

# Working with Tables in Microsoft Word

The purpose of this document is to lead you through the steps of creating, editing and deleting tables and parts of tables. This document follows a tutorial format so that by the end of the document, you will have created and worked with tables in Microsoft Word. This document was written using the procedures for creating tables in Microsoft Office Word 2003, but the steps may also apply to older versions.

## The Parts of a Table

It will be easier to create your tables if you are familiar with the parts of a table. The following table shows a sample table with its major parts listed. You can build a similar table to acquaint yourself with the steps for inserting tables into your documents.

Sample Table

Columns

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9

Cells

- **Columns** the vertical sections of the table
- **Rows** the horizontal sections of the table
- **Cells** the individual squares in which you will place text or images

## Creating the Table

You will need to insert the main part of the table to begin editing and manipulating it to suit your document's needs. To do this, perform the following steps.

### To insert a table:

1. Place your cursor in the general area where you want the table to be; you can be more specific with its location once you have inserted it.
2. In the Word menu bar, click **Table > Insert > Table**.

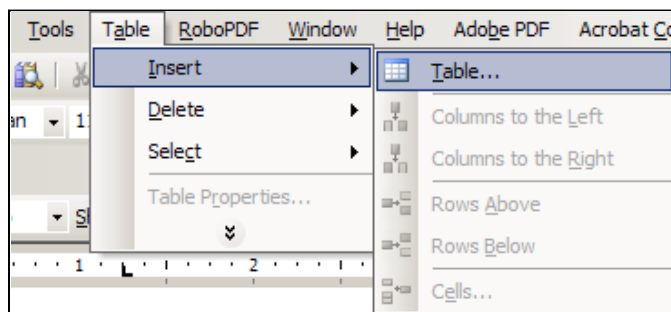
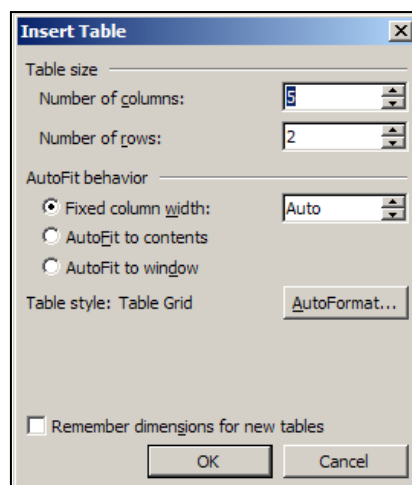


Figure 1: Table option in the Windows menu bar

3. A dialog box will display with the options for setting up your table. The following figure and paragraphs explain these options.



**Figure 2: Insert Table dialog box**

4. In the **Table size** section of the Insert Table dialog box, select the number of columns and rows you want in your table. If you need to, just estimate. You can always add and delete columns and rows later.
5. In the **AutoFit behavior** section, select the option for how you want the table sized within your document.
  - **Fixed column width** makes all the cells of equal width. You can select a width with the up and down arrows, type in a width or use the default Auto setting. The cells may resize as you begin adding content.
  - **AutoFit to contents** automatically sizes the width of each cell as you add contents to the cell, whether it is text or an image.
  - **AutoFit to window** makes all the cells of equal width across the length of the document, but the cells will remain at this width, even as you begin adding content to the cell.

***Note:** If you want to use these same dimensions for any future tables, check the **Remember dimensions for new tables** check box.*

6. Click **OK**.

Using the settings of 3 columns and 4 rows with the **Fixed column width** option selected, your new table will display as shown below. We will call this our framework table.

**Framework Table**


## Editing the Table

Now that you have inserted the table, it is time to edit, or customize, it. Microsoft Word offers many options for customizing tables but most are beyond the scope of this paper. The following instructions are for very basic editing, such as adding and deleting rows and columns, resizing table and cell size, aligning the table on the page and working with text within each cell.

Remember our sample table at the beginning of this paper:

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9

The following sections will help us take our framework table that we just inserted in the above steps and make it look like the sample table.

### To add columns or rows:

To match our sample table, the framework table needs another column.

1. Place your cursor in the first cell in the framework table.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Table > Insert > Columns to the Left**. The table will now display as shown below.


### To align the table on the page:

1. Right click anywhere inside the table to display the menu (you can also click **Table** on the menu bar once you have the cursor anywhere in the table). On this menu, select **Table Properties** to bring up the Table Properties dialog box.

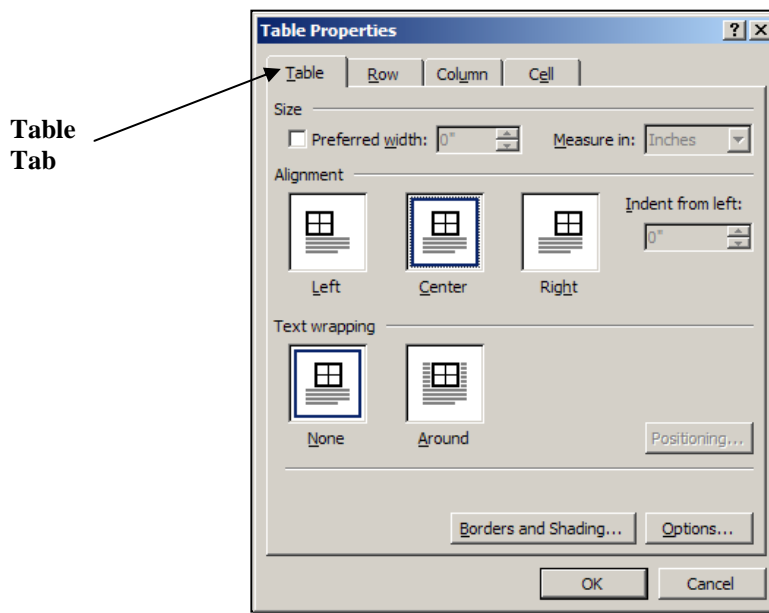


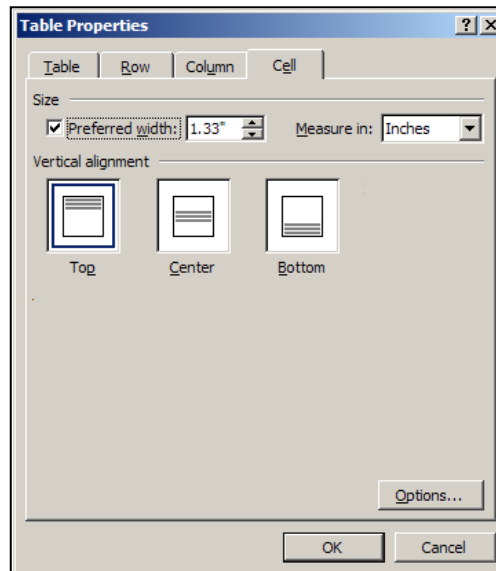
Figure 3: Table Properties dialog box

2. Be sure the **Table tab** is selected.
3. In the **Alignment** section, click **Left** if you want the table aligned with the left margin of the paper, **Center** if you want the table centered, and select **Right** if you want the table aligned with the right side of the paper. For our sample table, we want to select the **Center** option.
4. Click **OK** to save your settings, or click **Cancel** to exit without saving.

Our framework table will now be centered.


### To change the size of the cells:

1. Highlight the cells that you want to change.
2. Right click and select **Table Properties** from the menu to display the Table Properties dialog box.
3. Select the **Cell tab**.



4. In the **Preferred width** area, use the arrow keys or type in a width for the cells to shorten or widen them.
5. Click **OK** to apply the changes or click **Cancel** to exit without applying the changes.

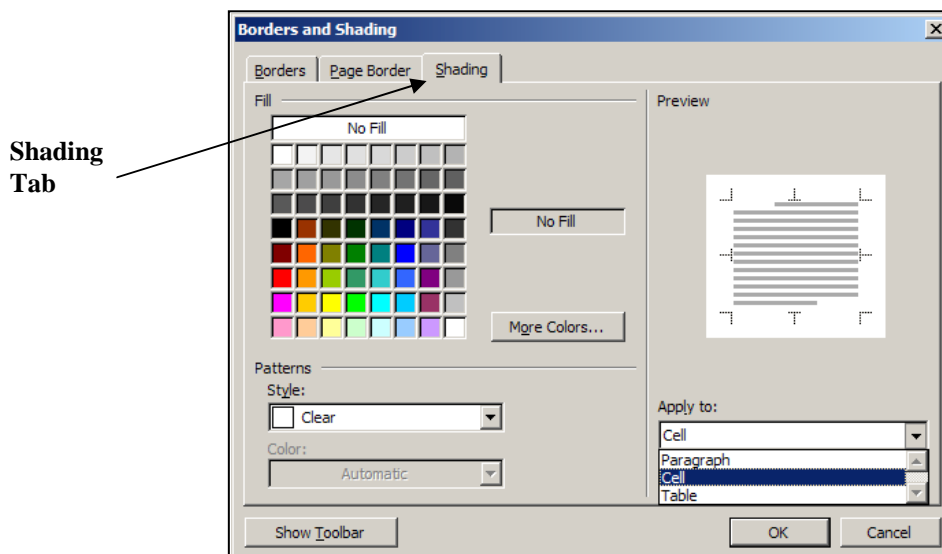
For our framework table we want each cell to be 1.33 inches in width, so type in 1.33 in the Preferred width field.

### Changing the Color of a Cell, Row or Column

A good way to help draw attention to an important cell, row or column (such as for headings for columns or rows) is to change its color to provide contrast and draw the eye of the reader. It might also help your reader follow the information in a row or column of a lengthy table if you alternate colors between rows or columns. For example, if you have a table that has 100 rows and 15 columns, with each cell containing numbers, it might be easier for the reader to scan a row if each row alternates between white and light gray, such as in the sample table.

#### To change the color of a cell, row or column:

1. Click and drag to highlight the row or column of which you want to change the color. To change the color of a single cell, just place the cursor in that cell.
2. Right click to bring up the menu, or click **Table** in the menu bar. From the right click menu, select **Borders and Shading**. From the **Table** menu, select **Table Properties**, click the **Table** menu, then click the **Borders and Shading** button to display the following screen.



**Figure 4: Borders and Shading dialog box - Shading tab selected**

3. In the **Fill** section, select a color for the cell, row or column.
4. In the **Apply to:** section, be sure **Cell** is selected or the color will be applied to the entire table.
5. Click **OK** to apply the changes, or click **Cancel** to exit without applying the changes.

To get the look of our sample table, on the framework table, highlight the last three cells of the top row. Right click, select **Borders and Shading**, click the box with the color Gray – 55%. Click **OK**. Then highlight the last three cells of the first column in the framework table. Right click, select **Borders and Shading**, click the box with the color Gray – 55%. Click **OK**. Finally, highlight the last three cells of the third row. Right click, select **Borders and Shading**, click the box with the color Gray – 12.5%. Click **OK**. The framework table should now look like the following:


### **To change the borders of a cell, row or column:**

1. To change the borders of a row or column, click and drag to highlight the row or column. To change the borders of a single cell, just place the cursor inside that cell.
2. Right click and select **Borders and Shading** from the menu. You can also select **Table** from the menu bar, click **Table Properties**, and from the **Table** tab, click the **Borders and Shading** button to display the Borders and Shading dialog box, as shown below.

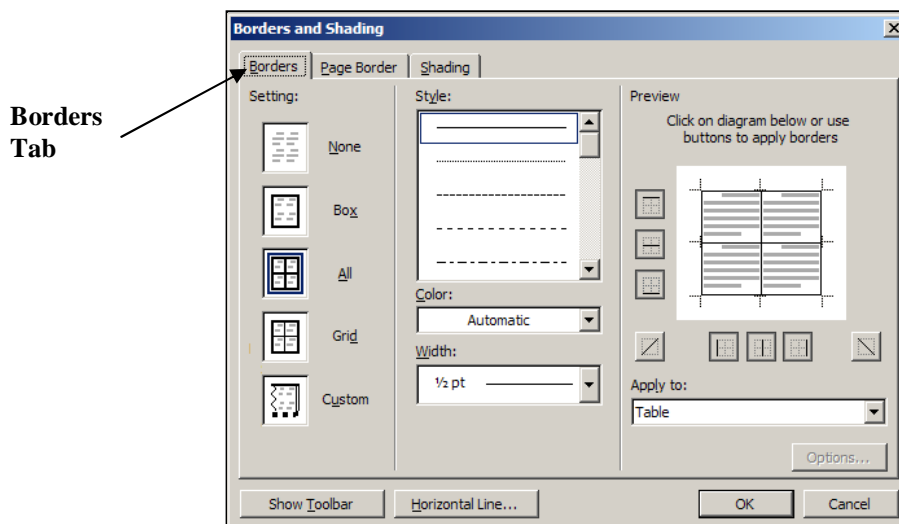


Figure 5: Borders and Shading dialog box - Borders tab selected

Be certain the **Borders** tab is selected. From this tab you can customize your table by controlling what lines of the table, cell, row or column is displayed and at what line thickness. You can play around with the settings in this tab until you are happy with the results, but for our purposes, we want the first cell in the first row of our framework table to NOT display. To do this, perform the following steps.

3. Place the cursor in the first cell of the first row of the framework table.
4. In the **Borders and Shading** dialog box, click the **Custom** box in the **Setting:** area.
5. In the **Preview** area, click the buttons for the lines that you don't want to display. The image in the center of the **Preview** area will show you which lines will display and which ones won't, based on the button you have pressed. For our purposes, we don't want the top or left side borders of the cell to display, so click the appropriate buttons. In the **Apply to:** area, be sure you select **Cell** so that your changes don't apply to the entire table.
6. Click **OK**. The table should now display as shown below:


The top and left side borders of the first cell in the first row will now be grayed out. These borders will not display when the paper is printed.

## Working with Text

Similar to changing the color of a cell, row or column, changing the color or style (if the text is bold, italic, underlined or plain) of the text within your table can also help draw your reader's eye to important text. For example, bolding the text of a heading for a column will indicate to the reader that this is a heading and not a data cell.

### To add text:

1. Place the cursor inside the cell. Begin typing.

2. You can also copy and paste text into the cell.

For our framework table, we want to simply label each cell. Each row and column will have a heading, and each data cell will be labeled as well. Our table should now look like the following:

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9

You may notice that we left the bottom row blank. This is because we will delete this row later in this document.

### To change font color:

1. Highlight the text.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Format** and select **Font** to display the Font dialog box.

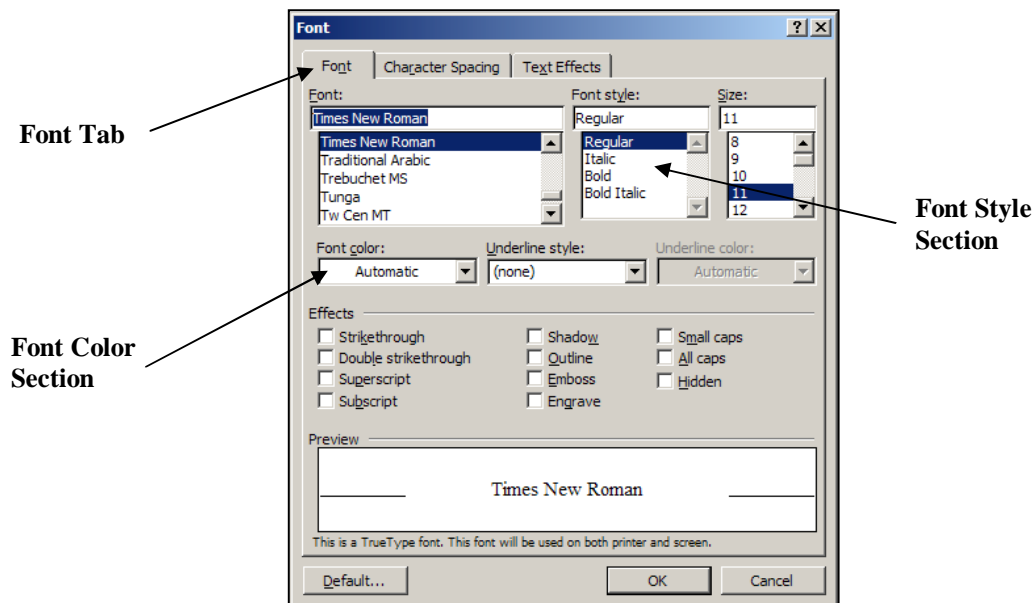


Figure 6: Font dialog box

3. Make sure the **Font tab** is selected. In the **Font color:** section, select a color from the drop-down list.
4. Click **OK** to apply the changes or **Cancel** to exit without applying the changes.

For our framework table, we want the heading cells for each column and row to display in white text, so we will select white. So now our framework table should look like the following:

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9



### To change the style of a font:

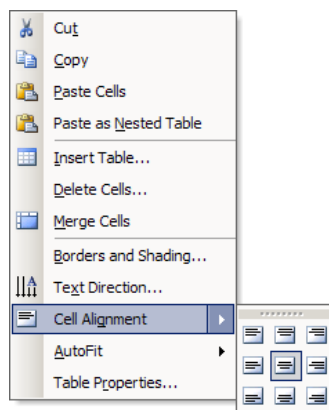
1. Highlight the text that needs to be changed.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Format** and select **Font** to display the Font dialog box.
3. In the **Font style: section** select the style for the text.
4. Click **OK** to apply the changes, or click **Cancel** to exit without applying the changes.

For our framework table, we want the heading cells for the columns and rows to be bolded. So we would select **Bold** in the **Font style: section** of the Font dialog box. (See Figure 6: Font dialog box.) The heading cells for the columns and rows should now be bolded, as displayed in the table below:

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9

### To adjust the alignment of the text within the cell, row or column:

1. Highlight the text for which you want to change the alignment.
2. Right click and click the arrow next to the **Cell Alignment** option on the menu.



3. In the option menu that displays after you click the arrow, the top row will align the contents of the cell to the top of the cell(s). The middle row options will align the contents of the cell to the center of the cell(s). The bottom row options will align the contents of the cell to the bottom of the cell(s).

For our framework table, we want the heading cells for the columns to be aligned in the center of the cell, so we will highlight the heading cells for the columns, right click, click the arrow on Cell Alignment, and select the option that will align the text in the middle center.

The framework table will now display as below: (notice the column headings are centered)

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9

## Deleting Tables, Cells, Rows and Columns

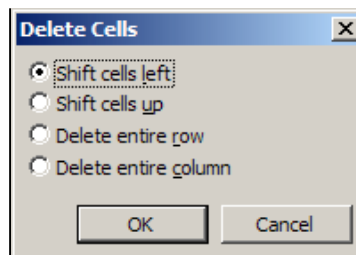
Once you have created a table, it may be necessary to delete parts of the table, or the entire table. The following instructions will lead you through deleting tables, cells, rows or columns.

### To delete a table:

1. Place the cursor in a cell of the table you want to delete.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Table > Delete > Table**.

### To delete a cell:

1. Place the cursor in the cell you want to delete.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Table > Delete > Cells**.



Use the **Shift cells left** option if you are deleting a cell from a column and want the other rows to move to the left to fill the empty cell.

Use the **Shift cells up** option if you are deleting a cell from a row and want the other rows to move up to fill the empty cell.

Use the **Delete entire row** option if you want to delete the whole row.

Use the **Delete entire column** option if you want to delete the whole column.

### To delete a row:

1. Place the cursor inside any cell of the row you want to delete.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Table > Delete > Rows**.

### To delete a column:

1. Place the cursor inside any cell of the column you want to delete.
2. In the Windows menu bar, click **Table > Delete > Column**.

For the final step in making our framework table into the sample table, we want to delete the bottom row of the table. To do this, we place the cursor in any cell of the bottom row. Click **Table > Delete > Rows**. Our framework table is now finished and should look like the following:

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Row 2	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6
Row 3	Cell 7	Cell 8	Cell 9