



LibreOffice Writer is not a Typewriter

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What this session will do

- So many documents use LibreOffice Writer as if it were a Typewriter
- It is however so easy to use Writer in the way in which it is intended
- This session will develop a Template that can be used to write Business Letters as an example
 - It can easily be adapted to suit you personal preferences
- It will demonstrate some of the useful features of Writer that can be applied to other Templates
 - If time permits we can look at a Template for writing more formal documents including several that have been published recently to the forum

First - some jargon terms used in typography

- Font
 - This is a name used to identify the character set design
 - Fonts are pre-installed with the Operating system
 - But differ between different manufacturers
 - Fonts can be installed by applications such as LibreOffice
 - Additional fonts can be downloaded from various sources
 - Some are free, others are licenced sometimes at high cost
 - What to choose?
 - This presentation uses Liberation fonts as installed by LibreOffice

Font Type

- Font types fall into two basic categories
 - Sans Serif fonts – this one is Liberation Sans
 - Serif fonts – this one is Liberation Serif
- Serifs are the curly bits at the end of the lines on the font
- Sans Serif fonts are typically used for Headings
- Serif fonts are designed for easy reading and are typically used for body text

Font Weight and related issues

- Font weight describes whether the font is
 - **BOLD** or Standard
 - And can also include *Bold italic* and just *Italic*
- Other variations (sometimes called decorations) include
 - Underline or Overline etc.

Font Size

- Font size simply defines how big the text is
 - It is usually defined in “Points” which are $\frac{1}{72}$ of an inch or 0.3527 mm
 - e.g. 6pt = 0.2166 mm LibreOffice rounds this down to 0.21mm
 - The actual size of a character which is described as 12 Point (pt) is however surprisingly difficult to measure directly
 - It is the measurement in points between the top of the
 - highest part of a character e.g. “H”
 - and the lowest part of a character e.g. “g”
 - Practically document text should typically be 10pt to 12pt in most cases
 - Headings can be typically 20pt to 12pt

Proportional spacing & Kerning – What is it?

- Proportional spacing
 - I I I I I
 - V V V V V
 - A A A A A
- Kerning
 - V V V V V - A A A A A
 - V A V A V A V A V A -
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Font advice

- Choose a pair of fonts for most documents
 - Only use “fancy” fonts for particular emphasis
 - Liberation Sans is reasonable for Headings
 - Liberation Serif is a reasonable choice for the body of the document
- For normal Documents use
 - 10pt to 12pt for body text
 - 12pt to 20pt for headings
 - Titles can be larger according to taste

Demo time - 1

- Open demo-01
- All Lorem ipsum text (multiple paragraphs)
 - All paragraphs initially Default style
- Select 1st para – change style to Text Body
 - Line spacing changes to 1.5 lines and para spacing – show why
 - Change language to Latin to get rid of spelling errors
 - Only applies to this paragraph for now
- Change font colour of text body to Red – only this changes
 - Change remaining paras to Text Body – all paras change
 - Change para spacing first line indent – all paras change

Demo Time - 2

- Select Text Body Style
 - New style = Text Body Green
 - Show/make inheritance from Text Body
 - Show Next para setting and set to Text Body green
 - Change font colour to Green
 - Apply to second paragraph
 - Insert new paragraph and show effect of Next para
 - Modify next para setting to Text Body
 - Insert new paragraph

Demo time - 3

- Select Default font
- Change font name to something outrageous
 - e.g. Lucinda Handwriting
 - Show that all paragraphs change
- Change font size to something small
 - Show that all paragraphs change
- Show Widow/orphan effect (not that sometimes these are defined the other way round)
 - Orphan is one line of text remains on a page when rest of the paragraph overflows
 - Widow is where one line of paragraph overflows from main body of paragraph to next page

What does a business letter contain (1)

- Your details section containing
 - Possibly a Logo for a business letter
 - Sender (i.e. your) address
 - Sender telephone number and email address
 - Date of letter
 - References (your own, e.g. a file name and the addressee's reference)
 - Address of the organisation you are sending to

What does a business letter contain (2)

- Introduction
 - A salutation – typically Dear ...
- Body of letter
 - Optionally a Subject line to highlight the reason for the letter
 - The body of the letter
- Sign off
 - Yours sincerely or something similar
 - Space for a “wet ink” signature
 - Your name (in case they can’t read your signature!)

Letter components

- Each of these elements has different layout requirements but the overall look must be consistent
 - A common font is needed for most elements
 - Your address could be in a fancy font for impact
 - The letter subject might be in a Heading font
 - The Font Weight should typically be consistent across all elements
 - The letter subject might be on Bold
 - The spacing between elements will probably need to be different

Letter layout

- This depends on personal preference
- A common way (well at least the way I do it) is
 - Right aligned
 - My address and contact details and date go top right
 - Left Aligned
 - References are next – left aligned
 - Salutation
 - Subject
 - Body of letter

Formatting each of these sections

- We allocate a unique “Paragraph Style” to each element
- A Paragraph Style specifies
 - Font choice including size, weight, colour etc.
 - Spacing between paragraphs
 - Position of paragraph on page i.e. Left, Right, Centre
 - and lots more ...
- Paragraph styles can be derived from another style but with specific parameters changed
 - e.g. paragraph spacing, font choice, weight etc

Templates

- When you have formatted a document to your design taste you can convert it to a Template
 - When you want a new document of a similar type e.g. a letter you just open that template and a document appears already formatted just as you like it.
- A demo letter template has been produced and will be used to show aspects of all of these features we have talked about
- You are welcome to have a copy!

Open Document from Letter Template

- File → New → Documents → Demo Business Letter
 - A new document opens which has
 - the from address, contact details, reference and date top right
 - Note that the Date is set to Today
 - The References, to address, a salutation on the left
 - These contain “Placeholders”
 - The Subject for the letter
 - Body of letter Placeholder
 - Signature etc. at the bottom
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How have we formatted it

- The formatting all comes from Styles in the Template
 - We will look at these shortly
- The strange elements next to your Reference etc are called “Placeholders”
 - Placeholders are special elements or fields we can add to the Template document that show you where to type data
 - They disappear as soon as you start to type

Styles used – Your details area

- The paragraphs at the top right are all derived hierarchically from Default Style
 - They are Right aligned
 - They are separate styles so we can easily add a blank space between them by using the option don't add space ...
 - Deriving them hierarchically means we can be artistic and choose a fancy font if we wish for the address
 - For this reason the My address style is NOT the top of the hierarchy!
 - Try it

Styles used – remaining areas

- The following styles are all linked to the Default Style
 - These have the Don't insert blank space between paragraphs of the same style enabled
 - References, next style = Reference
 - Addressee, next style = Addressee
 - These do insert space after the paragraph
 - Title, next style = Text Body, Centred
 - Text Body, next style = Text Body
 - Sign off, Next style = Signature
 - Signature, Next style = Text Body

Finally – what are these “Place Holders”

- A Place Holder is a special field that is contained in the Template
 - It indicates where, and what, text should be entered
 - It is only intended to be used in Templates but is very useful as a reminder what is needed
 - Click on it to start typing and it disappears
 - If you do not click and type over it it will be printed

My letter exceeds one page – what happens

- When the letter exceeds one page several additional features come into play
- widow/orphan control comes into play
 - Prevents a single line of a paragraph being left behind on a previous page
 - Prevents a paragraph overflowing one line onto the next page
- The second and subsequent pages suddenly acquire a Page number which by default shows
 - Page n of m

Can I have a copy of this Template?

- Yes of course!
 - It is free for anyone to use
 - Feel free to adapt it as you see fit as may want to define your own personal style
 - There are further options that could be used to layout the front page but these will have to left for another day.

External links

- A series of video tutorials on LibreOffice – in this case Writer
 - <https://thefrugalcomputerguy.com/seriespg.php?ser=11>
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