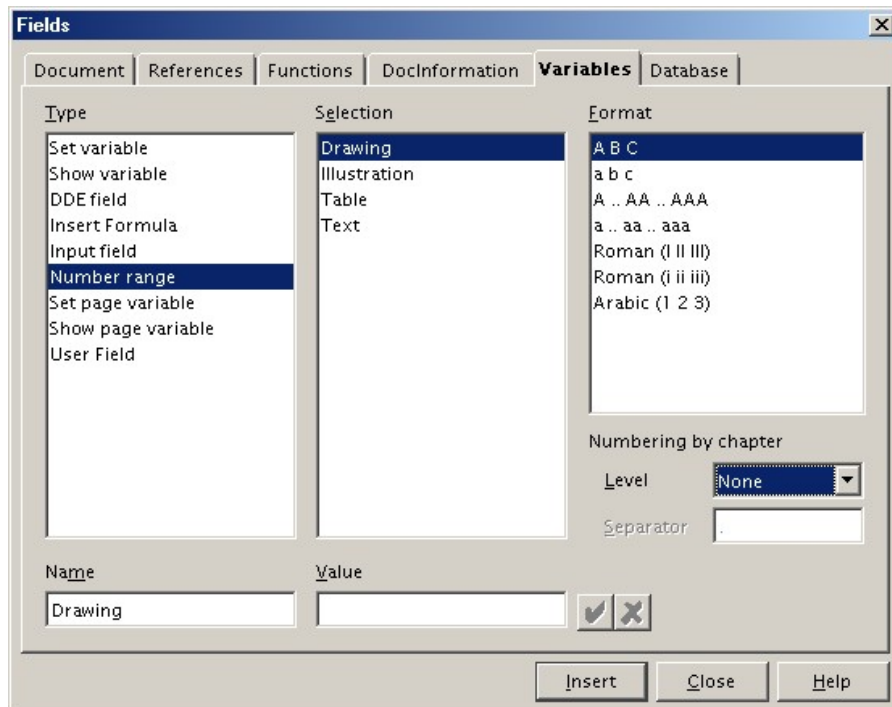


Illustration 10: Inserting Variable fields

Now, select *A B C* as format. This procedure has to be repeated for every appendix.

In order to have the appendix headings listed in the Table of Contents, every appendix heading has to be selected and registered by selecting **Insert > Indexes and Tables > Entry...**. The ensuing dialog box *Insert Index Entry* is shown in Illustration 11 below.

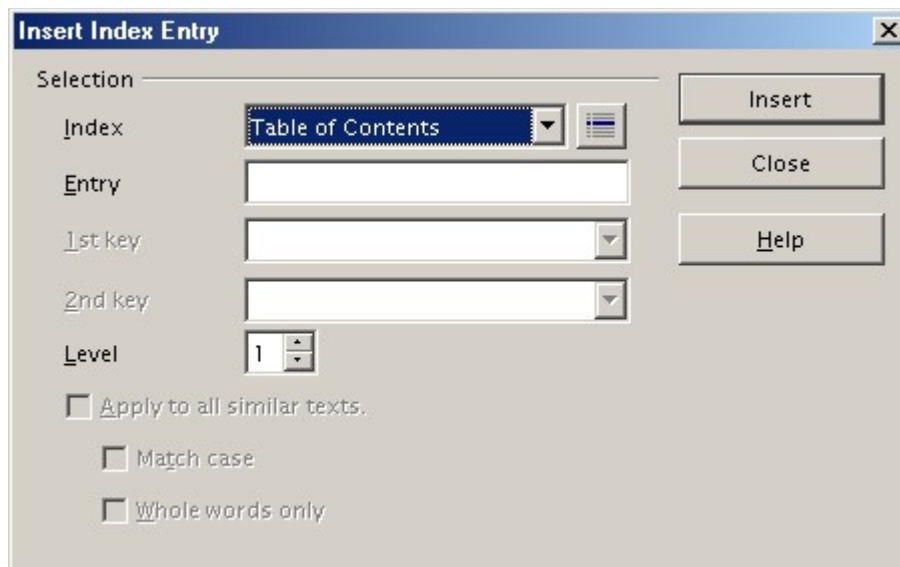


Illustration 11: Inserting an index entry

Select *Table of Contents* from the choice of indexes, then click *Insert* and *Close*.

Controlling Text Flow

The whole text flow of a document should be controlled through the *Text body* paragraph style or one of its successors. Refer to Illustration 12 below.

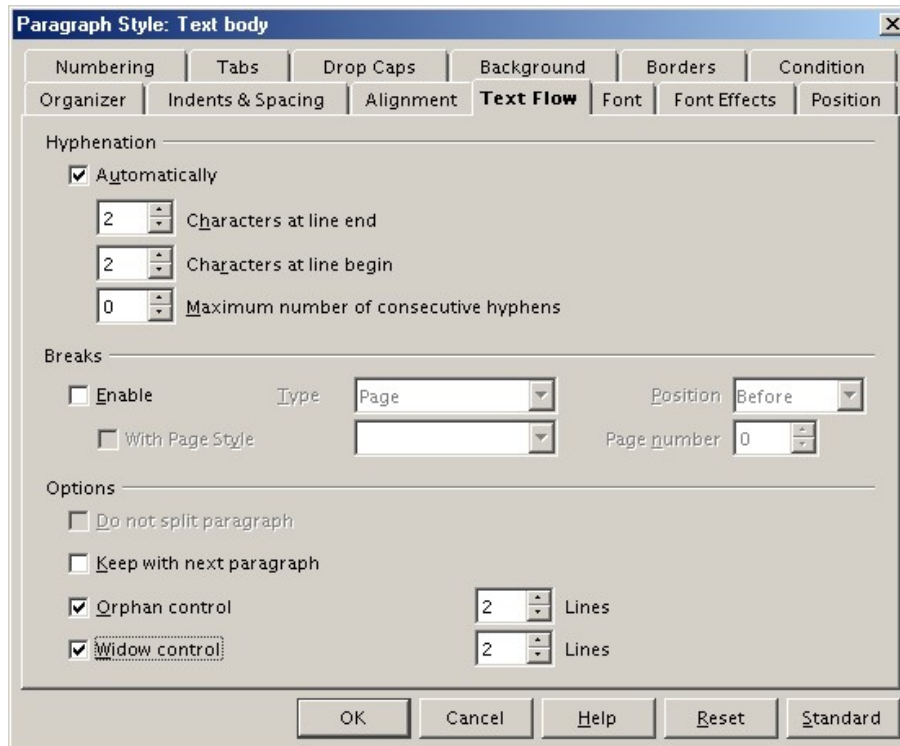


Illustration 12: Paragraph Style dialog box, Controlling text flow

In the *Paragraph Style: Text body* dialog box, under tab *Text Flow*, automatic hyphenation should be checked. More important is the activation of orphan and widow control. This prevents a single line of a paragraph from being placed at the start or end of a page. Setting orphan control to at least 2 lines ensures that at least 2 lines of a (longer) paragraph are placed at the bottom of a page, otherwise, the paragraph starts at the next page.

Indenting the first Line of a Paragraph

Indenting the first line of a paragraph is standard practice. However, this is often a matter of personal taste, or there may be a standard set by the University or the Thesis Supervisor. Set up indenting in **Paragraph Style > Indents&Spacing**. Unselect **Automatic**, and enter the first line indent amount in the edit box.

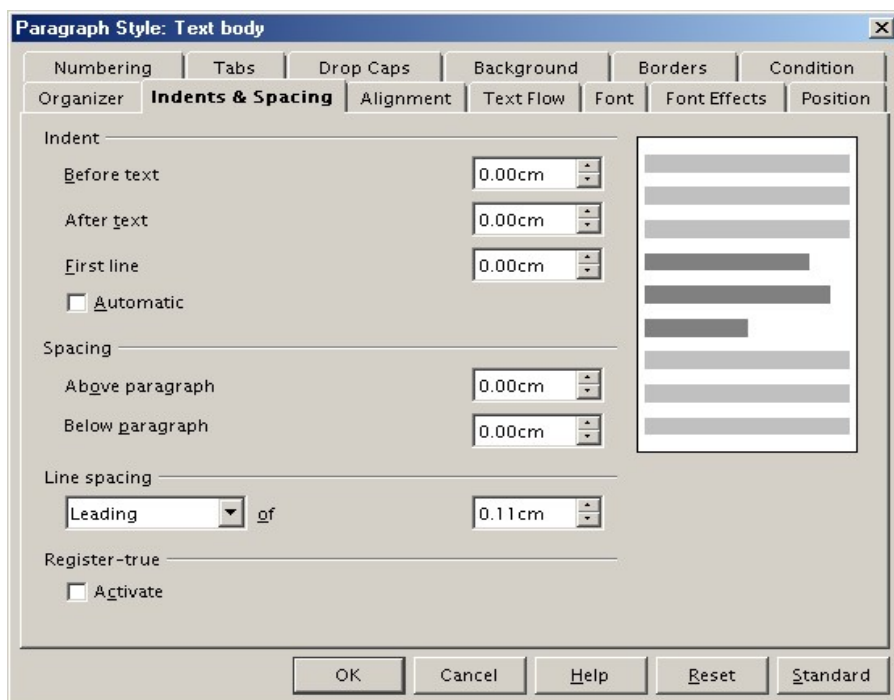


Illustration 13: Paragraph Style, Indents and Spacing

A frequent practice, is to indent, but not on the first paragraph after a heading or after an illustration.

For this, paragraph style *Text body* has to be modified as it is the default “next style” of all headings and the “previous style” of all text styles. Here, **Spacing > Above paragraph** has to be set to 0. **Line spacing** should be set to 2 to 3 pt (0.7 ...1.2 cm) for a 10-pt font . Note: OpenOffice.org Writer automatically translates other units of length into cm (or the preset unit of length). Refer to Illustration 13.

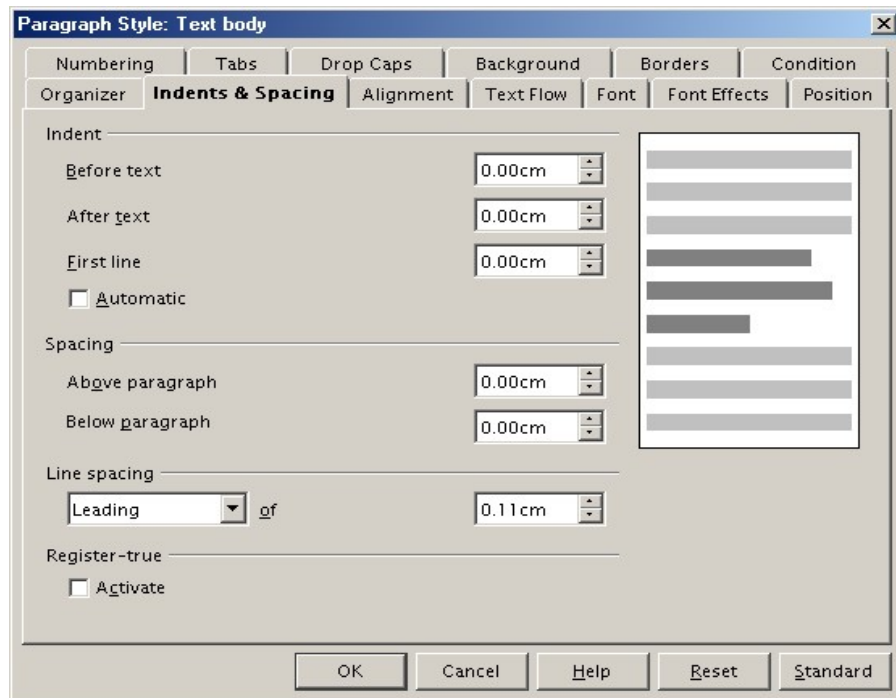


Illustration 14: Paragraph Style, Indents and Spacing

Now, *Text body indent* has to be selected as *Next Style*, as shown in Illustration 14. No change to paragraph style *Text body indent* is required as it is based on paragraph style *Text body* and thus “inherits” 0 cm as paragraph spacing and 3 pt (0.11 cm) as *Line spacing*.

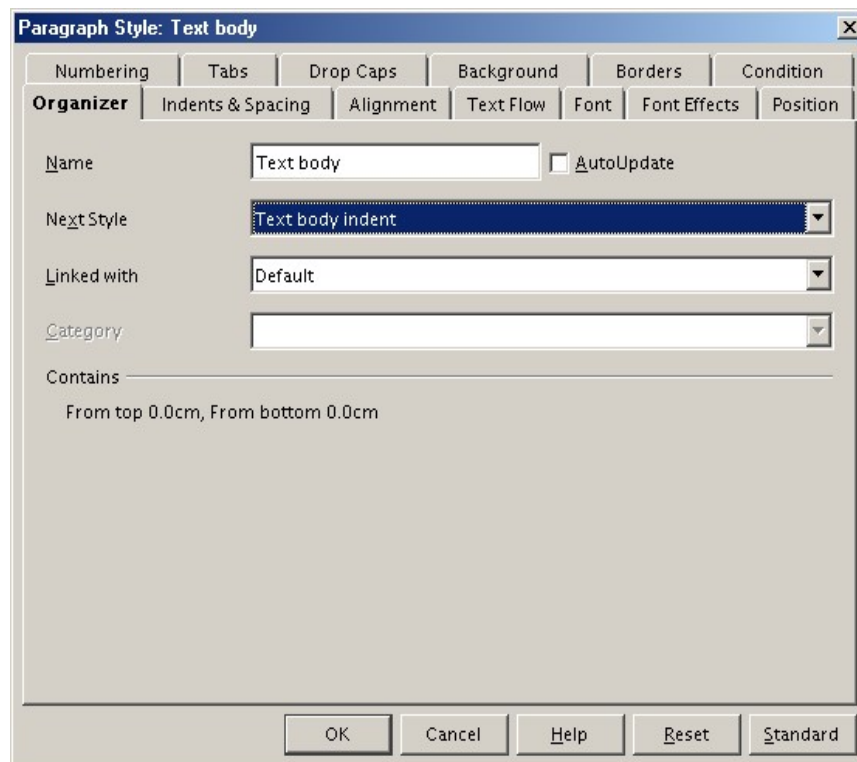


Illustration 15: Paragraph Style, Text Body indent

When one starts the first paragraph of a chapter (by hitting *Enter* after typing the chapter title), then this paragraph is governed by the parameters of paragraph style *Text body*, as desired without indentation of the first line. When hitting *Enter* at the end of this paragraph, a new paragraph is started which is based on paragraph style *Text body indent* and this holds true for all subsequent paragraphs. See Illustration 15.

After inserting a graphic or a list, the subsequent paragraph has to be manually set to paragraph style *Text body* via the Stylist. It is a good idea to check the correctness of all first-line indents after the whole thesis has been written. It is quite possible for some of these paragraphs end up at wrong places after some heavy editing. For example, if the first paragraph of a chapter is split, the second half of this original paragraph is also based on paragraph style *Text body* instead of paragraph style *Text body indent*.

Marking (or “Tagging”?) with Character Styles

For highlighting names of authors or foreign-language phrases, italics can be used. However, a more elegant way is the use of character styles. This has the advantage that a particular character style can be searched. Thus you don't have to search for all words or phrases in italics but - more focused - for “Author” or “Foreign-language phrase”. Also, the format of each style can be centrally modified at any time This is particularly important if only towards the end you decide if you want to highlight certain things at all. If not, you just cancel the highlighting.

Cross-referencing

The usual method of cross-referencing in OpenOffice.org Writer is to first set and then insert a reference. There is no mechanism to set a cross-reference to a chapter heading without setting a reference in this chapter. This should not pose too big a problem but rather be beneficial to organizing the work as a reference remains valid even after the wildest reorganization. Refer to Illustration 16.

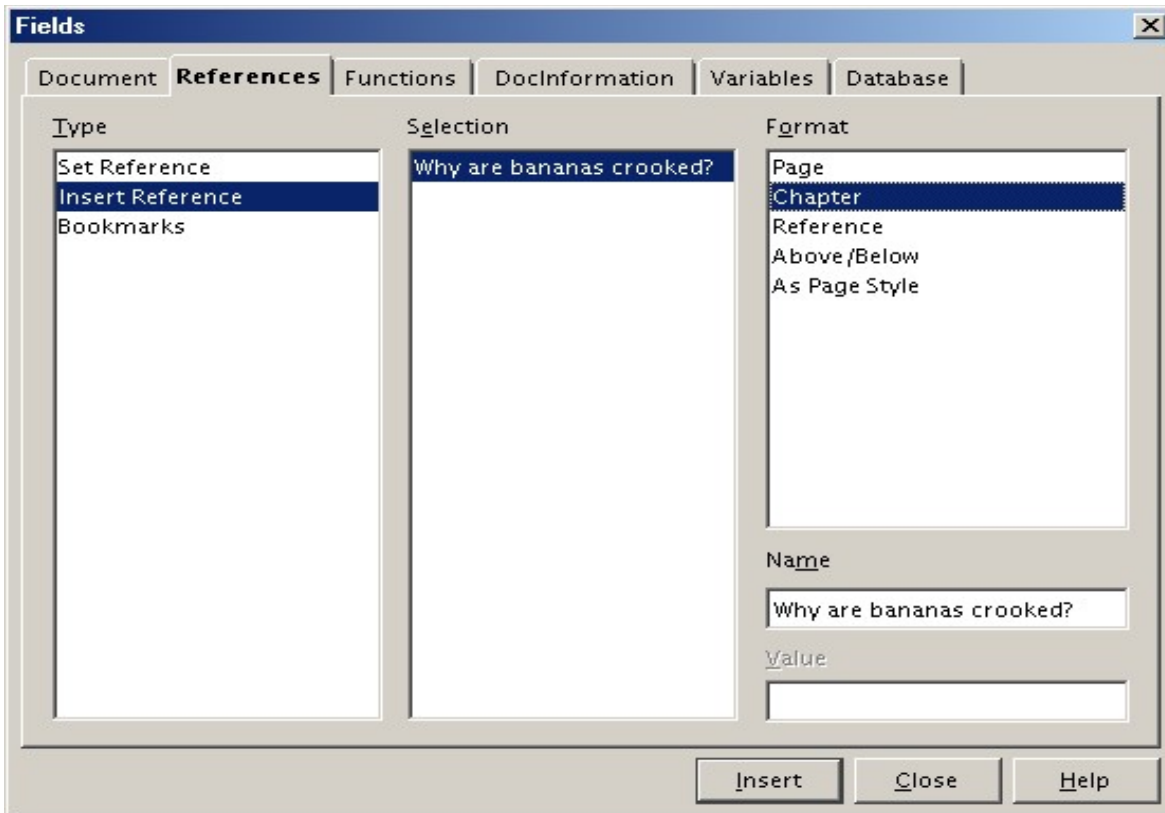


Illustration 16: Setting a Cross Reference

A reference can simply be set at the cursor position. In addition, also a selected word or block of text can be used as reference. Make sure to assign meaningful (long) names for your references, for these are not so easy to accidentally rename or delete.

The only way to delete a reference is to select it via the Navigator (<F5>) and delete it.

Bibliography

The OpenOffice.org Writer Help and the [User Guide](#) both give instructions on making a bibliographic database, and on using this database in the document. A small bibliography could be typed directly into the text of the document, but as the bibliography gets larger, more flexibility is obtained by using the database method.

Graphics

Working with graphics is a rather complex subject, therefore only that aspect involving how to insert graphics into a OpenOffice.org Writer document will be covered here.

Individual graphics can be inserted by selecting **Insert > Graphics > From File...**

If you have a large number of graphics to insert it may pay to create a temporary gallery (by selecting **Tools > Gallery**) where you collect all graphics for your thesis and then drag & drop them from there as the need arises. Graphics should always be inserted with the *Link* button in the *Insert Graphics* dialog box checked. This ensures that the main document is kept slim, all the graphics are always up-to-date and, in the case of data corruption in, or loss of the main document, the graphics are stored separately. Preferably, you should store the graphics in a separate folder. If you want to reorganize your graphics on your hard drive such as move it into a different folder, then this is no problem. By selecting **Edit > Links ...**, you can check all graphics in question and, after clicking on *Modify...*, choose the new folder. Refer to Illustration 17.

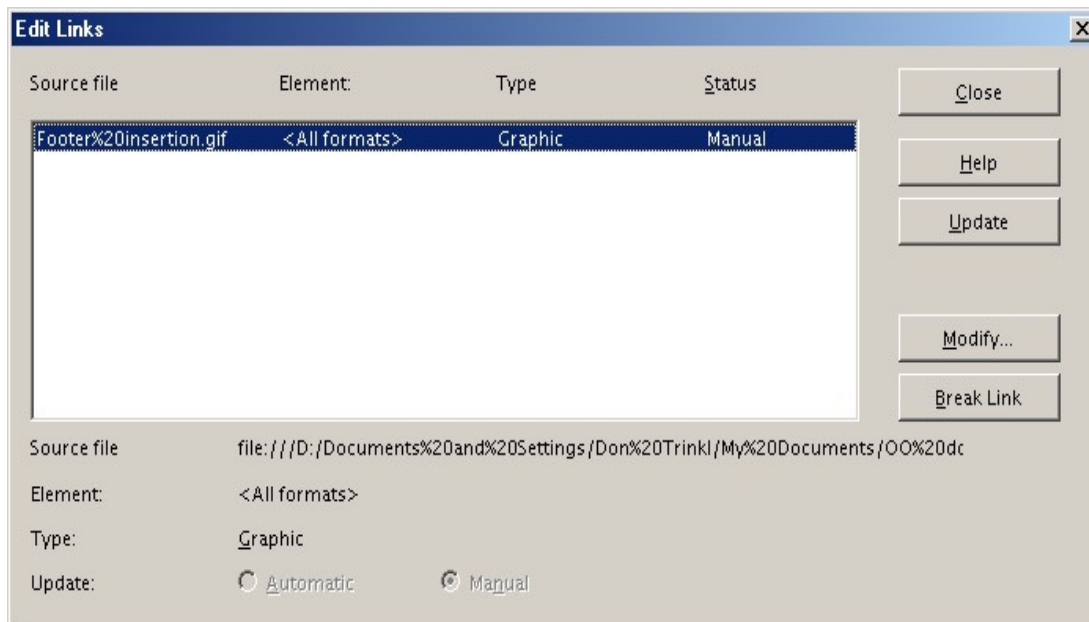


Illustration 17: Showing Editing links to Graphics

By using this dialog box, you can also break the links (by clicking on *Break Link*) if, for example, you want to send a copy of your thesis to a lector and want to make sure all graphics arrive correctly.

Inserting graphics via OLE is not recommended. From the viewpoint of data security it is more meaningful to export the graphic from its originating application and link it to OpenOffice.org Writer. If data are to be updated, simply export the graphic again from its native application. Sometimes, of course, it is more convenient or even necessary to use OLE. In this case, back up your data! If possible save data in its native format and into a separate folder. Also it would

be prudent to save the actual OpenOffice.org Writer document in another format, for example, RTF, in order to have at least the text saved separately.

Notice also that if an OLE object is scaled without opening the corresponding OLE application, then only the preview will be scaled, which can lead to some rather unpleasant results. Therefore, always open the OLE application before scaling.

If you insert a graphic via **Insert > Graphics > From File...**, it will be anchored to a paragraph. This means that the graphic is joined to this paragraph and can be moved with the paragraph, yet does not necessarily follow the paragraph. If, at the end of a page, there isn't enough space for the graphic, then text of the next paragraph is pulled up to fill the page and the graphic is placed at the top of the next page. Should that be undesirable, then the graphic should be anchored "as character" by right-clicking the graphic, selecting *Anchor*, then *As Character* and placing the graphic into an empty paragraph.

When a graphic has been selected it can be given a title by selecting **Insert > Caption**. OpenOffice.org Writer adds an additional text frame around the graphic. A list of figures can then be generated. A disadvantage of automatically-generated captions is that no footnotes can be incorporated. If that is a requirement, it can be done as follows. One needs a paragraph style *Graphic with Character* whose *Next Style* is *Graphic* and whose Text Flow – under heading *Options* - is set to *Keep with next paragraph*. By using this paragraph style, one generates an empty paragraph into which the graphic is placed. The caption of the graphic is now entered into the next paragraph. For automatic numbering, the method described in chapter *Numbering of Appendices and Adding them to the Table of Contents* should be employed by selecting *Drawing* as the selection of *Number range*. (See also the paragraph "Footnotes" below.)

Formulas

Pressing F2 while the cursor is in a text table opens the Formula bar. Clicking the icon opens a submenu, from which one can insert a formula into the cell of a table by putting the cursor either in the cell in the table or at the position in the document at which the result should appear.

The formula appears in the input line. To specify a range of cells in a table, select the desired cells with the mouse. The corresponding cell references also appear in the input line. Enter additional parameters, as necessary, and click **Apply** to confirm the entry. A formula can also be entered directly, if the appropriate syntax is known. This is necessary, for example, in the **Insert Fields** and **Edit Fields** dialogs.

For details, see the [User Guide](#).

Footnotes

Settings for footnotes are made at two places in OpenOffice.org Writer. Document-related settings are made under **Tools > Footnotes...**. In addition, settings for footnotes are also available in page styles. This is where the appearance of the footnote area is tailored. Using page style also allows one to set the maximum height of the footnote area, whereby OpenOffice.org Writer possibly pushes the footnote to the next page. However, this option will be rarely used in a thesis.

In order to switch between footnote anchor and text, one just clicks on the desired reference.

Occasional footnotes may be entered even when graphics captions are numbered. Select **Insert > Footnote**, Select Character and enter a character of your choice, or go to the Special Characters button (...) and select one from there. If automatic graphics captions are used, and you chose to number the footnotes, they will not automatically be updated when new footnotes are inserted.

Tables

If the thesis needs to contain a large number of tables that should look alike then a desired table form can be created and given a name via **Format > Autoformat**. This table format can then be transferred to another table, again via **Format > Autoformat**. A table with many rows and columns should be used since only then will the layout be accepted without problems.

Table of Contents

To generate a Table of Contents, place the cursor at the desired location and select **Insert > Indexes and Tables > Indexes and Tables...** After editing the entries under tab Index/Table, click *Entries*. Under *Structure*, *<E#>* stands for *chapter #*, *<E>* for *chapter text*, *<T>* for *tab stop* and *<#>* for *page #*. Refer to Illustration 18 and to the [User Guide](#) for details.

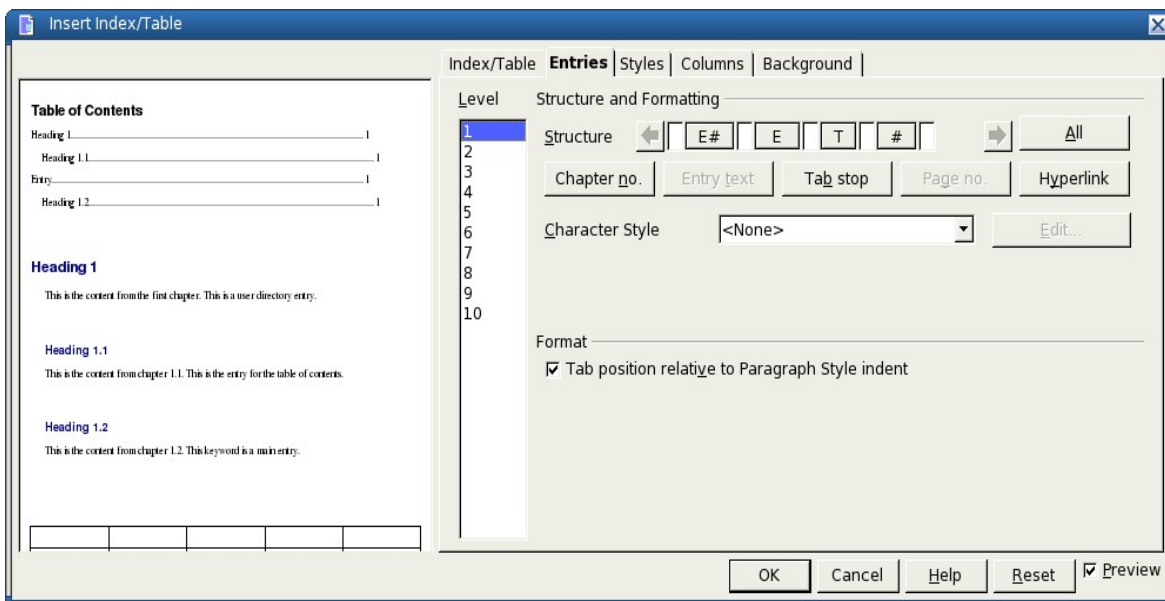


Illustration 18: Insert Table of Contents dialog box

In order to put a space character between the chapter # and the chapter text, the space character can simply be incorporated into the chapter title structure:

<E#> <ET><T><#>

Similarly, if a tab stop is desired between chapter # and chapter text, the structure would look like this:

<E#><T><ET><T><#>

In this case, a second tab stop has to be inserted in the paragraph styles *Heading 1* to *Heading 10*.

If no change has been made to the Table of Contents format, the Table of Contents can be updated via **Tools > Update**. However if the format has been changed, the cursor has to be placed into the Table of Contents and **Insert > Indexes and Tables > Indexes and Tables...** has to be called up.

Unfortunately, the page number formats of the various page styles are not automatically adopted by the Table of Contents. This means that anomalies in the Table of Contents, arising from this cause will have to be corrected manually. See the paragraph on “Change of Page Numbering.”

Marginalia

Marginal notes can be put in a frame like this.

Marginalia are rarely seen in a thesis; but if you want to use them you can implement them by means of text frames (**Insert > Frame...**) as in the example shown here. If you have a two-sided layout, the marginalia have to be placed on the outer page margin. For this, you can create a paragraph-anchored frame with the check box *To paragraph*. Refer to Illustration 19. The text box can be dragged and resized with the mouse.

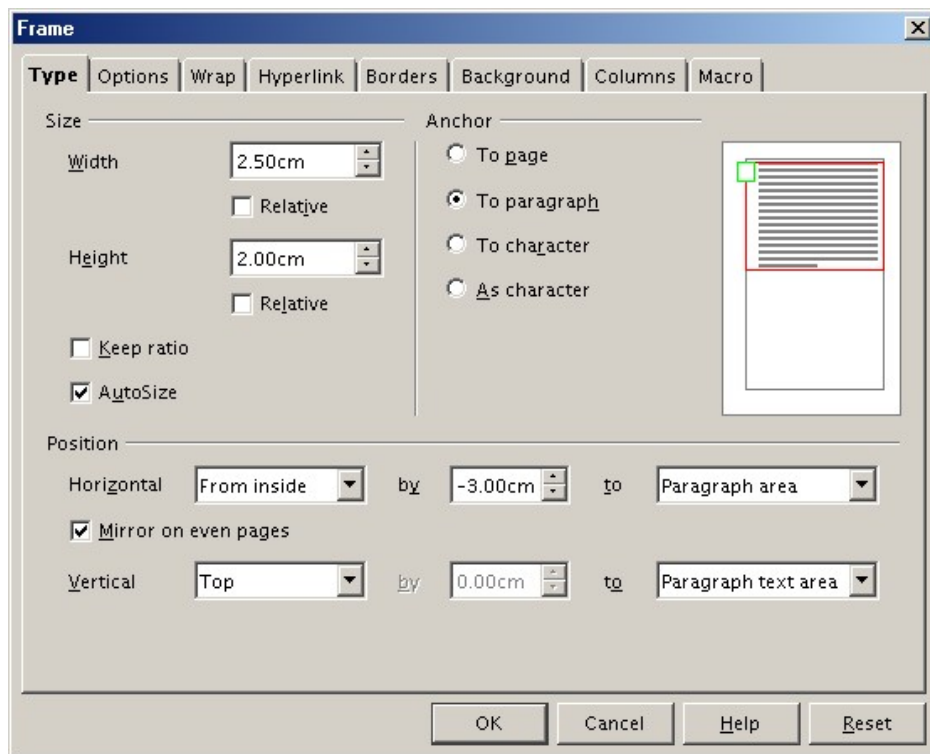


Illustration 19: Frame Type dialog box

If you want to insert another marginal somewhere else in your text, just copy the existing one. Whoever feels they have the time and inclination, may wish to write a macro.

In OpenOffice.org Writer, marginalia can also be generated and modified via paragraph styles or frame styles. A paragraph based on paragraph style with marginalia has a left margin of 4 cm. You have to use a marginalia text frame in conjunction with this paragraph. In this case, however, the marginal is always on the left side of the text.

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