How To Be Style-ish
by
Kim Murdock

We here at Appkickers Technology take styles seriously. In my last article I explained what styles are and why you really want to start using them. Now let's start to look at *how* to use them and what you need to do to bend them to your will.

Anybody For A Recap?

Before we go anywhere, remember the benefits of using Styles that I mentioned last time:

- Styles make formatting easier,
- Styles make formatting consistent,
- Styles make changes happen quickly and easily,
- Styles make documents stable,
- Styles make documents smaller,
- Styles give you much greater control over your work product.

While you're getting the hang of Styles, you're going to want to revert to your most comfortable habits – manual formatting – particularly when you don't have a lot of time. Resist.

A few of you reading this may be rolling your eyes and muttering "It's 'way faster to just format a paragraph with the buttons on the toolbar. Then I just use the format painter to apply it to all the paragraphs I want." It is to you Manual Laborers that I address this:

Is not.

No matter how quickly your mouse or keyboard can shoot you through your document, it *is* faster to format using styles.

What-ever...

Here's the theory: your document is broken up into paragraphs and each paragraph has a particular way it needs to look – the greeting on a letter, the chapter heading of a book. You "apply" the appropriately formatted style to each paragraph and the paragraph immediately takes on the formatting of the style. Move from paragraph to paragraph doing this and before you know it, your document is formatted.

So how is this faster? Apply styles as you type, and you'll only have to go through your document once. And when you need to reformat that 45-page document? Change a couple of styles and you're done. No visiting every paragraph, no scanning the document for something you might have missed.

Plus, you can use your styles in other documents. Essentially, that means no more formatting, just applying styles.

How Machiavellian

Let's take a look at the built-in styles that come with Word – there are more than 100 of 'em and just looking at the list would make anyone's hands start to shake. So take a deep, calming breath and try not to look down. As you'll see later, they may be built-in, but you can edit them to suit your purpose.

You view built-in styles differently depending on the version of Word you're using.

- **Word 2000:** Click Format > Styles. This displays the Styles dialog box.
- **Word XP & 2003:** Click the Format > Styles and Formatting… to display the Styles Pane.
- **Word 2007:** On the Home tab, the Styles Group is visible by default. This is a sub-set of the styles available to you. Click the arrow in the lower right corner of the Styles Group to display the Styles Window.

Something's Missing…

By default, Word hides most of the available styles from you. How can you start applying styles if you don't know what's there?

In all versions of Word, there are tools to help you fine-tune displaying styles. Prior to 2007, a drop-down list at the bottom of the list of styles allows you to choose which styles to view. Choose "All styles."
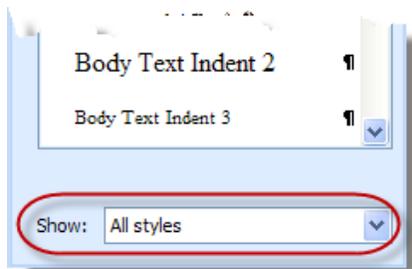
In Word 2007 they've replaced the drop-down with a "Manage Styles" icon. Click to display the Manage Styles dialog, then uncheck the box next to "Show recommended styles only."
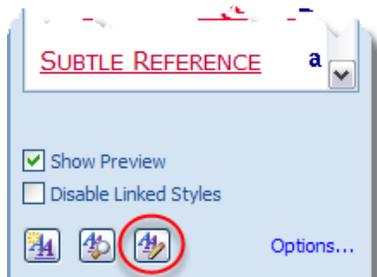
How Do I Apply?

To apply a style, all you have to do is move your cursor to the paragraph you wish to format. You don't need to select it – in fact, make certain you don't have anything selected as you can inadvertently apply the style just to the selected text.

Now, with the Styles Dialog box (2000), or Styles Panes (2002/2003), or Styles window (2007) open – click the style you want to apply. Simply clicking will apply the style in all but Word 2000 – for that version, click Apply to close the dialog and apply the style.

As you can see, it's a little easier in the later versions of Word to quickly apply styles. The Styles Pane and the Style window stay open so you can move back and forth in your document, clicking styles quickly and easily.

What's that I hear you say? You *hate* having the Styles thingie open all the time? And you Word 2000 folks are just about ready to check out? Well…

I've Got Some Good News And I've Got Some Bad News...

\<The Good News\> No matter what version of Word you're using, you can apply a style without displaying the various Styles dialogs. Type Ctrl+Shift+S.

In Word 2007, this displays the floating Apply Styles dialog (below left). In prior versions, it pops your cursor into the Styles drop-down on the Formatting Toolbar (below right). In either case you can type in the name of the style you want to apply, or you can click open the drop-down and pick from the list.
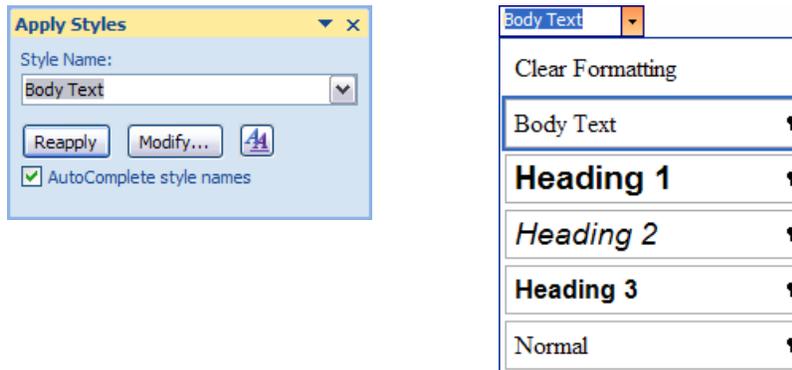
\<The Bad News\> This drop-down list doesn't always display all the styles you might want to use, even though the styles are in the document. **\<The Good News\>** If you know the style exists, just start typing it in the box – Word will find it and apply it to your current paragraph.
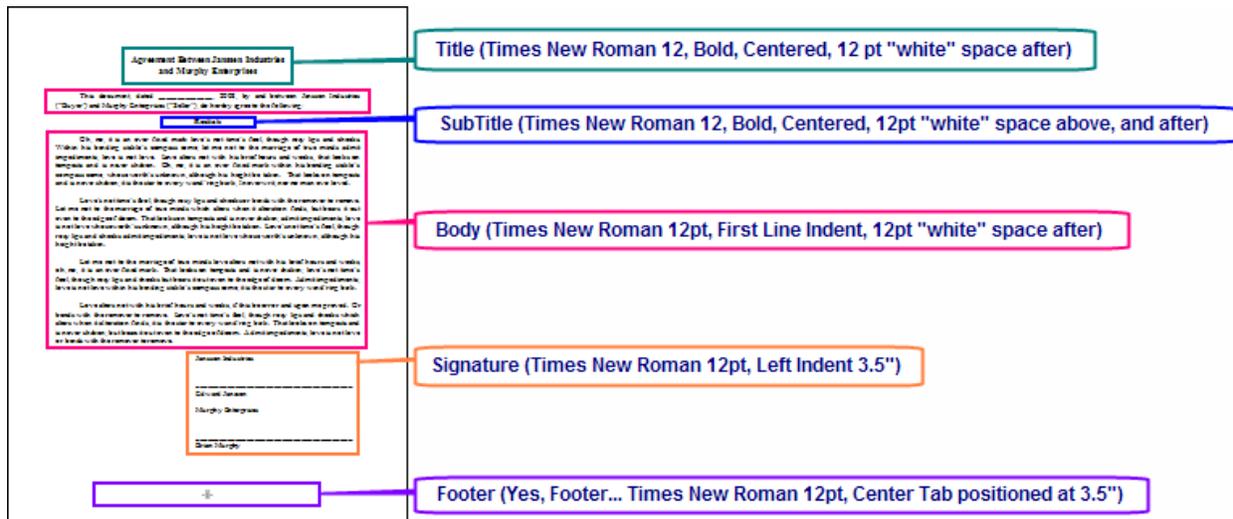
\<The Good News / Bad News\> If the style you type *doesn't* exist – maybe your fingers fumbled a little – Word will create it for you, based on the formatting in the current paragraph! So pay attention. This can drive you nuts, or be a very useful style trick.

\<The Good News\> You're really not going to use all that many styles. If you prefer this method, you'll get accustomed to calling up your most-used style.

Let's Be Practical

Now it's time to determine which styles you'll want to use. Start by reviewing your documents and analyzing how they look. What fonts do you or your company use? What size? Does this vary from document type to document type? Is your text usually double- or single-spaced? Is the first line indented? Is there space between paragraphs?

Here's a *very* simple, one-page contract that I've broken down by kinds of paragraphs:

Title (Times New Roman 12, Bold, Centered, 12 pt "white" space after)

SubTitle (Times New Roman 12, Bold, Centered, 12pt "white" space above, and after)

Body (Times New Roman 12pt, First Line Indent, 12pt "white" space after)

Signature (Times New Roman 12pt, Left Indent 3.5")

Footer (Yes, Footer... Times New Roman 12pt, Center Tab positioned at 3.5")

I've determined the attributes of each of the parts of my document, including the footer. [*Your* contract probably has numbered paragraphs, but numbering is a subject unto itself and will be addressed in a future article.]

As it happens, Word has built-in styles for each of the paragraph types I've identified. There are styles named "Title," "Subtitle," "Signature," and "Footer." There is also a style named "Body Text" which is intended for the body of a document.

But not one of them is formatted the way I want by default. So I'll edit each of these styles to reflect the desired format, and apply an appropriate style to each paragraph.

Let's walk through editing Body Text to look like the body of my contract, above.

Display the Styles dialog for your version of Word (hopefully, you remember how to do this now – if not, check above). In Word 2000, make sure Body Text is selected in the list of styles, then click the Modify button. In Word 2002-2007, right click on the Body Text style and click Modify.

In each version, there is a "Format" button on the Modify dialog that allows you to choose different kinds of formatting – such as paragraph or tabs. This is from Word 2003:
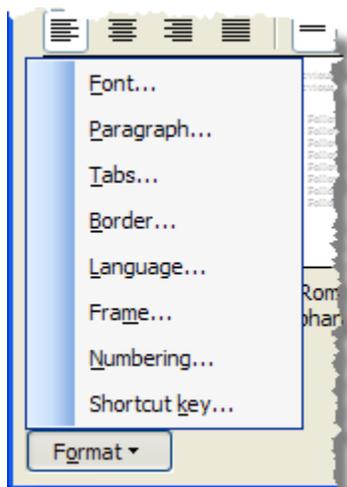
Click Paragraph… to display the Paragraph format dialog.
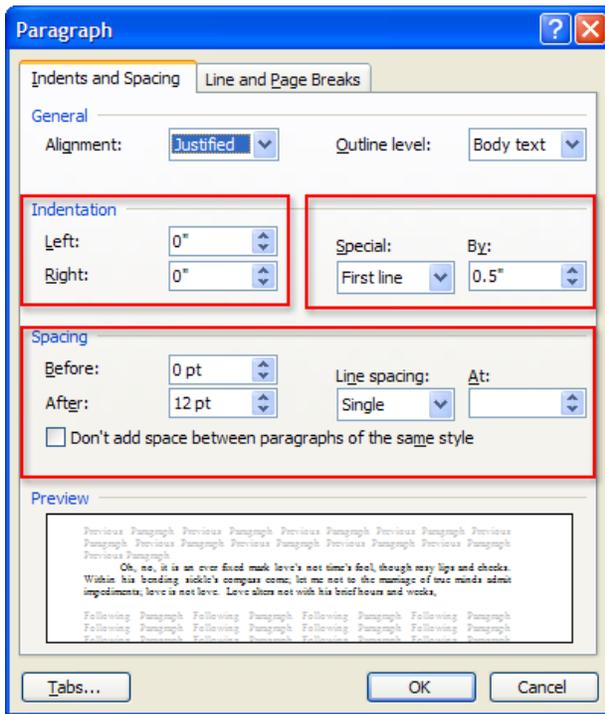
Use these settings to set up the Body Text indents and spacing.

Click OK, OK (or OK, OK, Apply for Word 2000) and you've done it – you've modified the Body Text style.

Now apply Body Text to the appropriate paragraphs – click in a paragraph and click on Body Text in the Styles Pane/Styles window or type Ctrl+Shift+S and start typing Body Text in the styles box. Word will auto-complete for you. Press the Enter key to apply the style.

Each of the dialog boxes available through the Modify Styles dialog looks a *lot* like its counterpart accessed directly through the toolbar. The only difference is that you're adjusting the style, not just the current paragraph. These dialogs should allow you to make the same kinds of adjustments you used to make directly.

Before I Go...

I've covered a lot. But have I convinced you manual laborers out there to keep working with styles?

Maybe this following trick will help.

Find a document with several paragraphs in it. Make sure Body Text has been applied to several of them. Now select one of those paragraphs – the whole thing, including the paragraph mark.

Now, go to town with those manual format buttons. Change the font, size, color, indent, alignment…anything you want. Drag the tabs around. Drag the margins around.
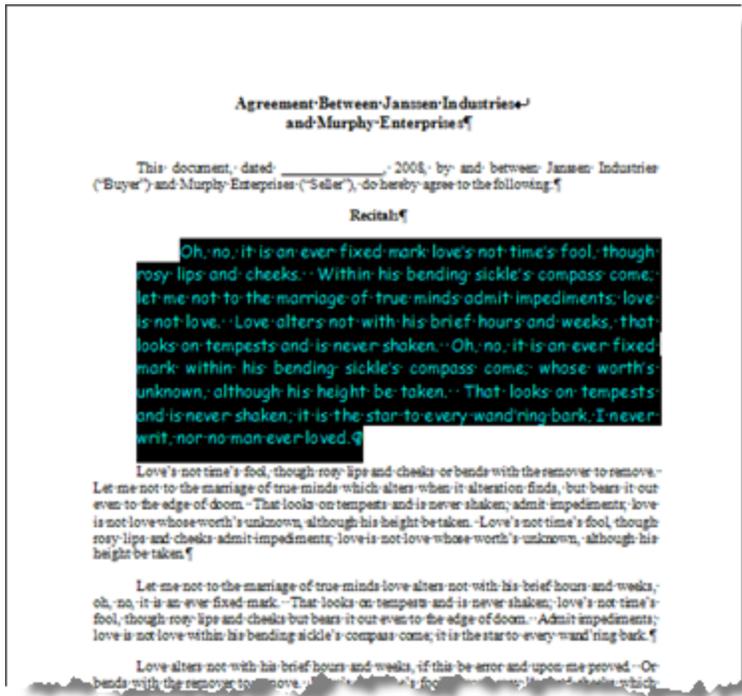
When you're satisfied, do the following with the paragraph still selected:

Word 2000: Press Ctrl+Shift+S. "Body Text" should appear in the box. Press Enter. You'll be prompted to either "Update the style to reflect recent changes?" or "Reapply the formatting of the style to the selection?" Choose the first option.

Word 2002/2003: Open the Styles Pane, locate Body Text in the *lower* list of styles, right-click it, then click "Update to Match Selection."

Word 2007: Open the Styles window, locate Body Text in the list of styles, right-click it, then click "Update Body Text to Match Selection."

Depending on your format choices, your document will now look something like this:
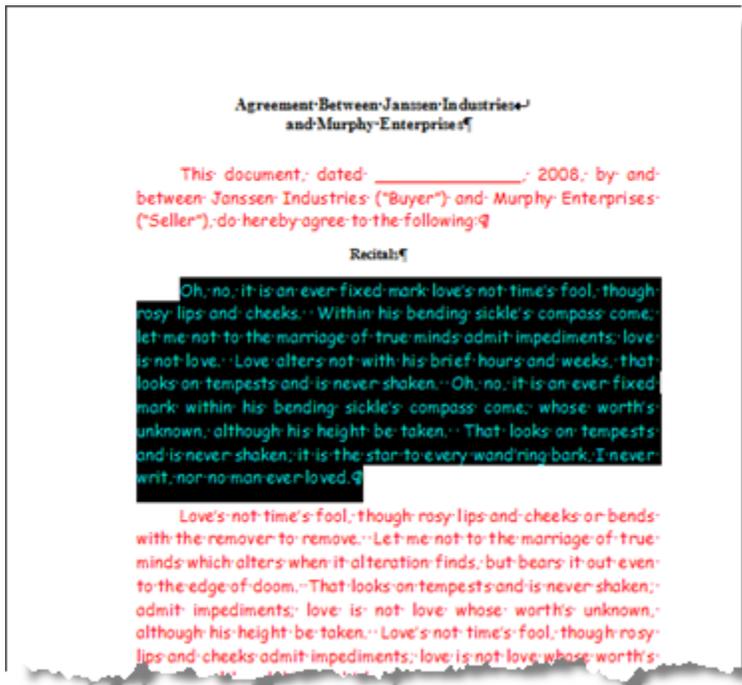
You redefined the Body Text style. Every Body Text paragraph in your document also changed. And you did it with a little manual labor.

How *very* stylish.