Create

Introduction to Table of Contents

Use IT+

Contents

Introduction

Imagine you're working with a **really long document** in Microsoft Word, like an academic paper or a big report. Depending on the project, it might be dozens or even hundreds of pages long! When a document is this large, it can be difficult to remember which page has what information. Fortunately, Word allows you to insert a table of contents, making it easy to organise and navigate your document.

A **table of contents** is just like the list of chapters at the beginning of a book. It lists each section in the document and the page number where that section begins. A really basic table of contents might look like this:

You could create a table of contents manually—typing the section names and page numbers—but it would take a lot of work. And if you ever decide to rearrange your sections or add more information, you'll have to update everything all over again. However, with the right formatting, Word can create and update a table of contents automatically.

We'll use **Word 2013** to show you how to create a table of contents, but you can use the **exact same method** in Word 2010 or Word 2007.

1 Apply Heading Styles

If you've already read **Styles** lesson, you know they're an easy way to add professional text formatting to different parts of your document. Styles also serve another important purpose: adding a hidden layer of **organisation** and **structure** to your document.

If you apply a **heading style**, you're telling Word that you've started a new part of your document. When you insert the table of contents, it will create a section for each heading. In the table of contents above, each chapter uses a heading style, so there are four sections.

To apply a heading style, select the text you want to format, then choose the desired heading in the **Styles** group on the **Home** tab.
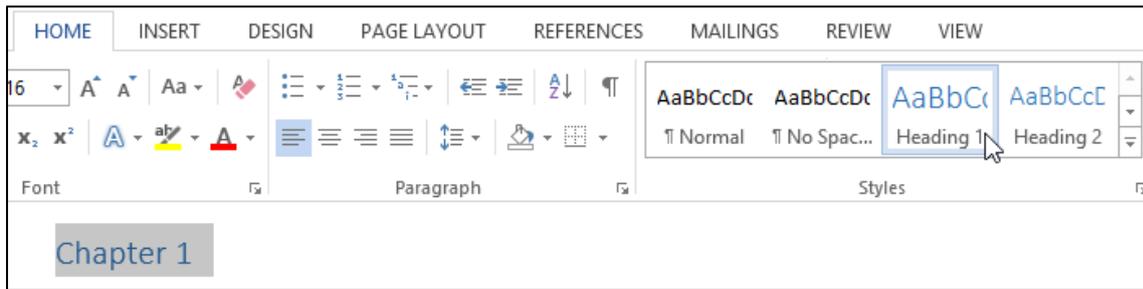
2 Insert the Table of Contents

Now for the easy part! Once you've applied heading styles, you can insert your table of contents in just a few clicks. Navigate to the **References** tab on the Ribbon, then click the **Table of Contents** command. Select a built-in table from the menu that appears, and the table of contents will appear in your document.
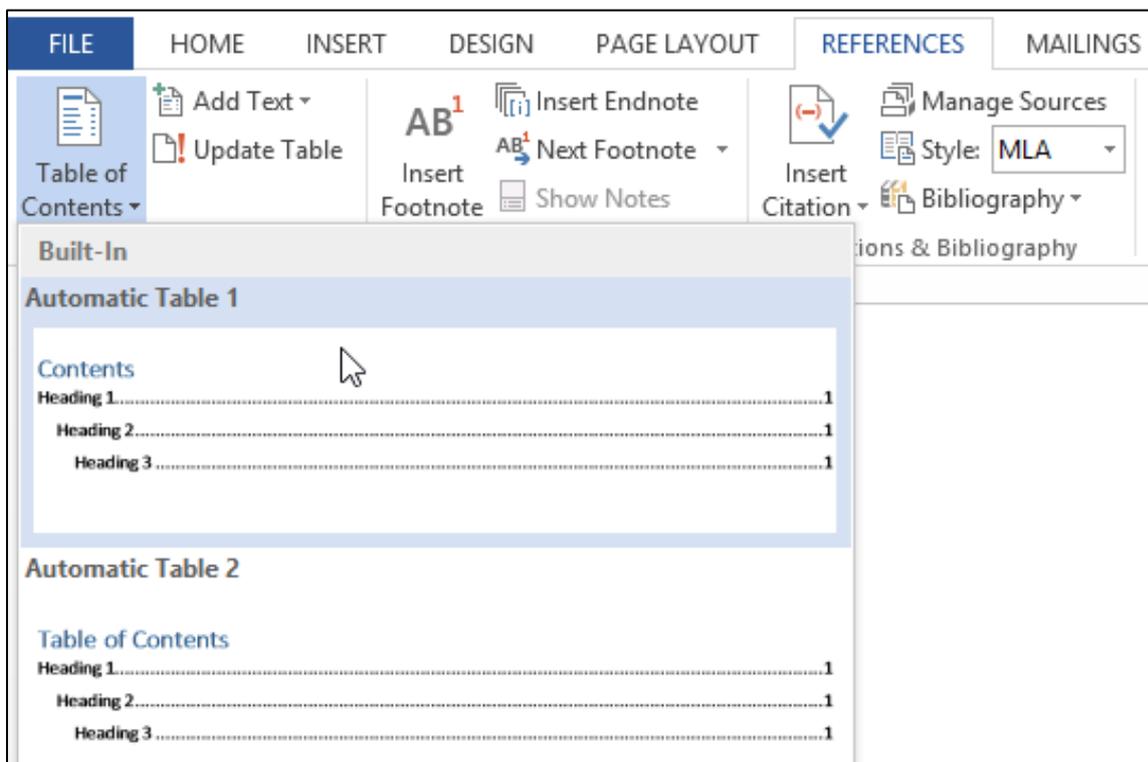
As you can see in the image below, the table of contents uses the heading styles in your document to determine where each section begins. Sections that begin with a Heading 2 or Heading 3 style will be nested within a Heading 1 style, much like a **multilevel list**.

A table of contents also creates **links** for each section, allowing you to navigate to different parts of your document. Just hold the **Ctrl** key on your keyboard and click to go to any section.

3 Update as Needed

If you edit or add to your document, it's easy to update the table of contents. Just select the table of contents, click **Update Table,** and choose **Update Entire Table** in the dialog box that appears. The table of contents will then update to reflect any changes.

Update Table...

A Brief History of the Roman Empire

Update Table of Contents ? ×

Word is updating the table of contents. Select one of the following options:

○ Update page numbers only

● Update entire table

OK   Cancel