

Introduction

This course moves beyond the basics of word processing and covers more advanced features of the OpenOffice.org software. Most of these features are also present, in one form or another, in other major word processing packages, but the details may differ. Obviously, it is not possible to cover every feature in such a short class, so I've attempted to choose some of the most useful ones, beginning with features that I use regularly in documents I create, such as these handouts, library newsletters, and so forth.

Frames

Think of frames as simple containers, rectangular boxes that you can put things in. Frames can have visible borders, like the sidebar at the right above, or the edges can be left blank, so that when the document is printed you only see the contents. In the latter case, a key advantage of putting something in a frame is that it makes it easy to control positioning. Simply drag the frame to a new location, and the contents go along with it. You can put anything into a frame that you can put in a document: images, paragraphs of text, tables, columns, even other frames.

To add a frame to your document, pull down the *Insert* menu and choose *Frame*. A frame dialog box will come up, which allows you to specify some options for the frame, but if you just click "OK", a basic frame will be inserted. If you later need to get back to the options, simply double-click the edge of the frame, and the frame dialog will reappear. Across the top of the frame dialog are several tabs, each of which contains the controls for a different aspect of the frame's appearance or behavior. For instance, the *Wrap* tab controls how the rest of the content of the document will wrap around the edges of the frame. New frames start with a basic thin black border, but you can change this in the *Borders* tab.

When I'm doing newsletters, I put practically every article in a frame, so that I can easily move them around to different positions, to find the places where they fit into the layout best. Positioning and changing the wrap properties for frames is very similar as for images.

Images

What would a modern office document be without clip art? Putting a picture into your document, assuming you have the picture on your computer, is as easy as pulling down the *Insert* menu and selecting *Picture* (or, in older versions, *Graphics*), *From File*, finding your picture in the file-open dialog box that comes up, and clicking the *open* button.



Once you have the image in your document, you can resize it and reposition it. Perhaps more interestingly, if you double-click the image, the *Graphics* dialog box appears, which allows you to change a number of useful options. Under the *Wrap* tab, for instance, you can control how the rest of the document's contents will wrap around the edges of the image. The image at left is set up for *contour* wrapping, which allows text to overlap into transparent parts of the image.

Where can I get OpenOffice.org?

The software used in this course is freely available. Here are some places you can get the software:

- <http://www.openoffice.org/>
(This is the official website.)
- <http://www.theopencd.org/>
- <http://distribution.openoffice.org/cdrom/>
- http://www.tradeswest.ca/ooo_order.html

Where can I get clip art?

Here are some places you can download clip art that you can use in your documents:

- <http://www.openclipart.org/>
- <http://commoncontent.org/>
- <http://pics.tech4learning.com/>
- <http://www.pcbypaul.com/wpclipart/>

Another important setting for an image in a word processing document is where it is set to *anchor*. If you anchor an image to the paragraph, then it will move if the paragraph moves, but if you anchor it to a frame or a page, then paragraphs can come and go, but the image will stay put. To change where an image is anchored, select the image, then right-click it, and use the *Anchor* submenu.

Tables

Simple tabular information can be entered using tabs, but sometimes things are too complex for that (for instance, when the text in one table position may wrap onto a second line), and a table is useful in these cases. Tables also allow for borders between the rows and columns. (Unlike frames, however, tables are not easily dragged around for positioning, so if you want easy positioning, place the table inside a frame, as in the example at right.)

Month	Days
January	31
February	28-29
March	31

To add a table, pull down the *Insert* menu and choose *Table*. An insert table dialog box will appear, which allows you to choose some options. The most important thing to set here is the number of columns. Once your table is inserted, you can add content to each of the cells. You can move to a particular cell by clicking in it, or you can move to the next cell by hitting the tab key. If you hit the tab key from the last cell in the lower-right corner, a row will be added.

To adjust the properties of the table or of certain cells, highlight the cells, then right click and choose "Table" from the context menu. In the resulting dialog box, you can change several properties of the table's cells, most notably the borders.

Table rows will automatically grow in height to accommodate the information you place in them (unless you turn off this feature, by selecting the cells, right-clicking, choosing *Row Height*, and turning off *Fit to size*). The easiest way to resize column widths is to drag the boundaries left or right. Table cells can contain most things a document can contain, including images and frames.

Columns

Columns allow content to be placed side-by-side, without the need for hand-positioning frames. Also, unlike with (most implementations of) frames, an article may flow from the end of one column automatically to the beginning of the next column, much like in a newspaper.

Some objects, including images and frames, are allowed to cross over column boundaries.

Text will flow from the end of each column onward to	the top of the next column. Separator lines are optional.
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If you want your entire document to be laid out in columns, pull down the *Format* menu and choose *Page*, then look for the *Columns* tab. Here you can set the number of columns per page, as well as change their spacing. Normally you will want at least some spacing between the columns.

If you don't want your entire document to be structured in columns, you can still have columns in certain places, by using frames. Any frame can have columns in it. To set up a frame with columns, double-click the edge of the frame to bring up the *Frame* dialog box, and click the *Columns* tab. Here you can make the same sorts of adjustments as before, only they will apply just to the selected frame.

If you want to fill a certain page with columns, insert a frame, resize the frame to take up that entire page, and then set up the columns for that frame.

Character Formatting

You've probably used some character formatting already, perhaps without even knowing that it was character formatting you were using. If you've ever made a word bold, underlined some text, or changed the font face or size, you've done character formatting. However, there is a lot more that can be done than just these basic things.

Did you know that there are different types of underlining? Select some text, then pull down the Format menu and choose Character.

Under the Font Effects tab you will find a drop-down list that shows the different types of underlining available: single, double, bold, dotted, dotted bold, dashed, dashed bold, long dash, wave, bold wave, double wave, or various other variations and patterns. Additionally, there is a checkbox for underlining each word individually and a place to set a different color for the underline.

The Font Effects tab is also where you can set the **color** of the text itself, add transformation effects (such as **SMALL CAPS**), or cause the text to appear *engraved*, *embossed*, *outlined*, or *shadowed*. These are not effects that you're likely to use very often, but they can come in handy occasionally.

Another, more advanced type of character formatting is positioning. Positioning is useful for changing the way words fit onto the page. This is especially useful when you are working with columns, because longer words can cause certain lines to wrap at undesirable places and look "funny". You can hyphenate words, of course. Indeed, you can insert optional hyphens (hold ctrl while typing the hyphen) that will only appear if a line breaks there, and you could even resort to automatic hyphenation

(pull down Format, choose Paragraph, and find Hyphenation under the Text Flow tab), but hyphenation can be ugly, especially if it's overdone. Sometimes what you really want is to squeeze or stretch certain words, to make them wider or narrower, so that they fit better. This is positioning. Select the word(s) you want to alter, pull down the Format menu, and choose Character. Under the Position tab there are two ways to squeeze or stretch your text. The first way is to simply scale the width of the text, which causes the actual letters to be squeezed or stretched. The second, more subtle way is to expand or condense the spacing. Change the spacing to either expanded or condensed and set the amount. (1 pt is a typical amount, but you can use more or less depending on the needs of your document.) The sidebars at the left and right show what Verdana 12pt and Georgia 13pt text look like with various settings. Condensing a long word so that it fits often looks better than hyphenating it, and expanding some words can make an otherwise short line look less empty.

Normal
(Verdana 12pt)
wide
(150%)
wide
(200%)
Narrow (75%)
Narrow (50%)
Expanded
(1pt)
Expanded
(2pt)
Condensed (0.5pt)
Condensed (1pt)

Normal
(Georgia 13pt)
wide
(150%)
wide
(200%)
Narrow (75%)
Narrow (50%)
Expanded (1pt)
Expanded
(2pt)
Condensed (0.5pt)
Condensed (1pt)

Besides stretching and squeezing the text, you can also $\overset{1}{\text{rot}} \text{ or } \overset{1}{\text{nr}}$ it or make a super^{script} or sub_{script}. Pull down the Format menu, choose Character, and look under the Position tab for these settings.

Word Processing System Translation Chart:

<i>Desired Action</i>	<i>OpenOffice or Star Office</i>	<i>Microsoft Office / Word</i>	<i>Corel Word Perfect</i>
insert a frame or text box: (A frame and a text box are basically the same thing.)	Pull down the Insert menu and choose Frame, then drag the frame to where you want it to go.	Pull down the Insert menu and choose Text Box, then click where you want the text box to go. For the most part you can ignore the larger "drawing area" box.	Pull down the Insert menu and choose Text Box, then drag the text box to where you want it to go
Place text in a frame or text box:	Click in the frame, and start typing.	Click in the Text Box, and start typing.	Click in the Text Box, and start typing
Change the properties of a frame or text box:	Click the frame to select it, then pull down the Format menu and choose Frame.	Click the text box to select it, then pull down the Format menu and choose Text Box.	Click the edge of the text box to select it, then right-click on the text box and use the context menu.
Add a picture you have on your computer: (The picture will go where the cursor is.)	Pull down the Insert menu, choose Picture (or, in old versions, Graphics), then From File. Find the picture file that you want and click Open.	Pull down the Insert menu, choose Picture, then From File. Find the picture file that you want and click Insert.	Pull down the Insert menu, choose Graphics, then From File. Find the picture file that you want (only certain image file formats are supported), and click Insert.
Change the wrap properties of an image:	Double-click the image, and select the Wrap tab.	Double-click the image, and select the Layout tab.	Click the image to select it, then right-click the image and choose Wrap from the context menu.
Add a table: (The table will go where the cursor is.)	Pull down the Insert menu and choose Table. Set the number of columns and click OK.	Pull down the Table menu and choose Insert, then Table. Set the number of columns and click OK.	Pull down the Table menu and choose Create. Set the number of columns and click OK.
Print sideways on the paper:	Pull down the Format menu and choose Page. Under the Page tab, select Landscape.	Pull down the File menu and choose Page Setup. Under the Margins tab, select Landscape.	Pull down the File menu and choose Page Setup. Under the Page Setup tab, select Landscape.
Add a header or footer:	Pull down the Format menu and choose Page. Click the Header or Footer tab and turn on the checkbox.	Pull down the View menu and choose Header and Footer. Edit your header or footer and then Close the Header and Footer dialog.	Pull down the Insert menu and choose Header/Footer. Select the one you want and click Create.
Set up columns for your entire document:	Pull down the Format menu and choose Page. Under the Columns tab, set the number and spacing of columns.	Pull down the Format menu and choose Columns. Set the number and spacing of columns.	Pull down the Format menu and choose Columns. Set the type, number, and spacing of columns.