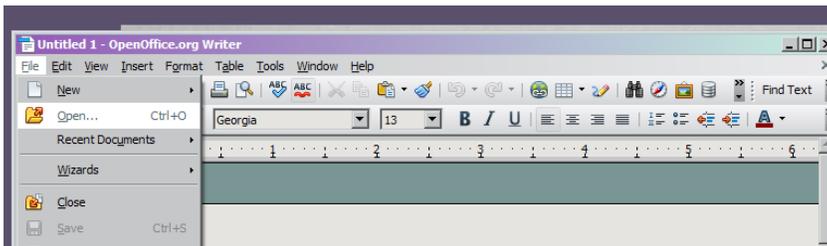
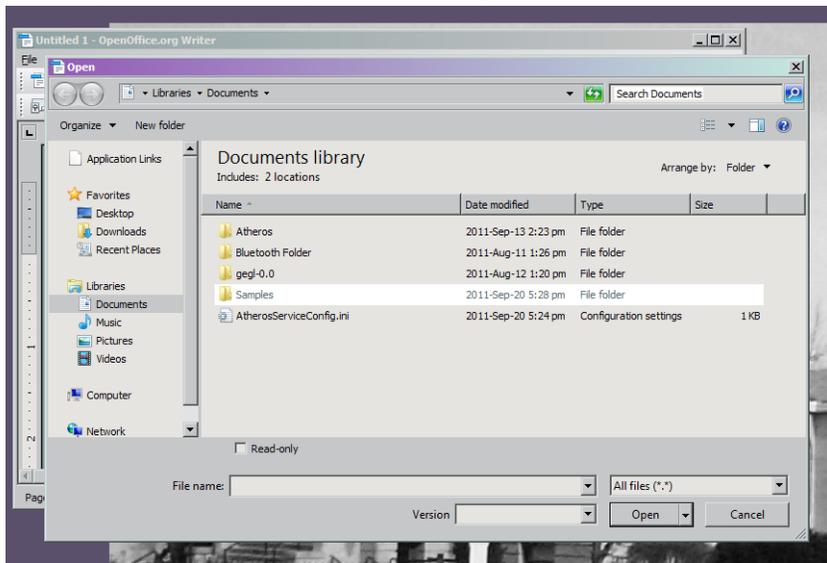


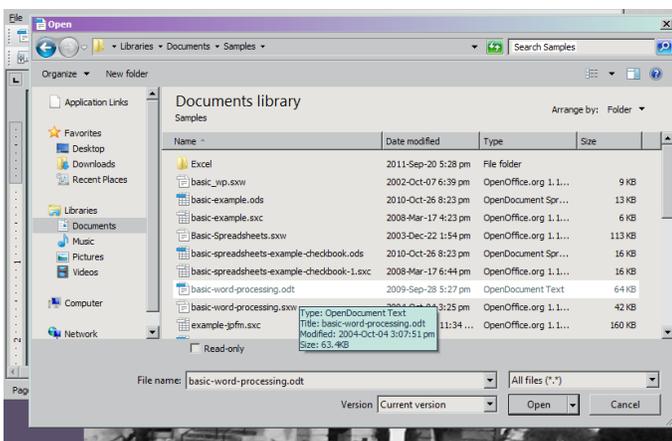
Let's start by **opening** an existing document. Start OpenOffice.org Writer (if you haven't already), pull down the *File* menu, and click *Open*.



The *Open File dialog box* will open:



Double-click on the *Samples* folder to open it, then find *basic-word-processing.odt* and double-click it.



The document will open, as shown at right.

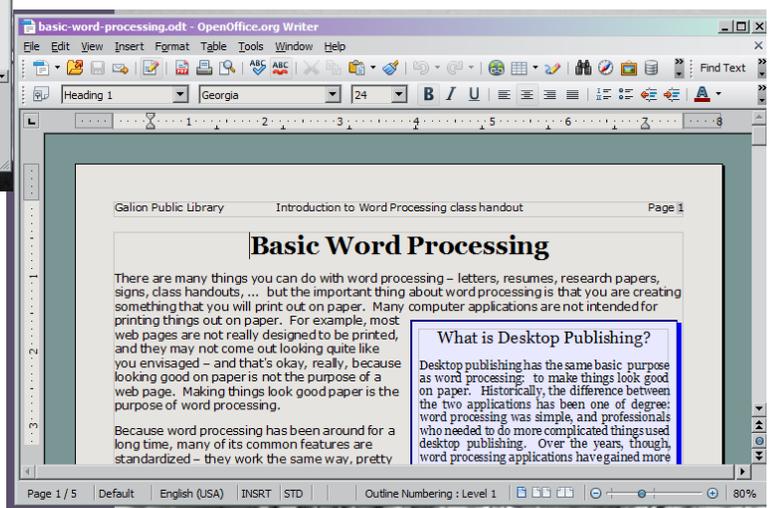
Now that we have a document open, let's play with it a little bit...

What Is Word Processing?

Basically, **word processing** is when you use a computer to create a document that you're going to print out on paper. There are many things you can do with word processing – letters, resumes, research papers, signs, class handouts, ... but the important thing is that you are creating something that you will print out on paper.

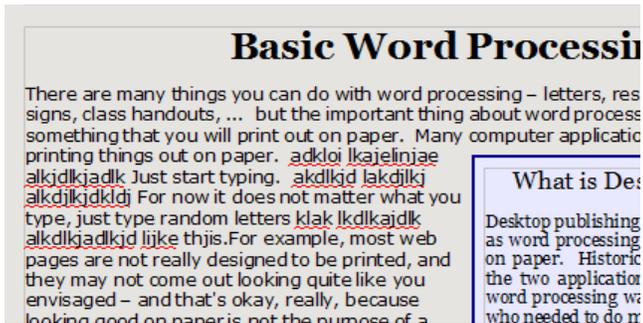
Early word processing software was very limited. If you needed to do anything complicated (like columns or tables or frames or even different sizes of text) you needed more expensive **desktop publishing** software. Today, regular word processing can do all that stuff.

Because word processing has been around for a long time, many of its common features are standardized – they work the same way, pretty much no matter what software you use. Thus, the skills that you learn in this class using OpenOffice.org will still work if you switch to Microsoft Office or WordPerfect or whatever.



Notice that when you move your mouse pointer over a paragraph of text, it changes its shape from the standard arrow to an I-beam pointer. This is called a *text selection* pointer. If you click with it, a text cursor will appear at that point. This *cursor* is the point where everything you type on the keyboard goes.

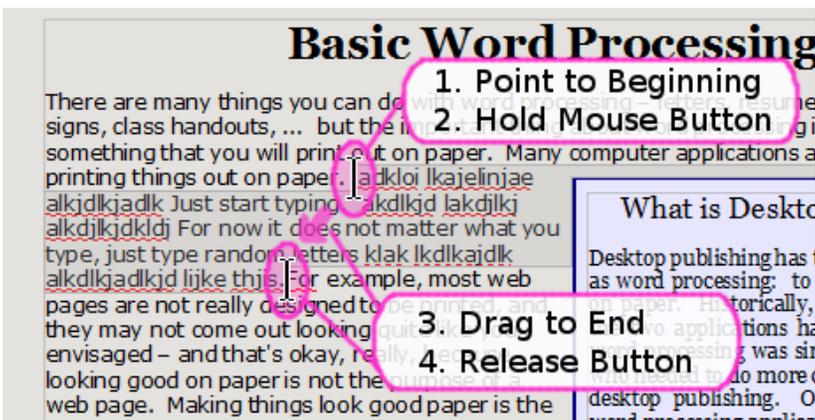
Cursor: |
Text-selection mouse pointer: I



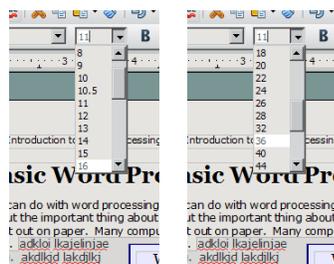
For now, click to place your cursor somewhere in the middle of the first paragraph, and start typing there. Just type some random words. (*Ignore the squiggly red underlines for now. All they mean is that the words you typed aren't in the spelling dictionary.*) Notice what happens to the rest of the paragraph: even though the individual words move around to make space for what you typed, the paragraph is still shaped like a paragraph.

This phenomenon is called *word wrap*, and word processing software does it automatically. Unlike a typewriter, you never need to worry about reaching the end of a line.

Typing in text is a great start at a document, but sooner or later you're going to want to do something more interesting with it. Let's play with it a bit. Pick out a portion of the text (e.g., one sentence) and **select** it: position the mouse pointer at the beginning, then *drag* the mouse (i.e., hold the button down and move the pointer) to the end of the section you want to select, then let go.



The text you have selected will be *highlighted*. Now you can do things to it. Let's make it bigger. Pull down the font size drop box and click on a bigger number, like 24 or 36. Presto, our selected text is now larger.



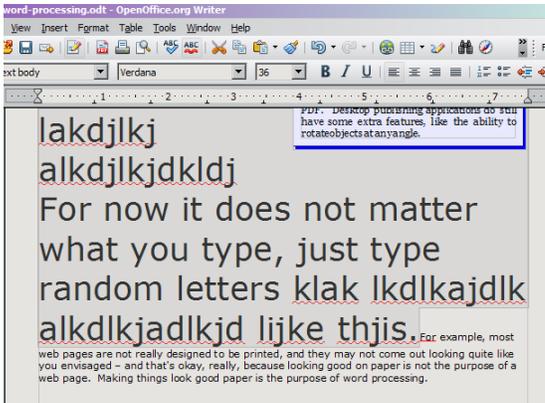
What's a Character?

A *character* is a single piece of text in a document: a letter, numeric digit, punctuation mark, or symbol...

What trips most people up is that a few special characters are not directly visible (although their effects are visible). The most common of these invisible characters are the *space*, the *tab character*, and the *paragraph break*, which are inserted with the spacebar, the tab key, and the return or enter key, respectively.

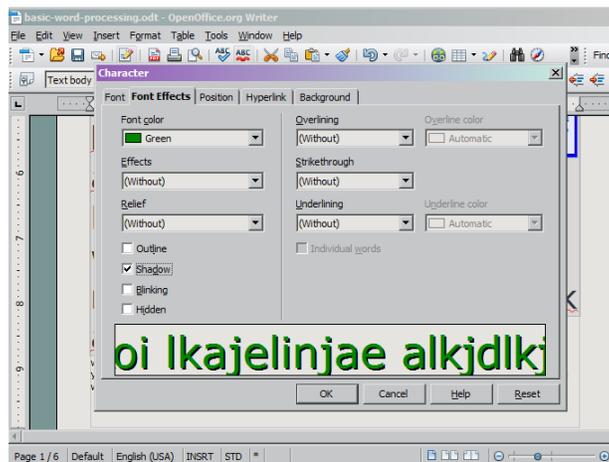
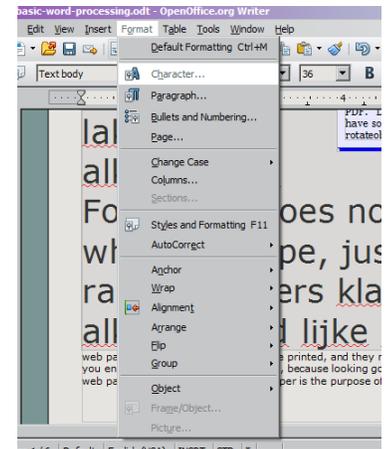
Although not directly visible, these characters are still present in the text and may be erased just like any other: put the cursor right after the character, and hit the backspace key.

So, to separate a paragraph into two paragraphs, position the cursor where you want the break and press the enter or return key. To combine two adjacent paragraphs into one, place the cursor after the break (i.e., at the beginning of the second paragraph) and tap backspace.



You can change more than just the size. Let's change the color. Pull down the *Format* menu and choose *Character*.

Click on the *Font Effects* tab, pull down the *Font color* drop box, and pick an interesting color. While we're here, click the *Shadow* checkbox as well. Click OK.

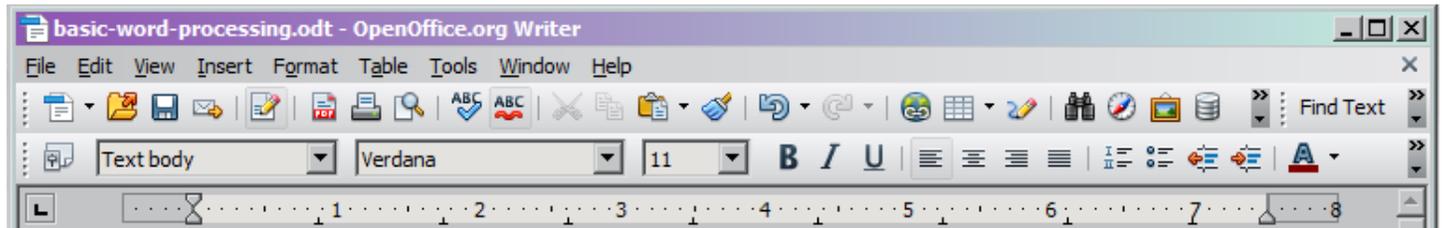


In your free time later, look through the *Format Character* dialog box and experiment with the other things you can change.

Notice that the changes you make are only applied to the text you had selected.

The same selection is still active, so if we wanted to make further formatting changes of the same text, we could do that now. When we're happy with how it looks, we can click anywhere outside the selection to *deselect* it. This places our cursor wherever we clicked, and we can continue editing our document.

We've already used the *menus* several times, but now let's step back and take just a moment to explore the features your word processing software has in the top part of its window...



Across the very top is the title bar, which displays the name of the document ("basic-word-processing.odt") and the name of the software itself ("OpenOffice.org Writer"). Right below that is the **menu bar**. Each word here (*File*, *Edit*, etc.) represents a category of things your software can do. If you click one of them, an entire *menu* appears ("pulls down") full of specific things you can do. The *File* menu contains commands that have to do with files: *Save*, *Open*, and so on. Because it's the first one, it also tends to collect miscellaneous things, like *Print* and *Print Preview*, that don't clearly belong in one of the other menus.

Important Commands:

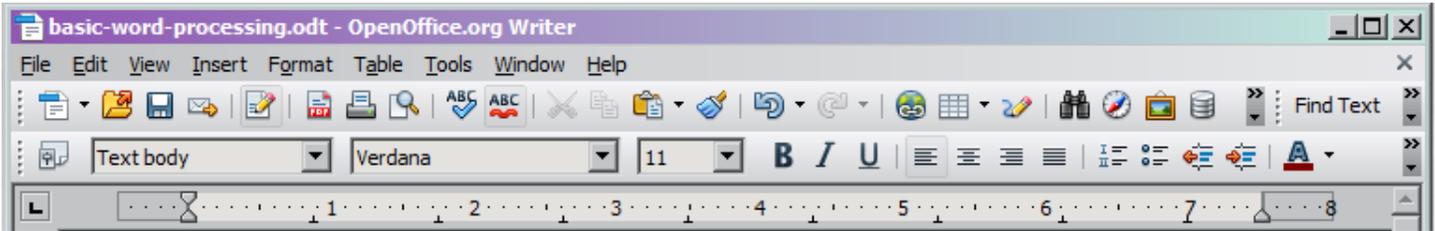
File → Save: Commits any changes you have made to disk, making them permanent. *If the document has not been saved before, Save will automatically do Save As (see below) instead.* Remember: Save early and save often!

File → Save As: Saves a new copy of the whole document, prompting you for a new filename to save under. The previously-saved version of the document will not be disturbed.

File → Open: Retrieve a document you previously saved, so you can use (or edit) it again.

Edit → Undo: Reverts the change you just made.

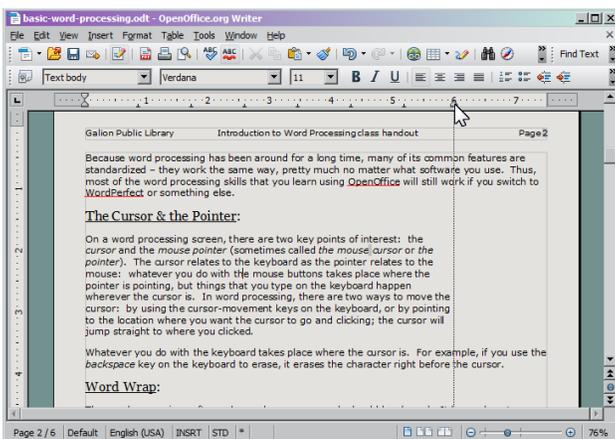
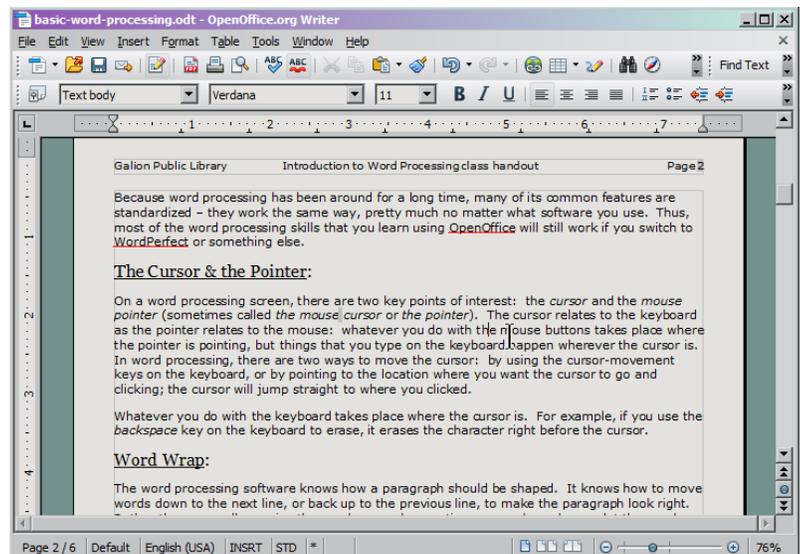
The *Edit menu* has commands that actually edit (change) your document. The *View menu* lets you change your view of the document (e.g., zoom in and out), and so on. The exact details of how the menu bar is arranged vary slightly from one brand of word processing software to another, but the same general principles apply. Some day when you're bored, you can create an "experiment" document that doesn't matter and play around with what the various commands in the different menus do.



Below the menu bar you see **toolbars**. These contain shortcuts for some of the things in the menus (generally, the ones that the programmers thought you'd use most often; if you disagree about which ones those are, it's possible to customize which items appear on the toolbars and which ones do not).

The last of these toolbars, right above your document, is a special one called the **ruler bar**. The formatting we did before pertained to how the characters are displayed. We selected an entire sentence, but we could have selected just one word or even just one letter. However, some things (like indents) don't change the appearance of individual letters but the shape of the entire paragraph. The ruler bar provides convenient shortcuts for common kinds of **paragraph formatting**. Let's try some of that...

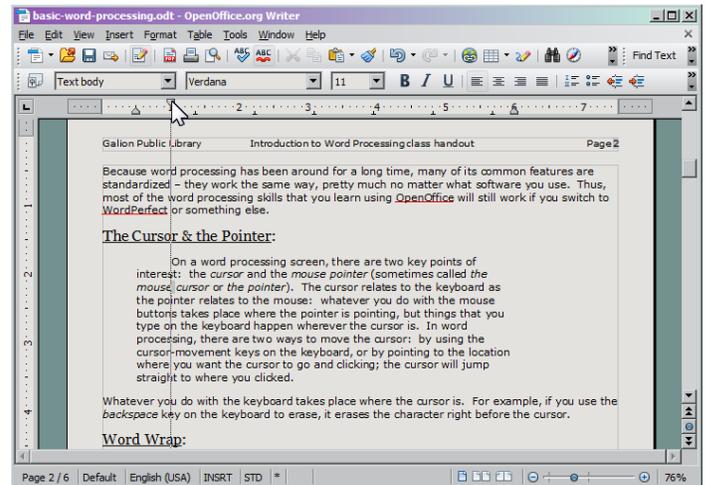
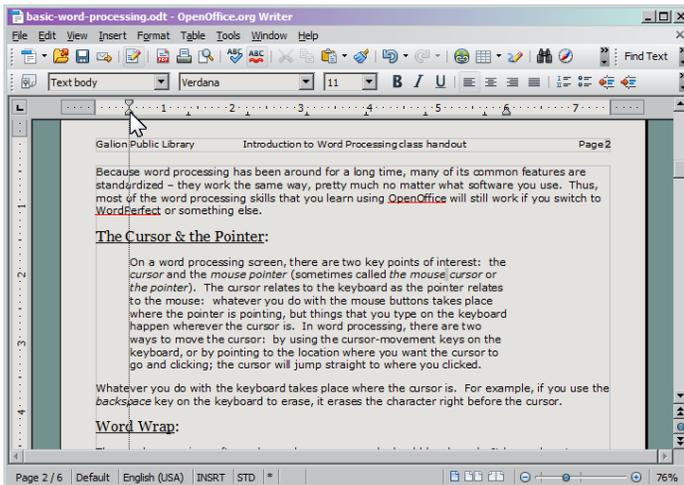
Scroll down through your document and find a nice paragraph we haven't messed with yet. Click within the paragraph. (*If you want to format multiple paragraphs at once, select the ones you want to change instead of just clicking in one.*)



Near the right end of the ruler bar, you'll see a small gray triangle (or trapezoid) that represents the paragraph's **right margin**. Grab it and drag it to a different place on the ruler. When you let go, the paragraph will *reflow* to fit the new constraint.

Paragraphs also have a **left margin**, but it's slightly more complex: you'll notice that the left end of the ruler bar has two little markers, an upper one and a lower one. That's because we often want to treat the first line of the paragraph differently from all the others. For this reason, the top marker

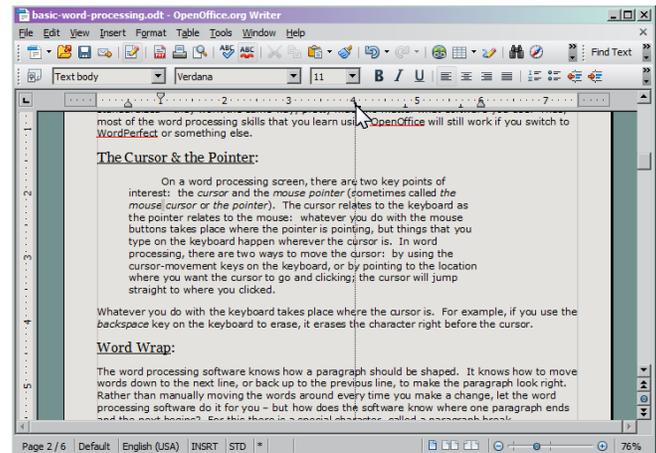
(called the **indent**) controls where the first line of the paragraph lines up, and the lower marker (called the **left margin**) controls all the other lines.



First grab the lower left margin marker and drag it across the ruler to wherever you want it. Then grab the upper (indent) marker and place it. For a traditional indent, the indent marker about half an inch to the right of the margin marker. For *block paragraph style*, leave the indent marker at the same position as the left margin. For a *hanging indent* (used e.g. for bibliographies and resumes), the indent marker actually goes to the left of the paragraph's left margin – but to the right of the page margin.

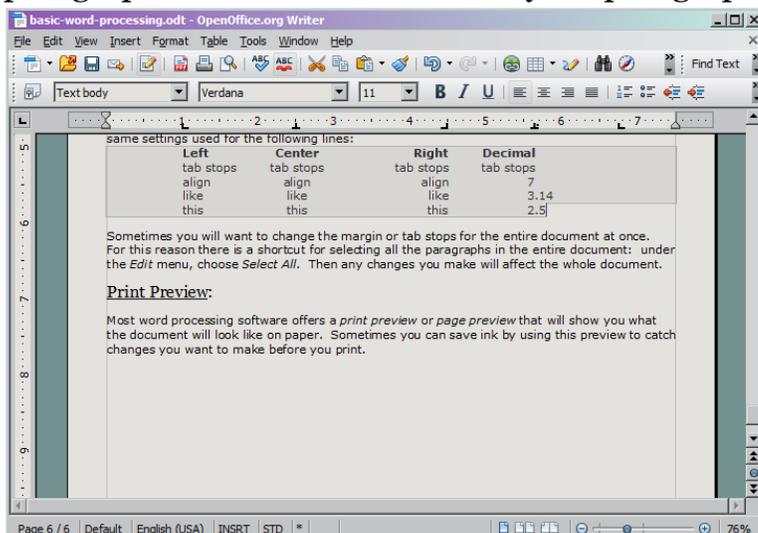
Each new paragraph that you create *inherits* its initial settings from the previous paragraph, so if you set up the margins and indent that you want on the very first paragraph when you first start your document, they'll stay that way for every paragraph (unless you change them).

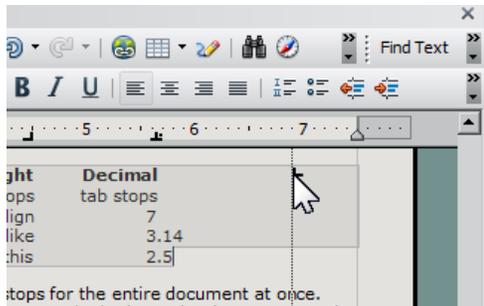
Besides paragraph margins and indents, the ruler bar is also used to manage tab stops. If you click any blank area on the ruler bar, a tab stop is created. Like the margins, these apply to whole paragraphs. Whenever the text of your paragraph



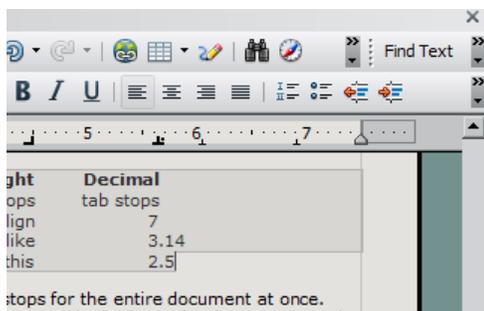
includes a *tab character* (inserted by pressing the tab key on the keyboard), the text that immediately follows the tab character will move over and line up at the next available stop.

There are four types of tab stops: left, center, right, and decimal. There's a button by the ruler bar that you can click to change which type of tab stop you are placing. The appearance of this button also will change to depict the type of stop. Whichever type you select is the type that will be added when you click the ruler bar.





If you create an extra tab stop by mistake, you can remove it by dragging it away from the ruler. Once off the ruler bar, it will vanish as soon as you drop it.



Let's practice **cut and paste**.

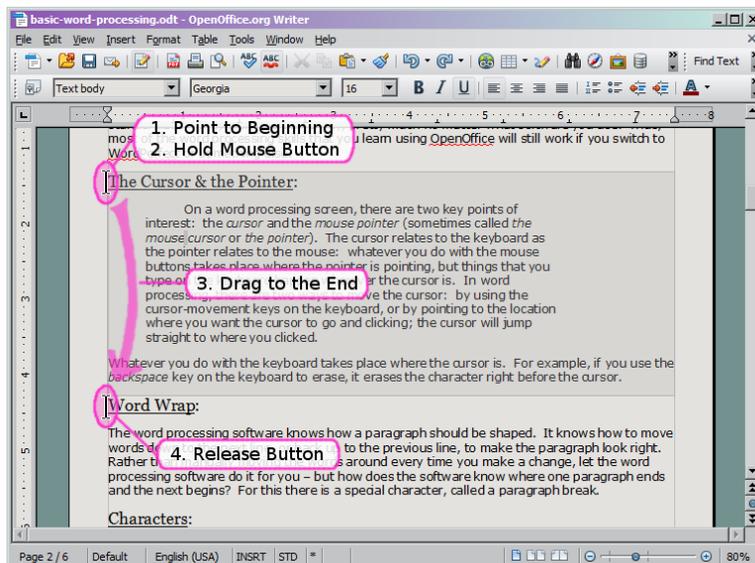
Pick a paragraph and select it. Selecting a paragraph works much the same way as selecting a smaller piece of text, like we did earlier, but with a paragraph it's useful to include the invisible paragraph break character that separates the paragraph we are selecting from the next one.

The Clipboard:

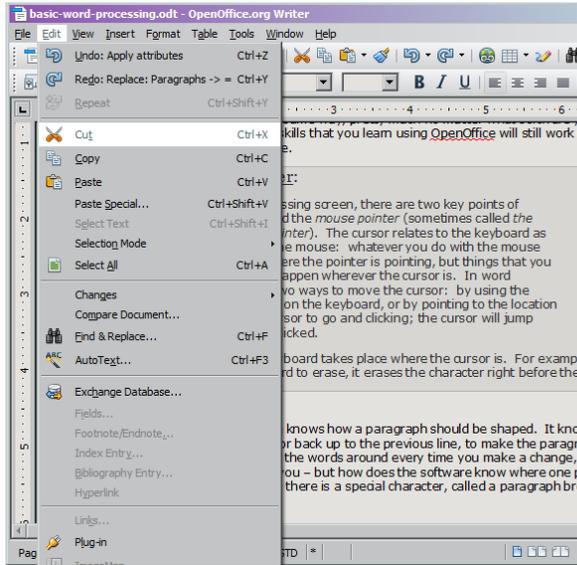
Before word processing was commonplace, people used creative means to avoid retyping pages. Sometimes they would take scissors and Scotch™ tape to a page they had typed, rearrange the pieces, and use a photocopier to make a clean copy of the result. The computer's clipboard works on similar principles. These commands are found under the *Edit* menu:

- ◆ The *Cut* command is like the scissors. It removes the selected thing from the document – and places it on the clipboard.
- ◆ The *Copy* command is a less destructive option. Rather than removing the selected thing from your document, it makes a copy, and places the copy on the clipboard.
- ◆ The *Paste* command is your Scotch™ tape: it inserts the contents of the clipboard into your document, wherever the cursor is located. So, click to place the cursor where you want it to go, and then paste.

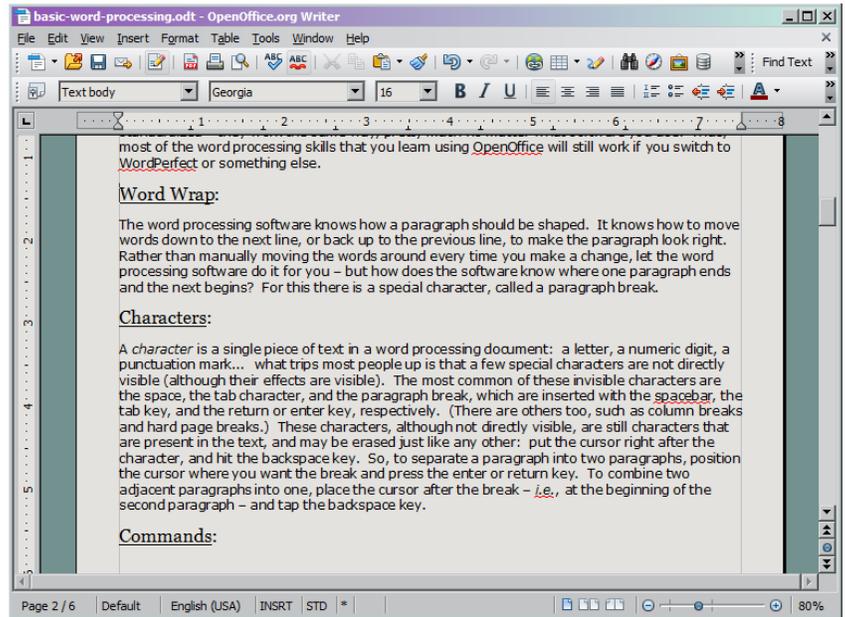
Normally, the clipboard can only hold one thing at a time. When you cut or copy something new onto the clipboard, its previous contents are gone.



Paragraph breaks (inserted with the enter or return key) separate your paragraphs in the same way that spaces separate words. If you wanted to select a word and the space after it, you would select from the beginning of the word to the beginning of the next word. The same trick works with paragraphs: position your pointer at the beginning of the paragraph you want, then drag it to the end – after the paragraph break, right before the first letter of the next paragraph.



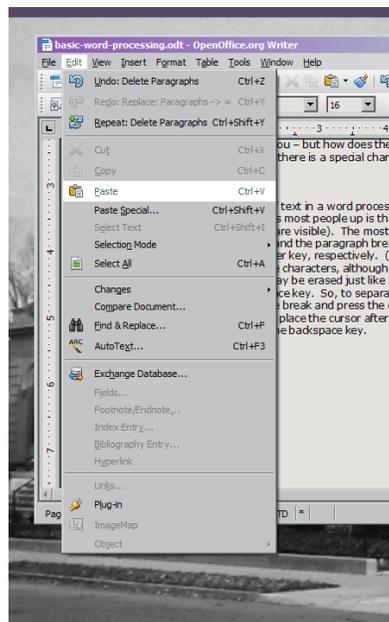
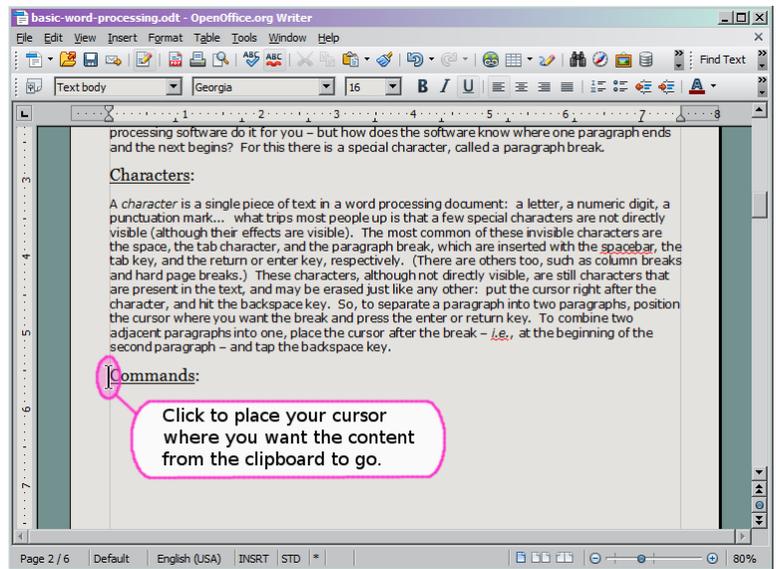
Once the paragraph you want to move is selected, pull down the *Edit menu* and choose *Cut*.



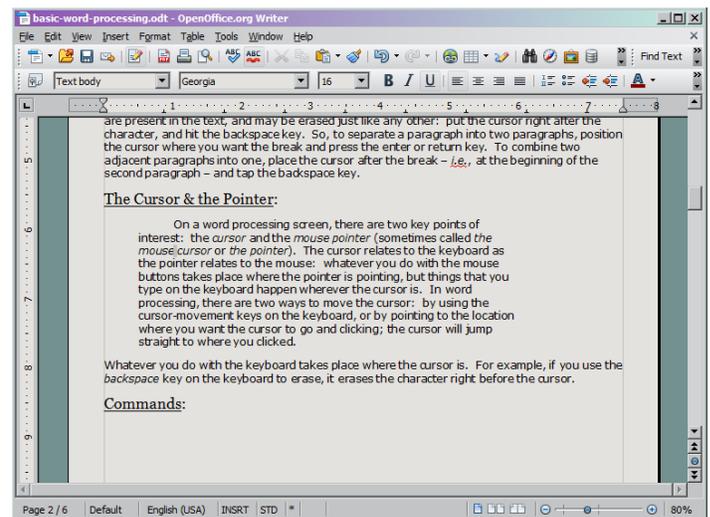
The paragraph will disappear from the text, because cut removes it – cuts it right out of your document. Where did it go? *To the clipboard.*

Now we can put it wherever we want it. We could switch to another window, or even another program entirely, and paste it there – so for example we could copy a recipe from a website and paste it into a word processing document, or we could copy text from a word processing document and paste it into an email message.

For now, let's scroll down half a page or so and put our paragraph somewhere in



the same document. Find the spot where you want it to go, and click to position your cursor there. When you paste, the content from the clipboard will go wherever the cursor is. Once you have your cursor in the right spot, pull down the *Edit menu* and click *Paste*. Voila.

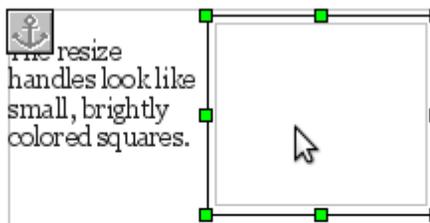


The **Insert menu** contains, among other things, commands for inserting several kinds of special items. We'll talk about 3 of them.

Pictures are just what you think they are: pictures. This handout contains numerous screenshots, all of which were inserted this way. You can also insert photographs, drawings, or even an image created using a scanner.

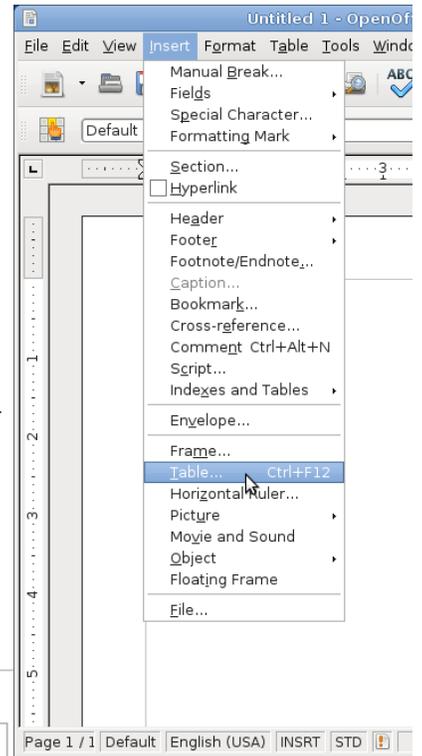
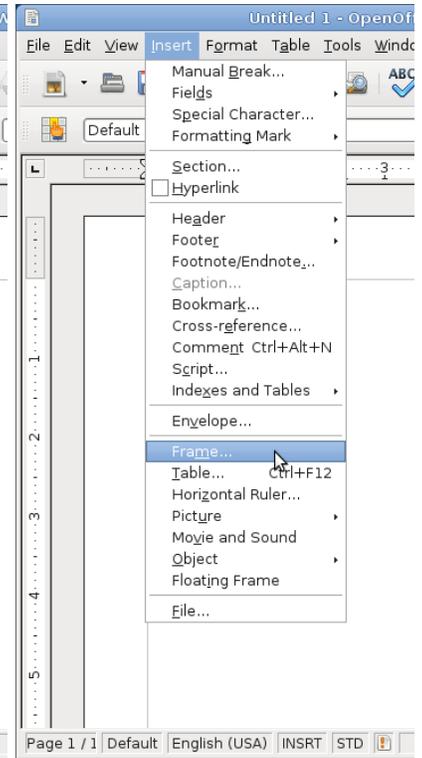
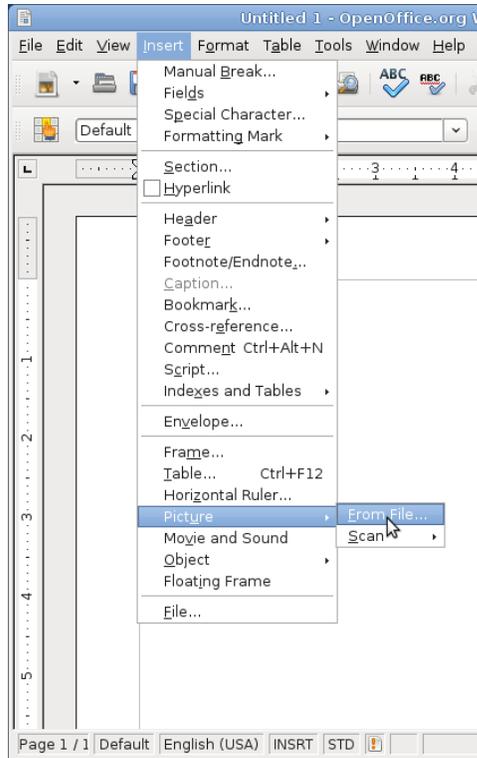
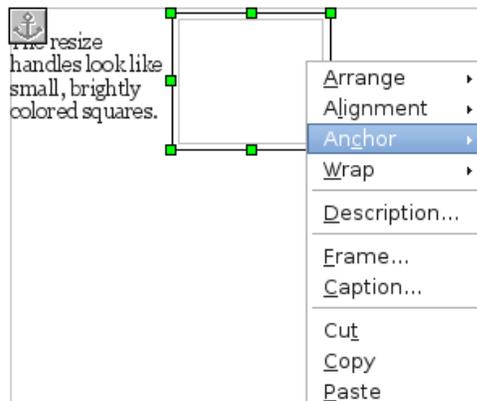
Frames are an organizational tool, a container in which you can put other stuff. You can put text inside them, pictures, tables (more on those in a moment), or even other frames. The really important thing about frames is that you can drag them around your document and position them more or less wherever you want.

Frames (and also pictures) have resize handles as well as several special properties that ordinary text doesn't have.

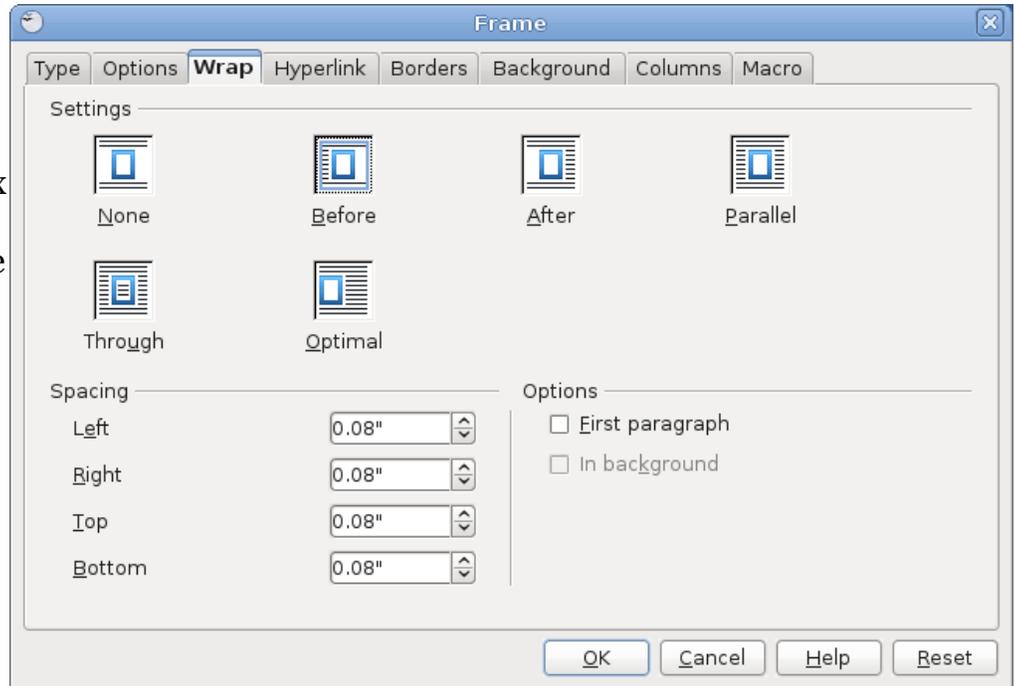


Resize handles appear when the object is selected. Click on the edge of the frame (or picture) that you inserted. It will become selected, and handles will appear on the corners and sides. If you drag one of these handles, the object will be resized. If you hold the shift key while resizing it, the *aspect ratio* (shape) will be preserved.

If you right-click the object, a *context menu* will appear, offering several additional properties, the most important of which are anchor and wrap. **Anchor** controls how a frame (or a picture) moves around (or doesn't move around) when you edit your document. If it is anchored to a paragraph, then it will stay with that paragraph: if the paragraph moves up or down on the page, the frame will move with it. On the other hand, if it is anchored to the page, it will stay put, and the other content on the page will flow around it.



Wrap controls how the text on the page flows around the frame (or picture). If you double-click the object, a dialog box will appear. Click on the *Wrap* tab, and you'll see the various options for this. *Optimal* wrap means that the text will pick either the left side or the right side of the frame, whichever has more space. There are various other options, and you can also specify spacing, so that the surrounding text doesn't quite touch your object.



Notice that the dialog box also has a **Borders** tab. Frames can have a visible border, or not. It's entirely up to you: thick, thin, red, green, double, invisible, whatever. Frames can also be decorated with other visual properties, such as a background color and a drop shadow. A frame can even contain multiple columns. All these properties can be found in (various tabs within) the dialog box that comes up when you double-click the frame.

If a frame contains columns, text will flow from the end of each column onward to the top of the next column. Separator lines are optional.

Months	Days
September, April, June, November	30
February	28-29
Other	31

Tables are an organizational tool of a different kind, designed for presenting rows and columns of information. Unlike pictures and frames, tables can't be resized or dragged around, but if you need to do that stuff you can always put a table inside a frame, like the one shown at left. Simple tabular information can also be entered using tab stops, as we did earlier, but sometimes things are too complex for that (for instance, when the text in one table position may wrap onto a second line).

In these situations, a table can be useful. Tables also allow for borders between the rows and columns. Like with frames, you have the option to turn these borders off or change their appearance.

Where Can I Get OpenOffice.org?

The software we used in this course is freely available. You can download it, install it on your computer, and use it, free of charge.

<http://www.openoffice.org/>

File Formats:

Whenever you save anything on your computer, the software uses a specific **file format** designed to store the kind of information you are saving. The file format tells the software how to represent the information you see on the screen as a series of numbers that the computer can store.

There are many different file formats for word processing documents. OpenOffice.org uses a format called ODF. Word Perfect uses Word Perfect document format. Microsoft Word uses either Word Format (DOC) or OOXML (DOCX), depending on what version of Word you have. Even different programs by the same vendor may use different formats: Microsoft Word uses Word format, but Microsoft Works uses its own, different format.

Why does this matter? If you only ever want to open your documents on the same computer you created them on, there's no problem. However, if you want to open them on a different computer, you may find that it does not have the same software installed.

The different word processing programs make some effort to support each other's formats, up to a point, but none of them support every format. OpenOffice.org can open Microsoft Word documents, for instance, but it does not support Microsoft Works format. For that matter, even Microsoft Word, made by the same company as Works, does not support Works format. So if you take your document to a computer that does not have the same software... you may find that you cannot open it.

The solution is to use Save As to save the document in a different format, one that the other computer will be able to open. For example, if you create a document on your home computer using Microsoft Works, and you want to bring it to the library (where we don't have Works) to print it, you can use Save As. Microsoft Works knows how to save in Microsoft Word format, which is one of the formats that our software at the library does support. So, when you do your Save As, look at the options for "file type" or "file format", and pick one that the software on the other computer will be able to handle.

If you don't happen to know in advance what format you'll need, Microsoft Word format is usually a good bet. Most word processing software can open files in Word format.

The equipment for this course is funded in part through an Institute of Museum and Library Services LSTA Grant awarded by the State Library of Ohio.

Outline

- I. Getting Started
 - A. Opening an Existing Document
 - B. The Cursor and the Pointer
 - C. Word Wrap
- II. Character Formatting
 - A. Selecting a Sentence
 - B. From the Toolbar
 - C. From the Menu bar
- III. Anatomy of a Window
 - A. Title Bar
 - B. Menu Bar
 - i. Important Commands (e.g., Save As)
 - ii. Keyboard Shortcuts
 - C. Toolbars
 - i. Ruler Bar
 - D. Scrollbars
- IV. Paragraph Formatting
 - A. Margins and Indent
 - B. Tab Stops
- V. Clipboard Operations
 - A. Selecting a Paragraph
 - B. Cut and Paste
- VI. Inserting Special Items
 - A. Pictures
 - B. Frames
 - C. Anchoring
 - D. Wrap
 - E. Tables
- VII. Advanced Formatting
 - A. Page Formatting
 - B. Character Positioning
 - C. Borders and Backgrounds