

How to create an automatic table of contents in Word 2019/2016/2010/2007

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1. How to create an automatic table of contents in Word

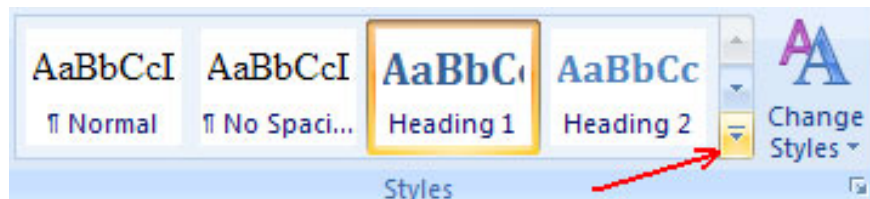
To put it simply, creating an automatic table of contents involves two steps: step 1 is marking the table of contents, and step 2 is displaying it. Marking the table of contents is the most important step and determines its accuracy; you need to do it very carefully.

Step 1: Create a table of contents in Word

You can mark items in an automatic table of contents in one of two ways: using pre-built headings, or marking individual text items.

Method 1: Using pre-installed Heading Styles

1. Select the content you want to format as Headings, then carefully highlight it to avoid adding extra spaces or text to the table of contents.
2. Click the **Home** tab
3. In the **Styles** group, click **Heading 1** (or choose a custom heading).

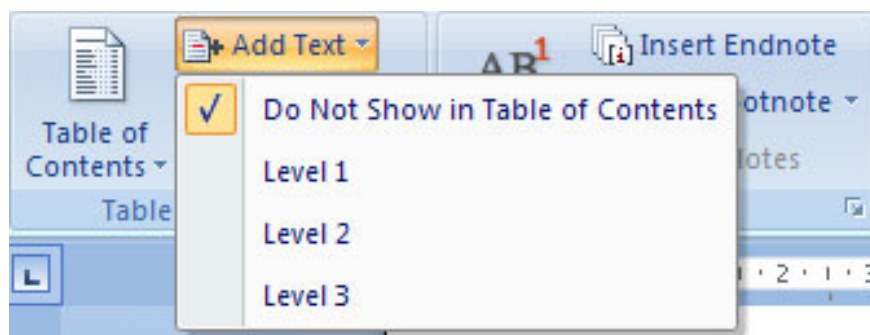


1. If you don't see the style you want, click the arrow to expand the **Quick Styles Gallery**.
2. If the style you want doesn't appear, click **Save Selection as New Quick Style**.



Method 2: Highlight items using the Add Text feature of Table of Contents

1. Select the content you want to create a heading for by highlighting it, highlighting just enough to fill the line you need to create the heading, avoiding highlighting too much.
2. Click **the References tab**.
3. Click **Add Text** in **the Table of Contents group**.
4. Click **the Level** you want to apply to the selected content.

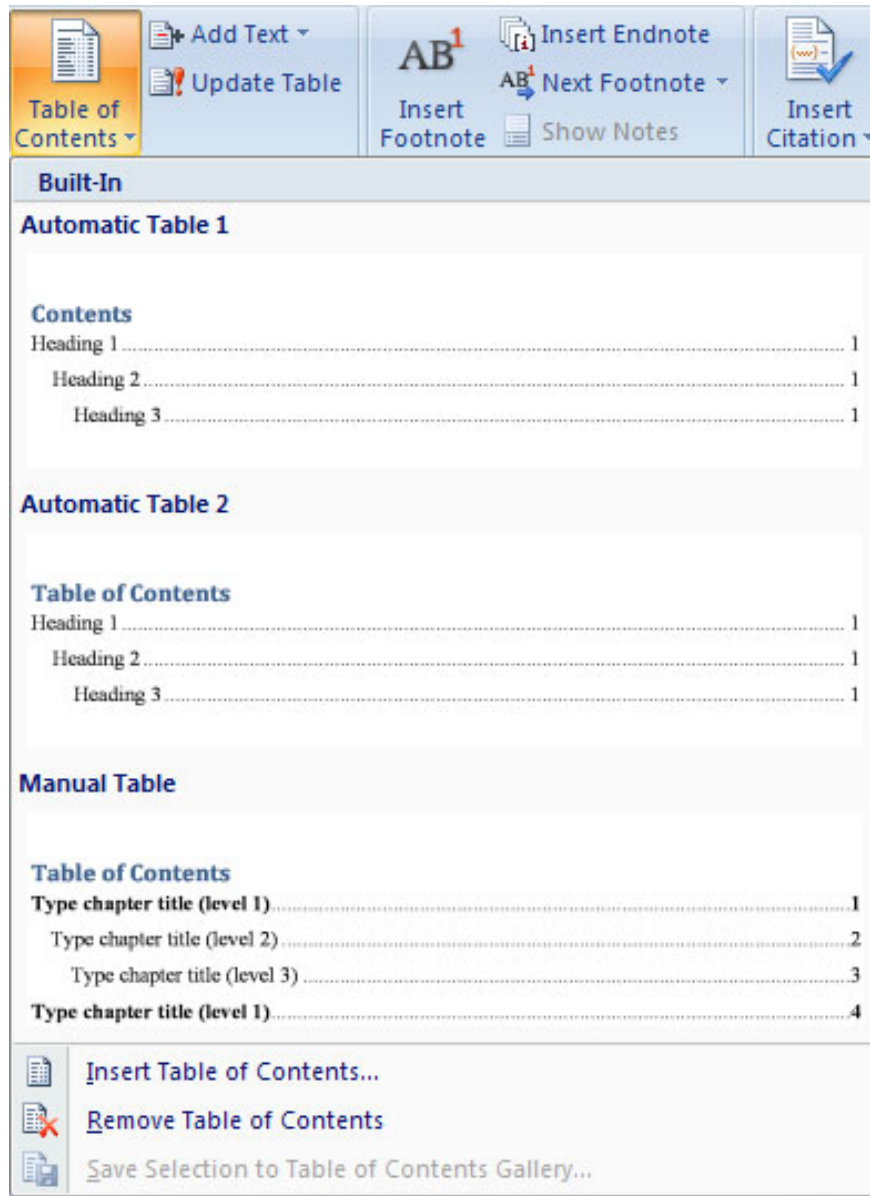


Step 2: Insert an automatic table of contents in Word

To create an automatic table of contents, follow these steps:

1. Place the cursor in the document where you want to place the automatic table of contents (usually the first or last page).
2. Click **the References tab**.

3. Click the **Table of Contents** button and choose from the available table of contents templates. If you don't like any of them, you can click **Insert Table of Contents** and format the table of contents in your own way.
4. In Word 2016, 2019, and Word 365, you have an additional option called **Custom Table of Contents** to customize the table of contents style.

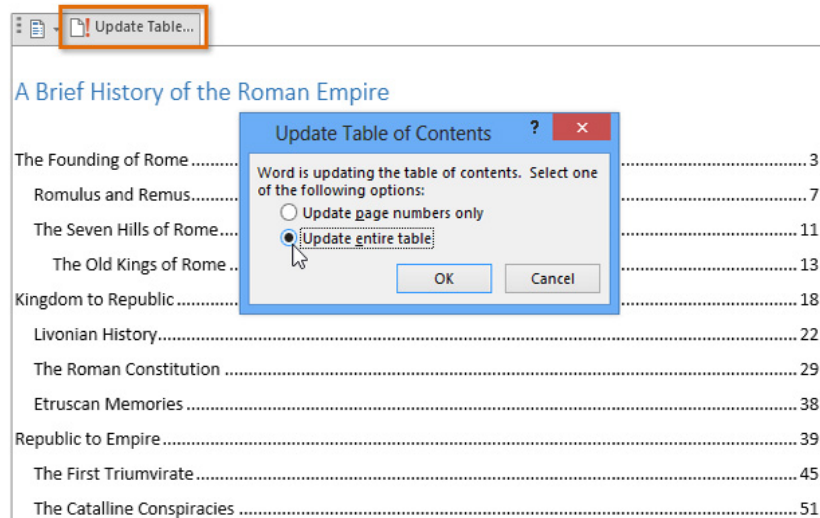
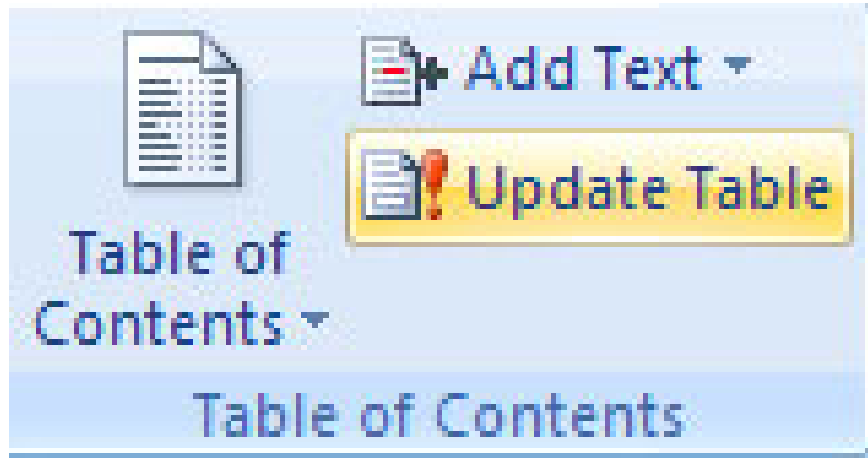


2. Update the table of contents when changes occur.

If you add or remove headings, the table of contents can be updated by:

1. Apply headings or mark items as mentioned above.
2. Click the **References** tab in the Ribbon group.
3. Click **Update Table**; there are two options for updating the table of contents:
 1. Update page numbers only: Select this option when editing heading names or adding pages.

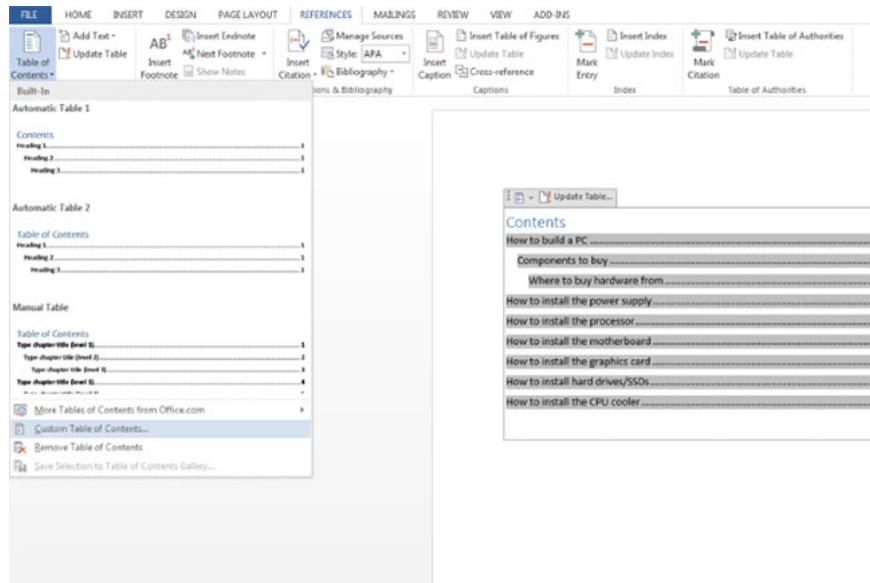
4. This option updates both page numbers and the entire document. If you are not modifying the names of the headings, but only editing the text that changes the page numbers, then simply select "Update page numbers only".



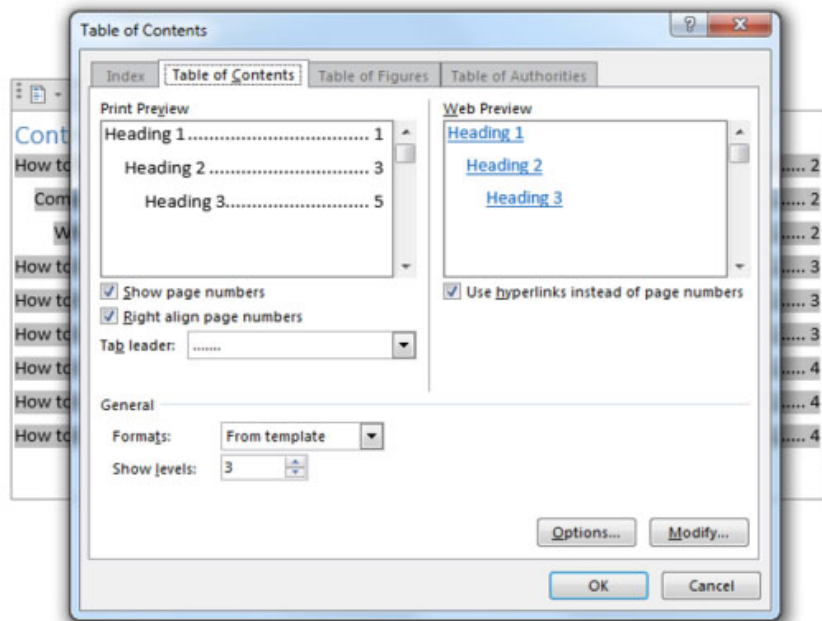
3. Customize the table of contents

Not satisfied with how the table of contents is displayed in the existing templates? The good news is there's a way to customize the appearance of your table of contents.

Step 1 : Click on your table. Select the **References** tab , select **Table of Contents** , and click **Custom Table of Contents** .



Step 2 : In the pop-up window, you can make various adjustments to the table, including the number of levels to display, deleting page numbers, and changing the alignment. You can also open the **Options** button for further customization. Click **OK** when you are finished.



Step 3 : If you want to apply additional formatting, such as changing the appearance of the text in the table, simply highlight what you want to change in the table and modify the size, color, style, etc. These options are located in the **Home** tab.

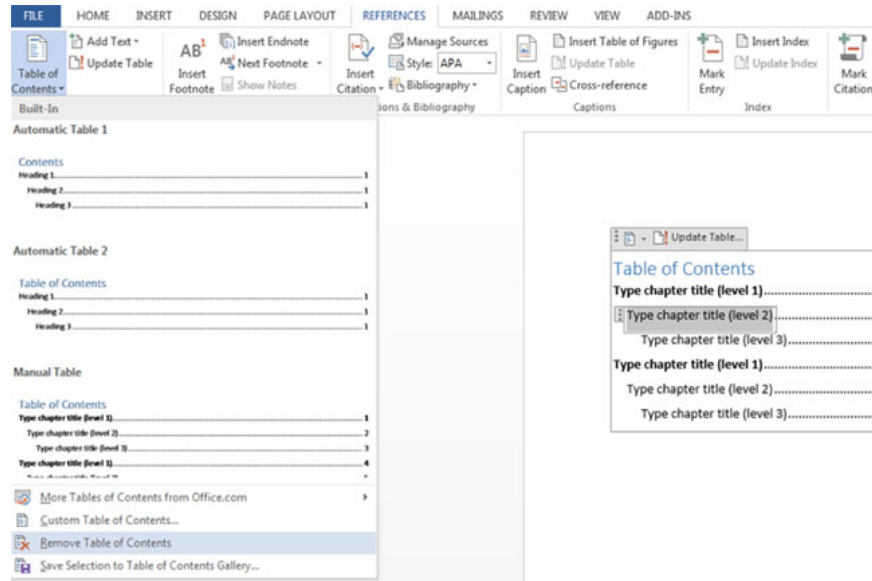
4. Create a table of contents manually.

Your document may be structured in a way that makes it difficult to create an automatic table of contents. Therefore, you might choose to insert a manual table instead.

Step 1 : Click on **References** , select **Table of Contents** , and then select **Manual Table**.

As its name suggests, you will be required to make all necessary edits, such as page numbers. It cannot be updated automatically. You will need to manually enter all the relevant details.

Step 2 : To further customize the manual table of contents, click on the table of contents you created. Click on the **Custom Table of Contents** field in the **Table of Contents** menu .



5. Delete the table of contents in Word

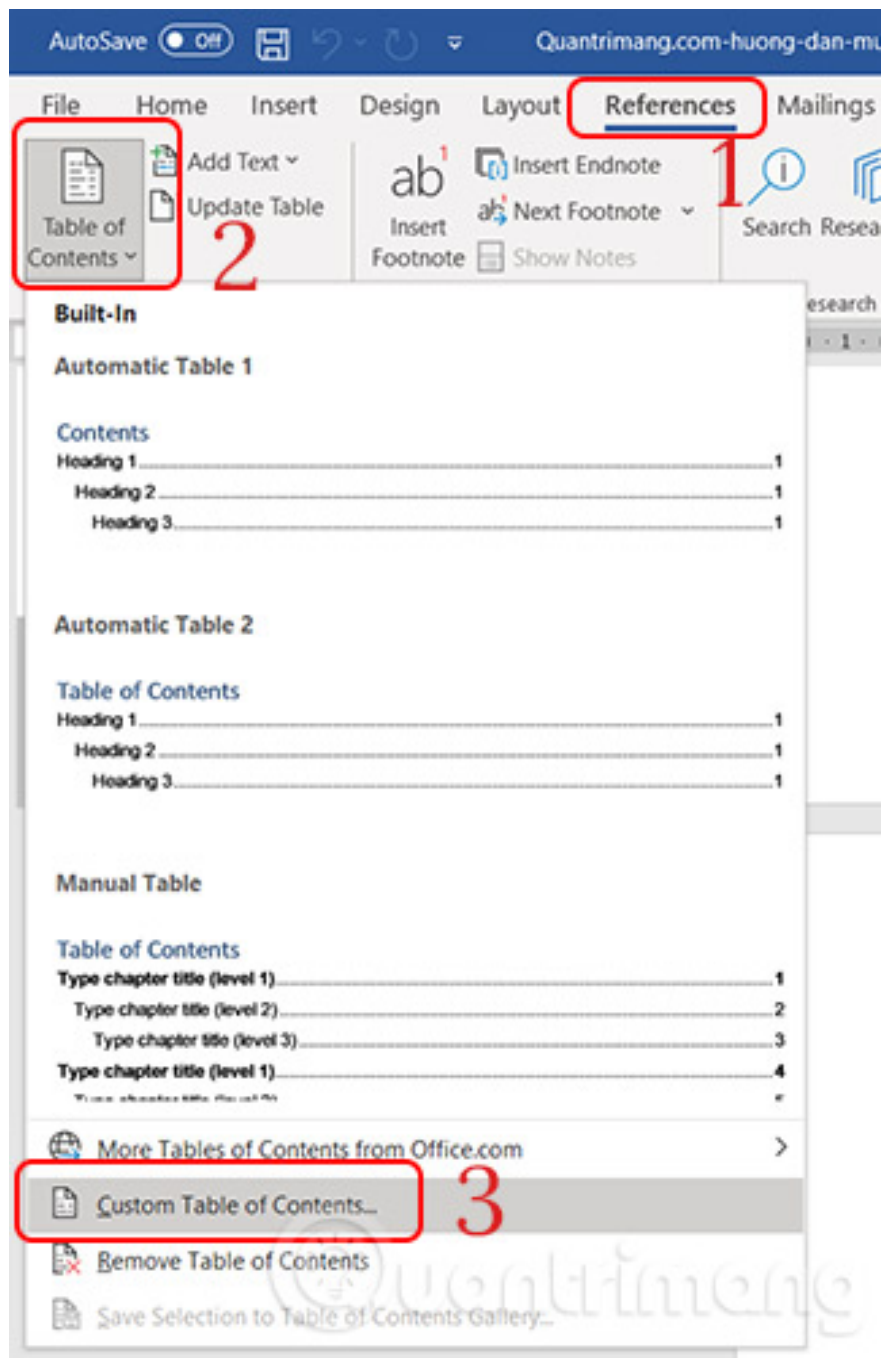
To remove the automatic table of contents, follow these steps:

1. Click the References tab in the Ribbon group.
2. Click **Table of Contents**
3. Click **Remove Table of contents**.

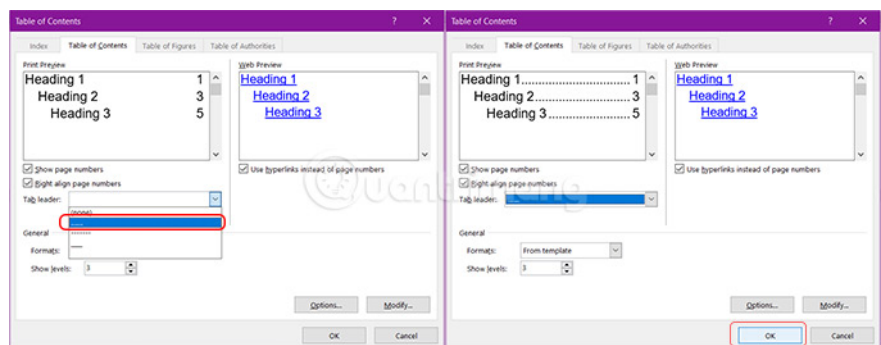
6. Some common errors when creating a table of contents in Word

The table of contents was created automatically, but there are no dots in the table of contents?

You can access the table of contents settings by clicking on the **References** tab > **Table of Contents** > **Custom Table of Contents** :

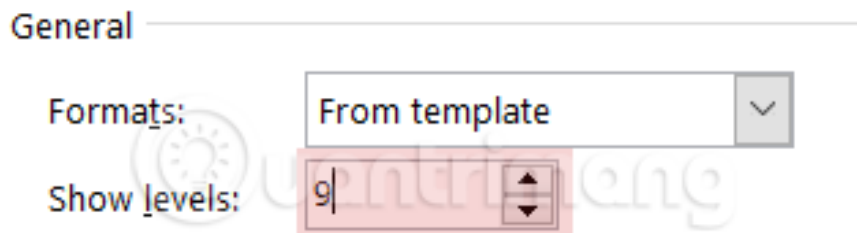


In the **Leader** tab , select . > **OK** :



The table of contents only shows 3 levels?

You also go to the table of contents settings as above, then in the Show levels section, select the number of levels of the table of contents you want to display, up to a maximum of 9. Make sure you have selected all the headings marked according to the chosen level for it to appear.



The table of contents does not display all headings.

Error 1: The table of contents does not contain the heading you just added to your document.

Solution : Update the entire table of contents. If it still doesn't display, check if a style has been applied to the heading you're trying to include. If so, apply the appropriate style and update the table of contents again.

Error 2: The table of contents does not display all heading levels (i.e., level 1 is displayed but a subheading is not shown).

How to fix it : This may be related to not applying the style (see above) or the table of contents not being set up to select the correct style you applied.

Select **Table of Contents** , then click the **References** tab and choose **Table of Contents/Custom Table of Contents** to check your custom settings.

The table of contents displays too much information.

Error 1: The table of contents is displaying the entire text.

Solution : Navigate to the section(s) currently displayed in the table of contents. They may be incorrectly styled. This sometimes happens when you continue from previous sections, causing the style to be set incorrectly.

Select a paragraph and reapply the appropriate formatting to prevent the paragraph content from being mistakenly included in the table of contents. Check the paragraphs beforehand to ensure their formatting is correct, then copy the appropriate formatting to another paragraph.

Error 2: The table of contents is displaying all paragraphs.

Solution : In this case, the same style applies to both headings and paragraphs, so you need to correct the style as instructed above. Otherwise, the table of contents might mistakenly include some items in the table.

Video on how to create an automatic table of contents in Word 2019

The easiest way to create an automatic table of contents is to utilize the Heading Styles you want to include in the table of contents. For example, there are Heading 1, Heading 2... depending on the content of the document. When you add or delete any Headings from the document, Word will update the automatic table of contents. Word also updates the page numbers in the table of contents when information in the document is added or deleted. When you create an automatic table of contents, the first thing you think about is marking the items in the document. The table of contents is formatted according to the levels of Headings. Level 1 will include any content formatted with Heading 1 style.

If you need to create a table of contents for your document, don't type it manually; check out [TipsMake.com](https://www.tipsmake.com)'s guide on creating an automatic table of contents in Word .

The tutorial above guides you on creating an automatic table of contents in Word 365, Word 2021, 2019, 2016, 2013, 2010, and even Word 2007, as the process is basically the same across all versions. If you are using Word 2003, please refer to the guide on creating an automatic table of contents in Word 2003 [here](#).

You finished reading the article "**How to create an automatic table of contents in Word 2019/2016/2010/2007**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.