



OpenOffice.org Styles

Writing Complex Documents

What are Styles?

If you have used a word processor before, you might be used to giving your documents a *physical description*. For example, you would specify the font, font size (e.g. 12pt), and weight (e.g. bold).

Styles are a way of giving your document a *logical* description. For example, instead of saying “Times New Roman, 14pt, bold, and centered”, you might say “Heading”. In other words, the emphasis is not on what the text *looks like*, but what the text *is*.

Why use Styles?

Using styles allows you to do a number of things that are not otherwise possible. For instance, if you decide later that you do not like the way your headings look, you can make changes in one place, the **Stylist**, and all the headings in your document will be updated automatically.

it is 9:45 a.m., and you are just finishing the 30-page paper for school that is due at 10:00 a.m. You look over the assignment one more time, and suddenly you realize that your Professor wants:

- *The text written in Arial font instead of Times New Roman.*
- *The headings to be numbered and must use Georgia font instead of Helvetica.*
- *A table of contents.*

As a student, you have two options for preventing this kind of nightmare:

1. Do not procrastinate until the last minute.
2. Use Writer with Styles.

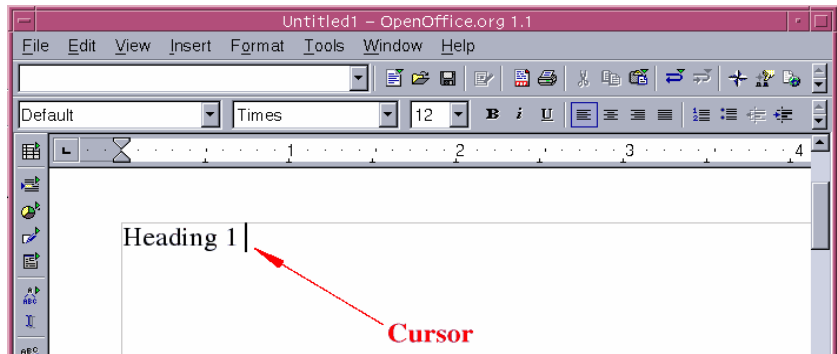
Naturally, you will choose the second :-)

With Styles, all these changes can be done in just a matter moments, even for very long documents. Styles are not unique to OpenOffice.org. However, Styles under OpenOffice.org are more powerful than in other applications.

Getting started

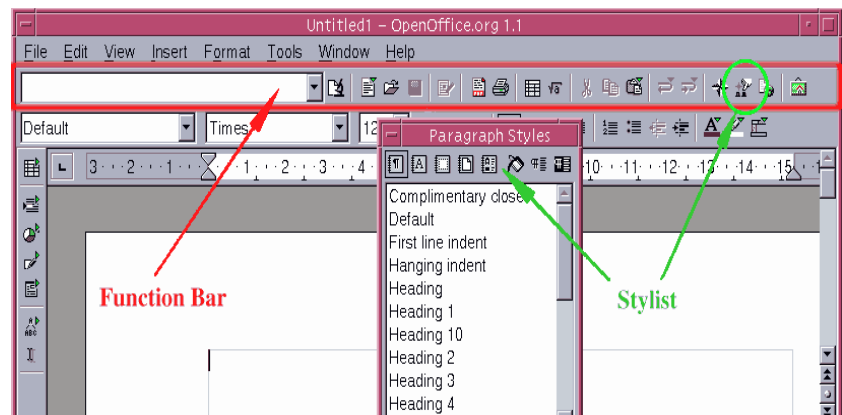
Go to **File > New > Text Document** to create a new text document (or press **Ctrl-N**). Type "Heading 1" on it. Make sure that the cursor remains in that same line.

You should see something like the screen presented here.



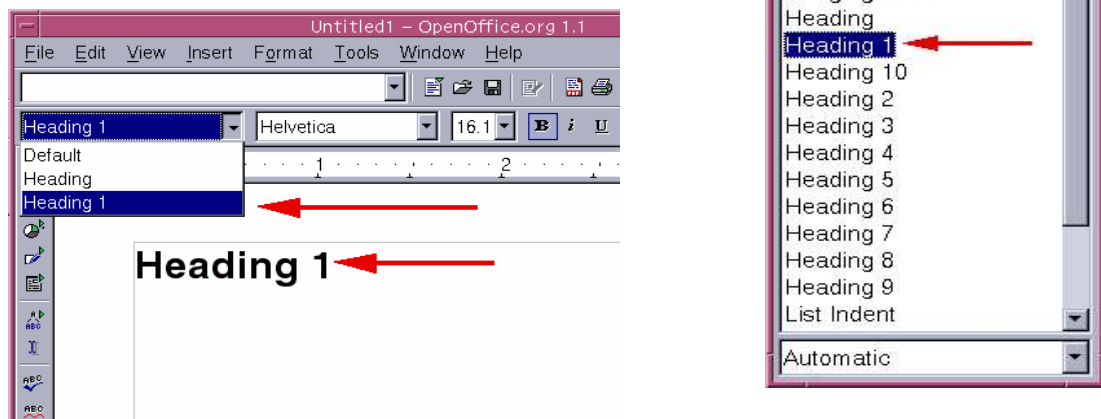
Click on the **Stylist** icon  in the **Function Bar** to bring up the **Stylist**.

Note: The **Stylist** is a floating palette and can be dragged conveniently out of the way.



The new window that pops up is called the **Stylist**. Double click on the **Heading 1** entry of the **Stylist**. This will do two things:

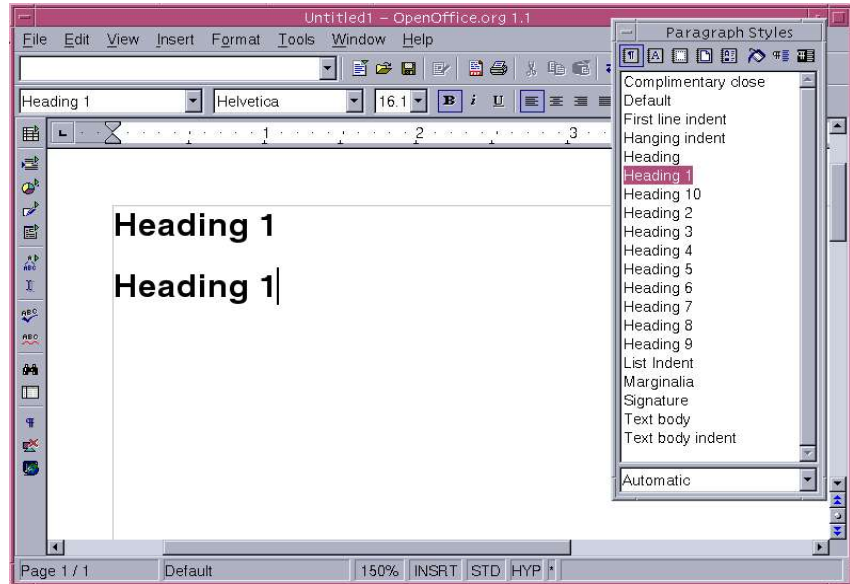
1. Give the line you typed the **Heading 1** style.
2. Add **Heading 1** to the **Apply Style** menu.



The purpose of the **Apply Style** menu is to give you easier access to the styles that are currently in use in your document. Use the **Apply Style** menu:

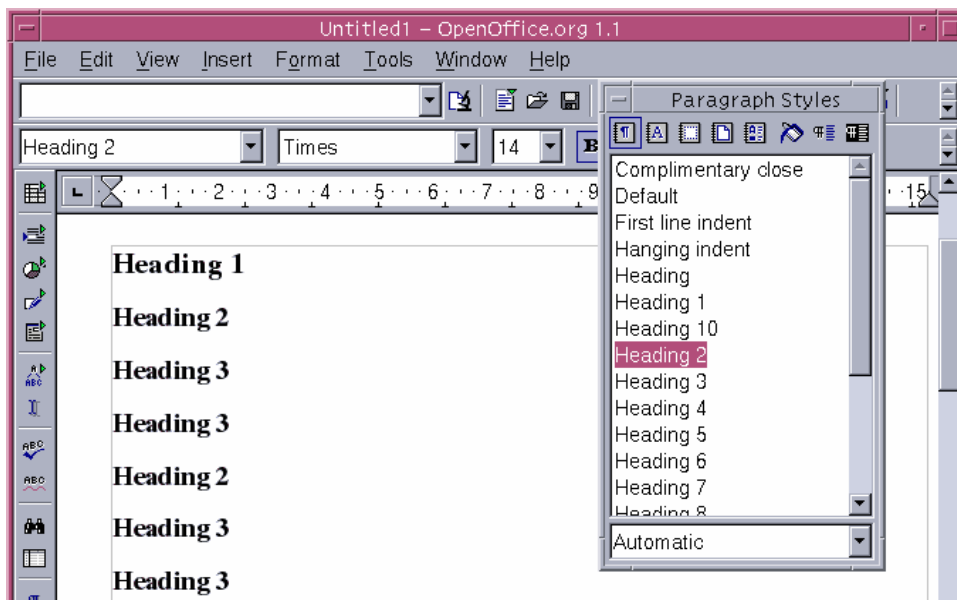
1. Press **Enter/Return** to get a new line, and type “Heading 1”.
2. Select **Heading 1** from the **Apply Style** menu.

You should see something similar to the sample screen.



Working with Styles

The ability to customize styles is precisely what makes them so powerful. For this section you will need a few level 1, 2 and 3 headings. Type something resembling the sample screen. Use the **Stylist** to apply appropriate styles to your headings.

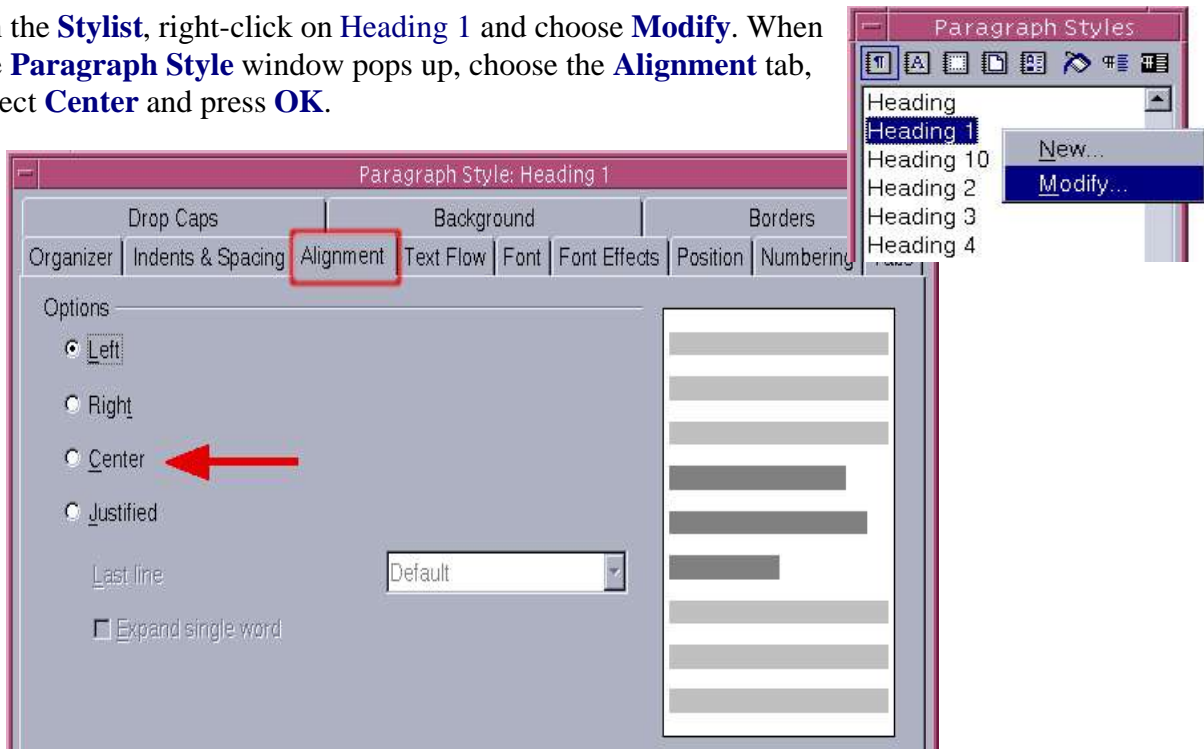


Suppose that we have written a long document and then decide to make a few changes:

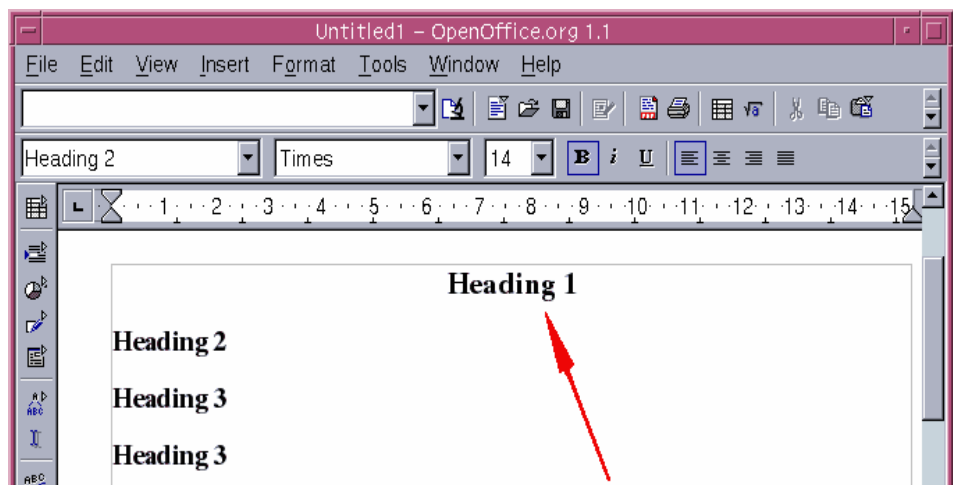
- **Heading 1** should be *centered*.
- **Heading 3** should be *indented*.
- All headings should be in *Helvetica* type font. If you do not have Helvetica, simply choose another font for this exercise.

Center “Heading 1”

On the **Stylist**, right-click on **Heading 1** and choose **Modify**. When the **Paragraph Style** window pops up, choose the **Alignment** tab, select **Center** and press **OK**.



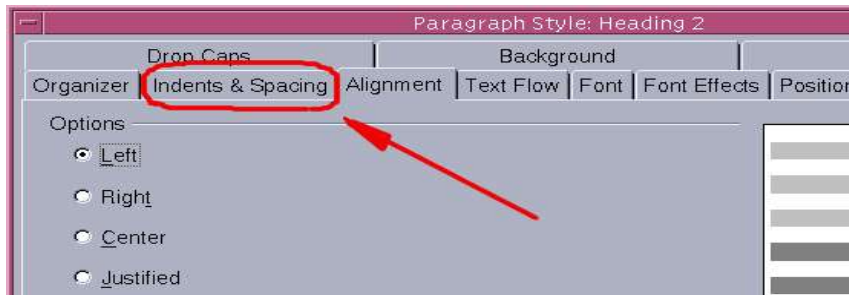
Now everything marked as **Heading 1** will be centered. If you make another **Heading 1**, it will be centered as well.



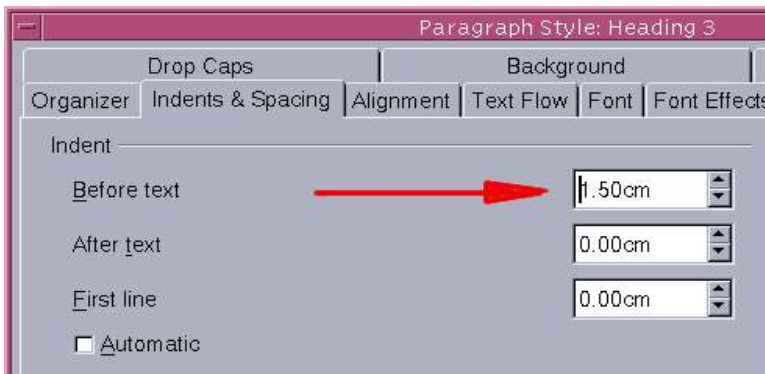
Indent “Heading 3”

On the **Stylist**, right-click on **Heading 3** and choose **Modify**. When the **Paragraph Style** window pops up:

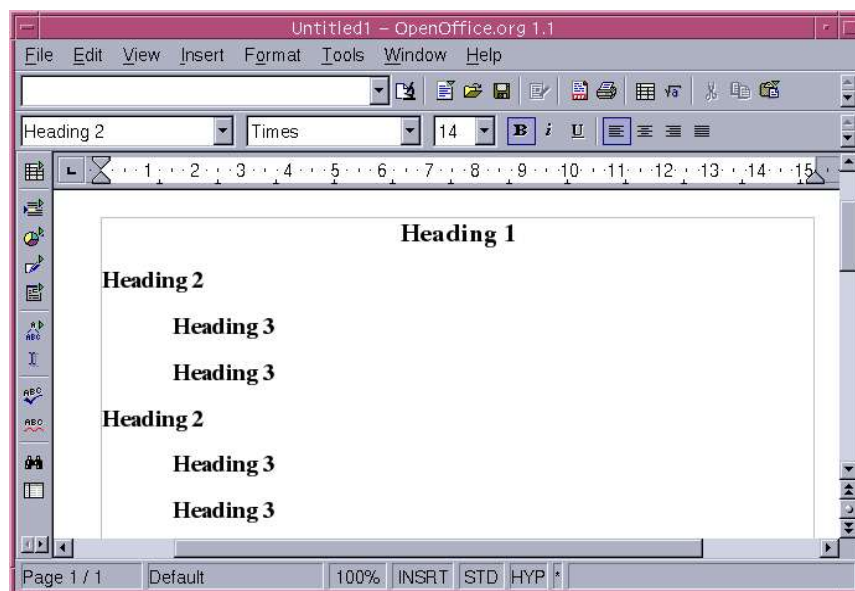
1. Click on the **Indents & Spacing** tab.



2. Under the **Indent** section, set the indentation before the text to 1.5cm (0.6 inches).



Press **OK**. Now all Heading 3 lines are indented.



Change all headings to Helvetica type font

Now suppose that we want to change the font of not only **Heading 1**, or **Heading 2**, but *all* headings. Though we *could* go through each heading one by one, there is a better way.

Take another look at the **Stylist**.

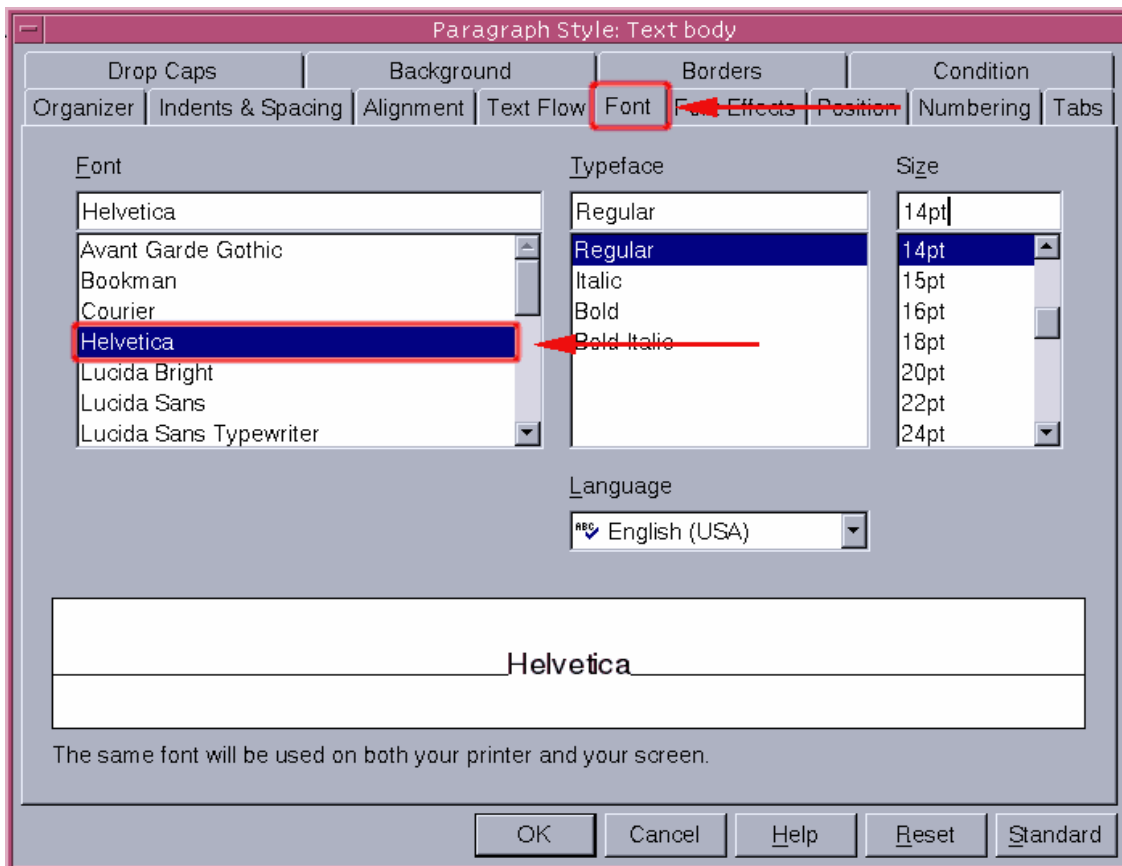
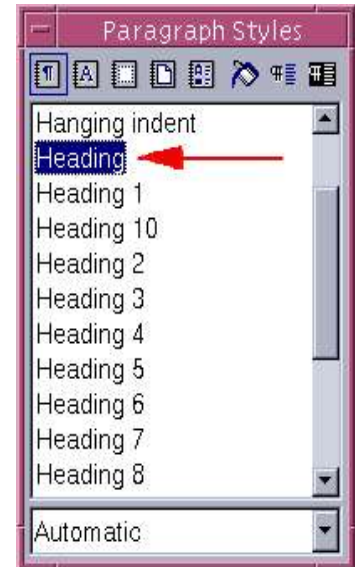
Notice that, in addition to **Heading 1**, **Heading 2**, etc., there is an entry simply called **Heading**.

This entry is unique in that, if we change something in **Heading**, it gets changed in all the other **Headings**. Think of it this way:

Heading 1 is different from Heading 2, but both of them are Headings.

We will use this feature to change all the headings to Helvetica in one swoop:

1. Right-click on **Heading** and select **Modify**.
2. Go to the **Font** tab and pick **Helvetica**.
3. Press **OK**.



Now all the fonts have been changed in one single operation. Your document should now look like this:

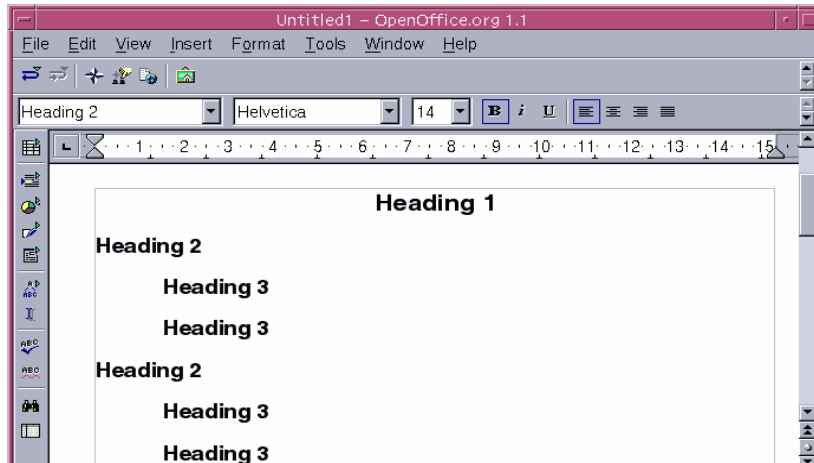


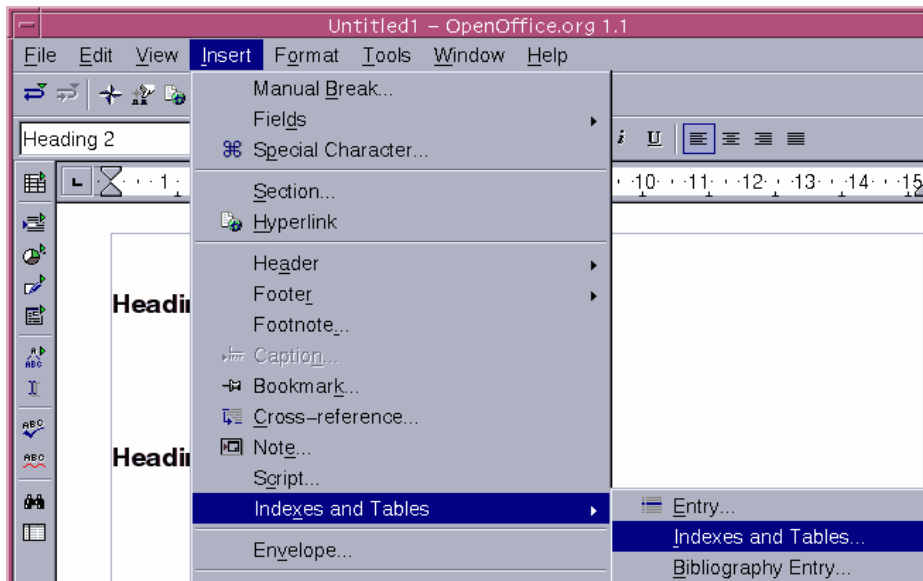
Table of contents & numbering headers

OpenOffice.org offers other useful features such as adding a table of contents, or automatically numbering all headers.

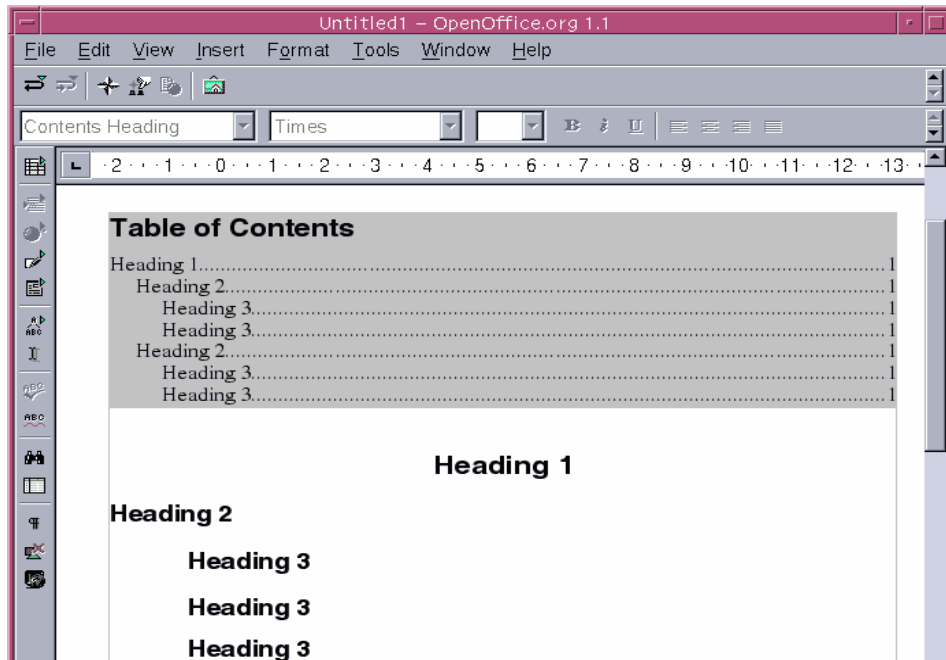
Adding a table of contents

Styles also provide a way to add a table of contents:

1. Put the cursor exactly where you want the table of contents.
2. Press **Insert > Indexes and Tables > Indexes and Tables**.



The **Insert Index/Table** dialog is fairly complex, so we will not discuss it here. All the defaults are sensible, so just press **OK**. At this point, you should have a table of contents like the example below:



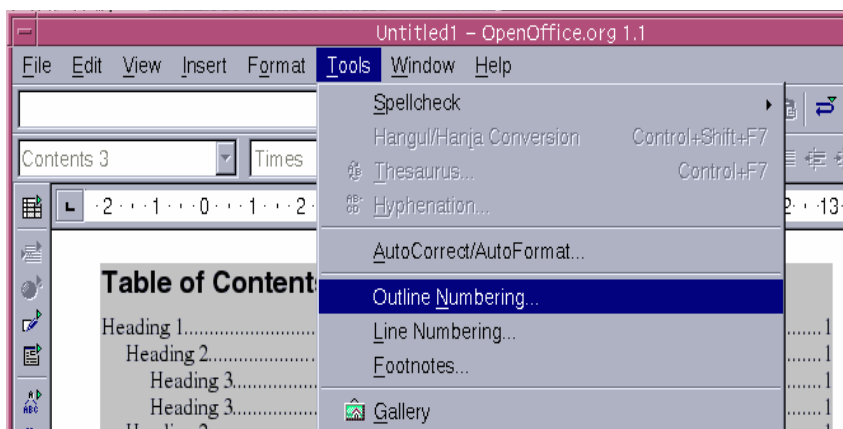
Updating a table of contents

If you change your headings around, or add more material, the table of contents is not updated automatically. Updating it requires to steps:

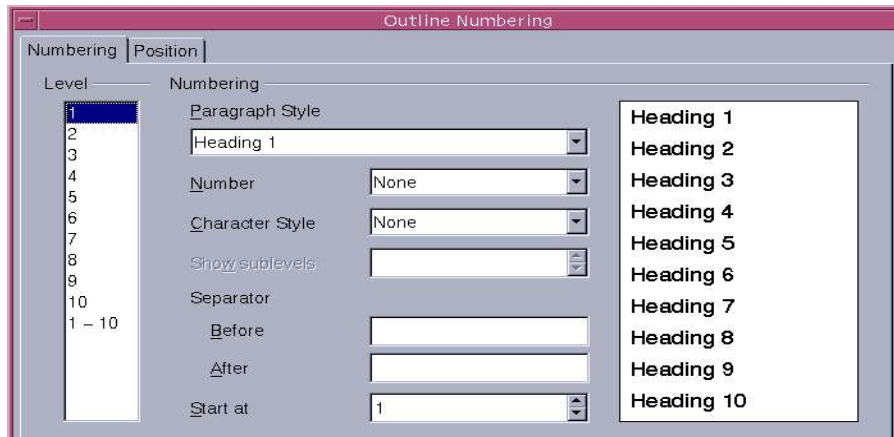
1. Click somewhere inside the table, making sure that the cursor is inside the table.
2. Right-click and select **Update Index/Table**.

Numbering headers

The best way to have the headers numbered is to go to **Tools > Outline Numbering**.

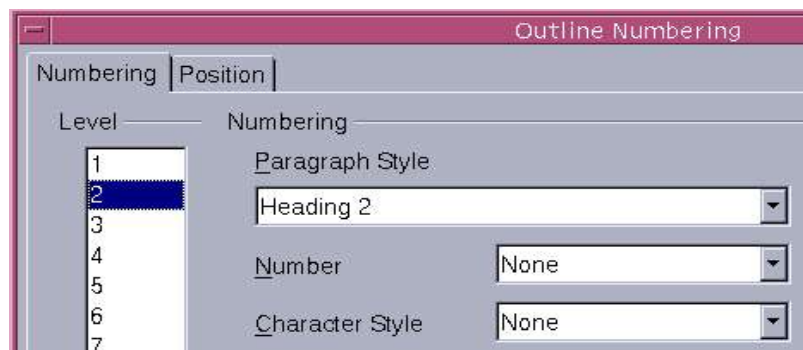


You will see the **Outline Numbering** dialog come up.

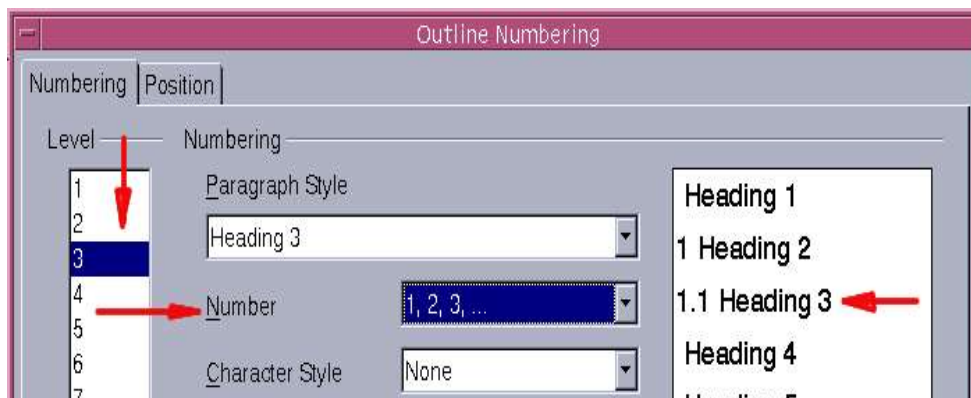


We will only give numbers to **Heading 2** and **Heading 3**.

1. Under **Level**, select “2”. Notice that **Paragraph Style** changes to **Heading 2**.

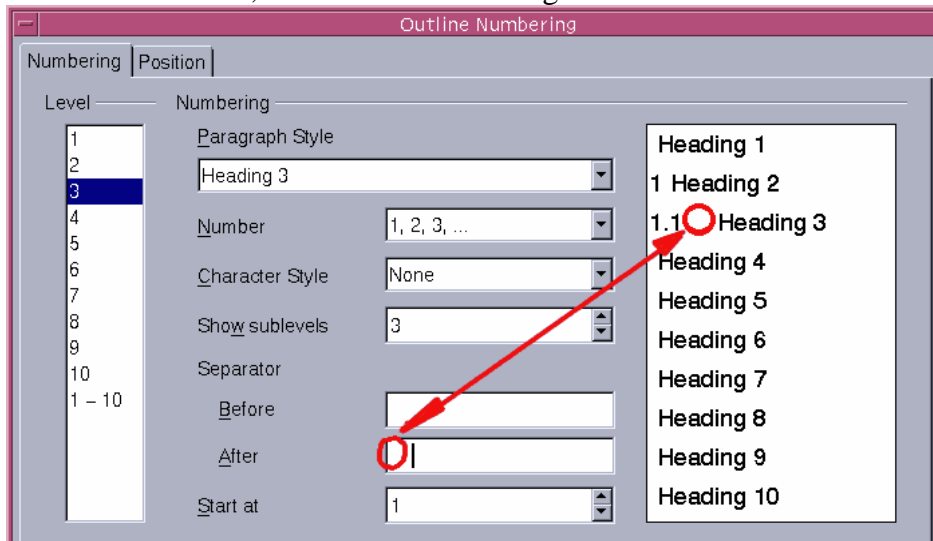


2. Under **Number**, select “1, 2, 3, ...”. Notice how the sample window has changed.
3. Now change **Level** again, this time to “3”, and set **Number** to “1, 2, 3, ...” again.



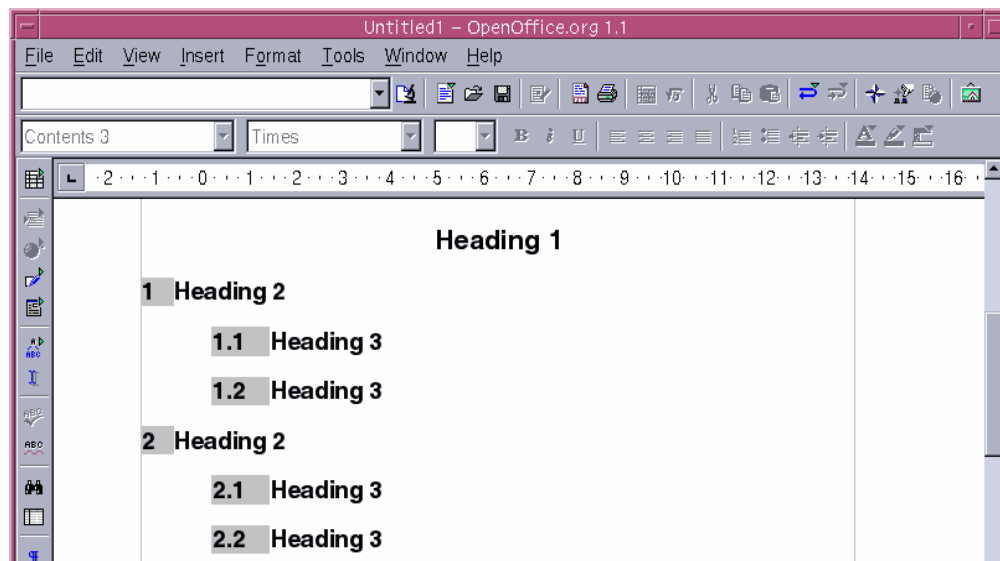
Alternatively, choose some other entry for **Number**. Experiment with these entries and see what happens.

4. In the **After** box, under **Separator**, type four spaces. The characters in this text box are placed **after** the number, and before the heading.



In this example, we are simply adding some separation between the numbers and the headings to get a nicer look.

5. Do this for both **Heading 2** and **Heading 3**. Play around with the settings until you are happy with the result. Then press **OK**. This is what my result looks like:



One final note:

Remember that the table of contents doesn't get updated automatically. To update it, put the cursor on the table, right click, and select **Update Index/Table**.

Creating your own Styles


You have seen that the **Stylist** has several styles, such as **Heading 1**, **Text body**, and **Signature**. But what if you need something different, like a **poem** style, that is not in the **Stylist**? With **OpenOffice.org** you can make your own styles to suit your needs.

In this section, we will create a **Poem** style, and a **Poem Header** style, with the following properties:

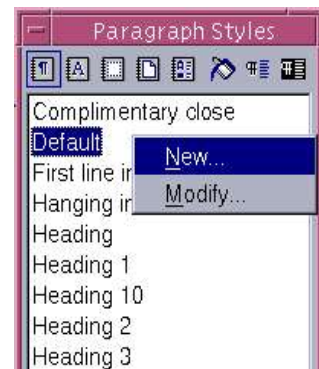
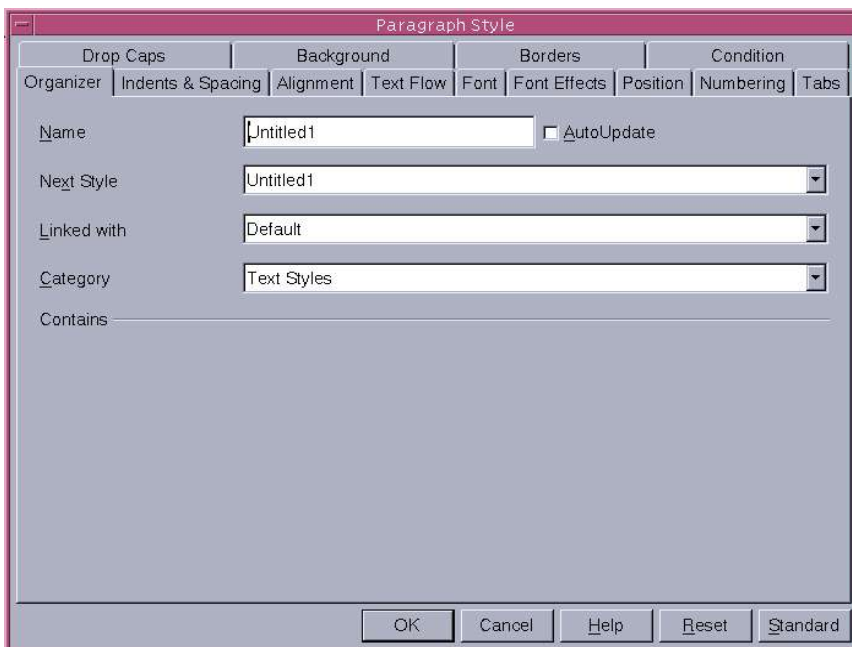
1. A **Poem** will be centered, with font-size 10.
2. A **Poem Header** will be centered, bold, with font-size 12.
3. After you enter a **Poem Header**, when you press Enter, you should automatically go to the **Poem** style, without having to click anywhere.

Create the “Poem” Style

First we will create the **Poem** style.

1. Go to **File > New > Text Document**, to create a new text document.
2. Click on the **Stylist** icon  to bring up the **Stylist**, if necessary.
3. Right click anywhere in the **Stylist** window and choose **New**.

At this point you should see the **Paragraph Styles** dialog box, and you should be at the **Organizer** tab. The dialog should look like the one below:



To create your own styles, you have to at least understand the top three entries.

Name This is the name of the style itself, like **Heading 1** or **Signature**.

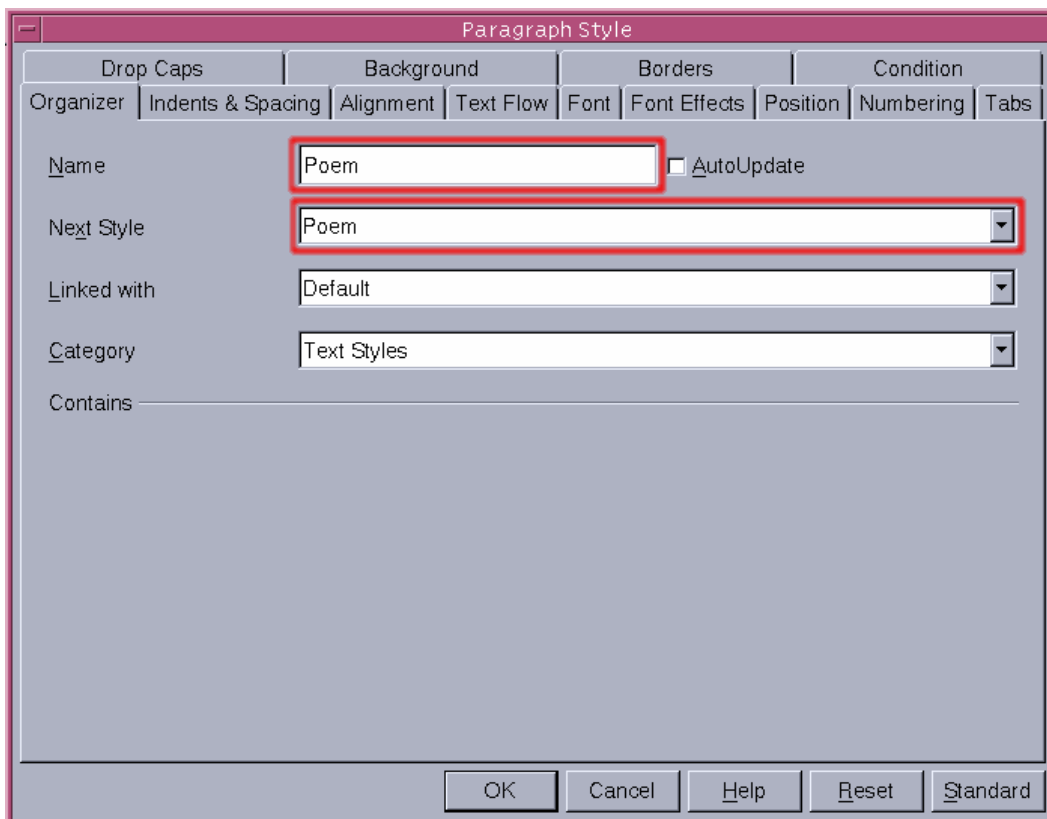
Next Style This indicates the style that will be in effect after you press **Enter** on your keyboard. For example, after you type a **Heading 1**, if you press **Enter**, you return to the **Text body** style.

Linked With If a style is linked with another, it will inherit any changes done in that style. For example, **Heading 1** is linked with **Heading**. So, if you change something in **Heading**, it will also change in **Heading 1**.

To define the new style, you must do the following:

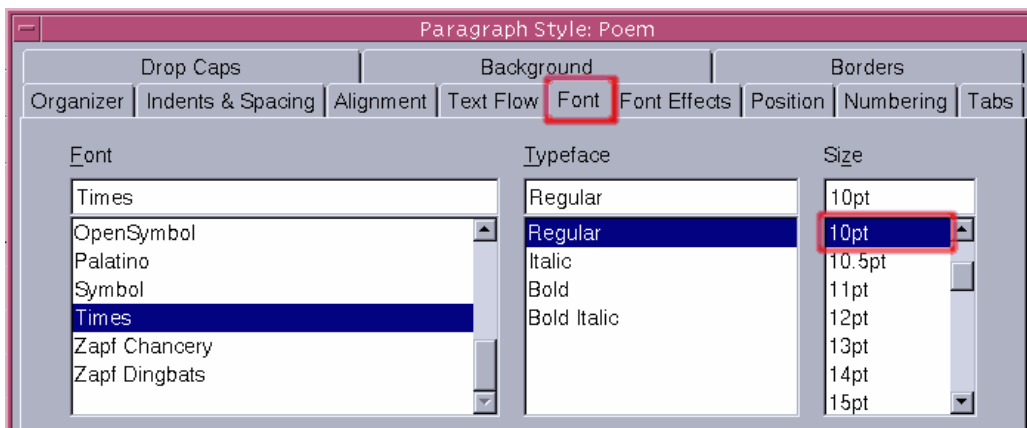
1. Type “Poem” under **Name**.
2. When you click on the **Next Style** drop-down menu, **OpenOffice.org** will select **Poem** by default. This is what you want. This means that if you press **Enter**, you will stay in the **Poem** style.
3. Set the **Linked With** entry **None**. We will not be linking this style with anything.

At this point, your **Paragraph Styles** window should look like this:



Now you can configure the new style the way you want:

1. Under the **Alignment** tab, select **Center** text, just as you did in the section **Center “Heading 1”** earlier.
2. Under the **Font** tab, select 10pt font-size.



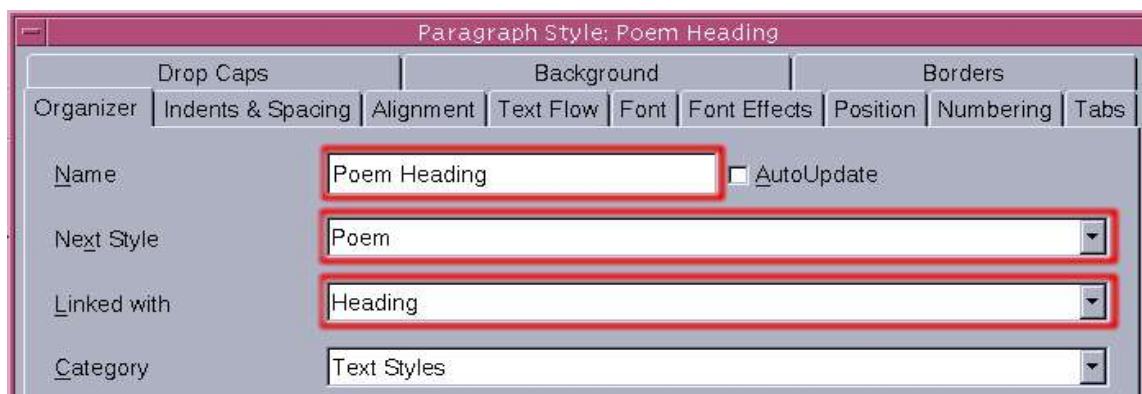
Once everything is done, press **OK** at the bottom of the dialog.

Congratulations! You just made your very own style.

Creating the “Poem Heading” style

The procedure is essentially the same as before. Right-click on the **Stylist** and choose **New**. The configuration of this style will be slightly different:

1. Under **Name**, type “Poem Heading”.
2. Under **Next Style**, select “Poem”.
3. Under **Linked with**, select “Heading”.



Notice some important differences:

1. Under **Next Style**, you chose “Poem”. This means that if you press **Enter**, you will be in the **Poem** style.

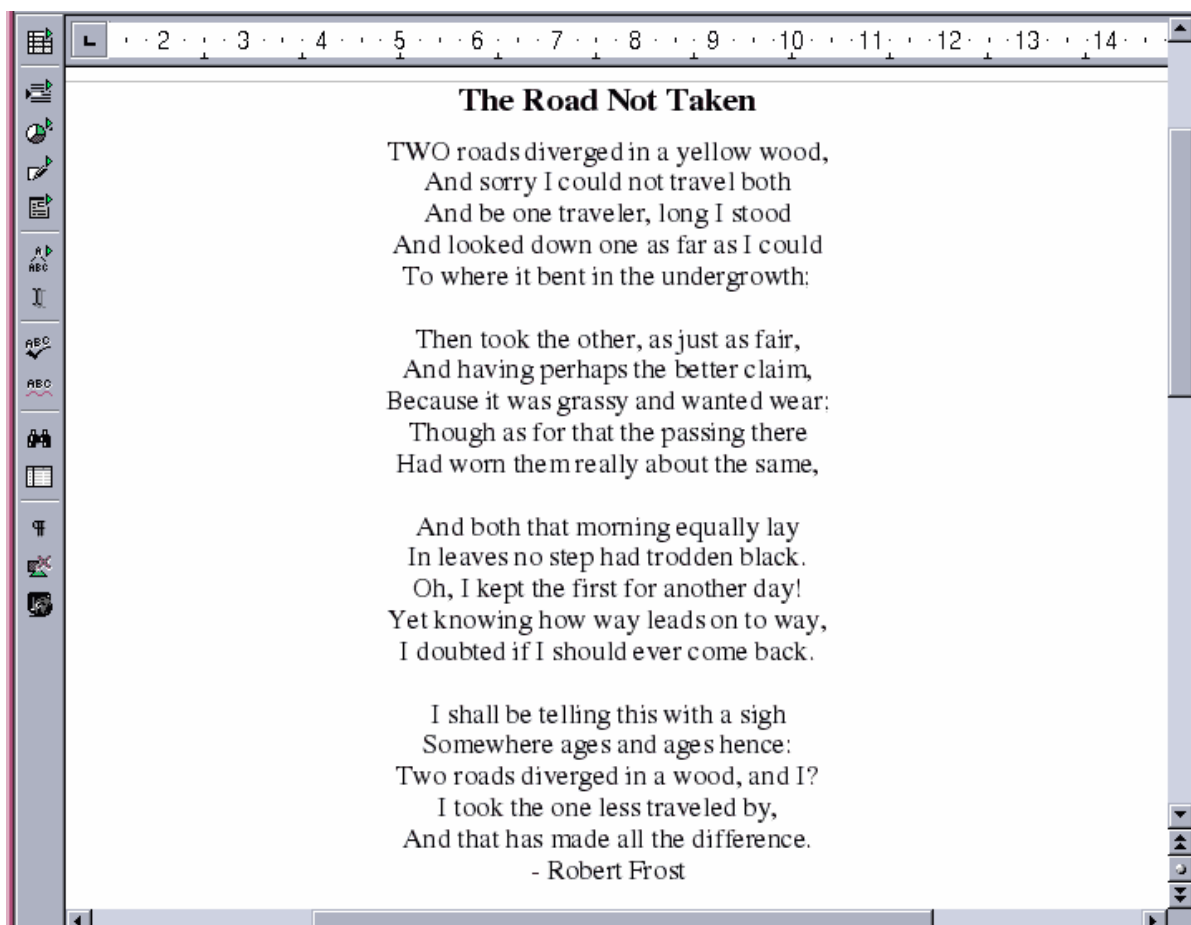
2. Under **Linked With**, we chose “Heading”. This means that any changes in **Heading** will also affect **Poem Heading**.

Now we can choose the settings of our new style:

1. Under **Alignment**, choose “Center”.
2. Under **Font**, choose bold and size 12pt.

Example poem

It is a good idea to test out your new styles and see if you are happy with them. Your poem should look like the example below.



Reconfiguring your styles

Suppose that you later decide to make some changes to our poems:

- Instead of centering the **Poem** style, you want to indent it.
- You also want a style for **Poem Author** which you can configure separately.
- The **Poem Author** style should:
 1. Be in bold type face.
 2. Be indented more than the rest of the poem.
 3. Link with the **Poem** style.

Indent “Poem”

First, set the **Poem** style to left alignment:

1. From the **Stylist**, select **Poem**, control-click, select **Modify**.
2. Go to the **Alignment** tab and select “Left alignment”.

Now select the indentation:

1. Go to the **Indents & Spacing** tab.
2. Under **Indent**, set the indentation before the text to 5cm (or about 2in).

Done! Press **OK**, and you should see the text change.

Create “Poem Author” style

You already know how to create a new style. Follow the same procedure as when you created the **Poem Heading** style, using the following configuration:

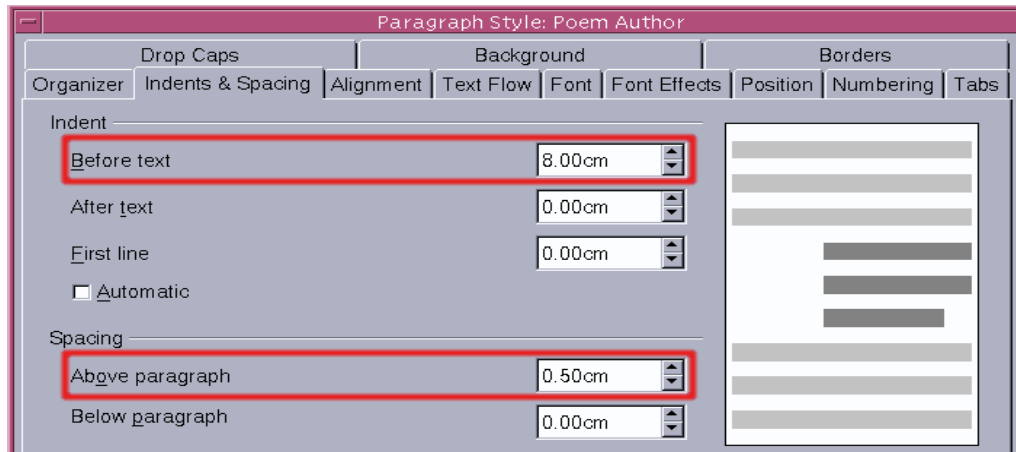
1. Under **Name**, type down “Poem Author”.
2. Under **Next style**, select “Default”.
3. Under **Linked with**, select “Poem”, so that changes in **Poem** also affect this style.

Now, configure **Poem Author** just like you configured **Poem**, with the following changes:

1. Under the **Font** tab, set the type face to bold.
2. Under the **Indents & Spacing** tab, set the indentation to 8cm (or about 3.2in) instead of the 5cm we chose before.
3. Under the **Indents & Spacing** tab, under **Spacing**, set the spacing above the paragraph to 5cm (or about 2in). This creates an extra space between the poem and the name of the author.

The purpose of this style is to set apart the name of the author from the rest of the poem.

This is how the **Indents & Spacing** tab should look at this point:



Click **OK** to save this style. Now set the author of the poem (in my case, “Robert Frost”) to the newly created **Poem Author** style, as described in the [Getting started](#) section.

Final result

After all these changes, the new poem style should look like this:

