

Set, edit, or clear tabs in Word 2007

Tab stops are often used to create easy-to-format documents — but the document layout options in Microsoft Office Word 2007 can do the work for you.

For example, you can easily create a table of contents or an index without setting a single tab stop. You can also use the predesigned table and header and footer options in Office Word 2007.

In addition, Office Word 2007 provides predesigned pages, such as cover pages and various page layout options, which make tab stops unnecessary.

What do you want to do?

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- ↓ [Add leaders between tab stops](#)
- ↓ [Change the spacing between the default tab stops](#)


Set the tab stops

You might want to use the ruler to set manual tab stops at the left side, middle, and right side of your document.


NOTE If you don't see the horizontal ruler that runs along the top of the document, click the **View Ruler** button at the top of the vertical scroll bar.

You can quickly set tabs by clicking the tab selector at the left end of the ruler until it displays the type of tab that you want and then clicking the ruler at the location you want. But which type of tab stop should you use?

 A **LEFT TAB STOP** SETS THE START POSITION OF TEXT THAT WILL THEN RUN TO THE RIGHT AS YOU TYPE.

 A **Center Tab** stop sets the position of the middle of the text. The text centers on this position as you type.

 A **Right Tab** stop sets the right end of the text. As you type, the text moves to the left.

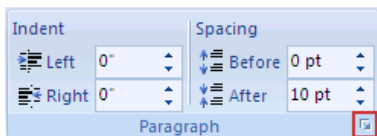
 A **Decimal Tab** stop aligns numbers around a decimal point. Independent of the number of digits, the decimal point will be in the same position. (You can align numbers around a decimal character only; you cannot use the decimal tab to align numbers around a different character, such as a hyphen or an ampersand symbol.)

 A **Bar Tab** stop doesn't position text. It inserts a vertical bar at the tab position.

If you want your tab stops at precise positions that you can't get by clicking the ruler, or if you want to insert a specific character (leader) before the tab, you can use the **Tabs** dialog box.



To display the **Tabs** dialog box, double-click any tab stop on the ruler, or do the following:

1. On the **Page Layout** tab, click the **Paragraph** Dialog Box Launcher.



2. In the **Paragraph** dialog box, click **Tabs**.

About using the horizontal ruler to set tab stops

- By default, there are no tab stops on the ruler when you open a new blank document.
- The final two options on the tab selector are actually for indents. You can click these and then click the ruler to position the indents, rather than sliding the indent markers along the ruler. Click **First Line Indent** , and then click the upper half of the horizontal ruler where you want the first line of a paragraph to begin. Click **Hanging Indent** , and then click the lower half of the horizontal ruler where you want the second and all following lines of a paragraph to begin.
- When you set a bar tab stop, a vertical bar line appears where you set the tab stop (you don't need to press the TAB key). A bar tab is similar to strikethrough formatting, but it runs vertically through your paragraph at the location of the bar tab stop. Like other types of tabs, you can set a bar tab stop before or after you type the text of your paragraph.
- You can remove a tab stop by dragging it (up or down) off the ruler. When you release the mouse button, the tab stop disappears.

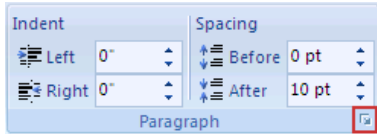
- You can also drag existing tab stops left or right along the ruler to a different position.
- When multiple paragraphs are selected, only the tabs from the first paragraph show on the ruler.

Portions of this article were excerpted from Training on Microsoft Office Online.

Add leaders between tab stops

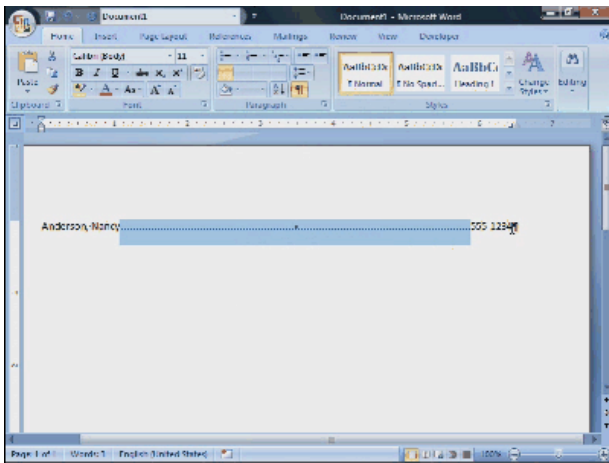
You can add dot leaders between tab stops or choose other formatting options in the **Tabs** dialog box.

1. Type the text that you want.
2. On the horizontal ruler, set the tab stop that you want.
3. On the **Page Layout** tab, click the **Paragraph** Dialog Box Launcher.



4. In the **Paragraph** dialog box, click **Tabs**.
5. Under **Leader**, click the leader option that you want.

When you press ENTER to start a new line, the formatted tab stop is available on the new line.



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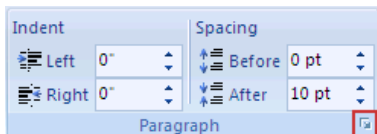
Video created by Office Online staff writers

TIP If you want to use tab stops and dot leaders to format a table of contents, consider using Word to [create a table of contents automatically](#).

Change the spacing between the default tab stops

If you set manual tab stops, the default tab stops are interrupted by the manual tab stops that you set. Manual tab stops that are set on the ruler override the default tab stop settings.

1. On the **Page Layout** tab, click the **Paragraph** Dialog Box Launcher.



2. In the **Paragraph** dialog box, click **Tabs**.
 3. In the **Default tab stops** box, enter the amount of spacing that you want between the default tab stops.
- When you press the TAB key, your tab will stop across the page at the distance that you specified.