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An Introduction to Microsoft Word 2007:

Creating an Index

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Introduction:

At the back end of some documents, you typically find an index. The publishing industry has another clever term for index: **index**.

An index is an alphabetical list, usually at the end of a book or report, of people, places, or topics, giving the numbers of the pages on which they are mentioned.

Seriously, an index is more precise than a **Table of Contents**. An index references specific items, tasks, terms, or people throughout a document. Obviously, this is a techie thing; who would ever have reason to index a letter to their mother?

Creating an index:

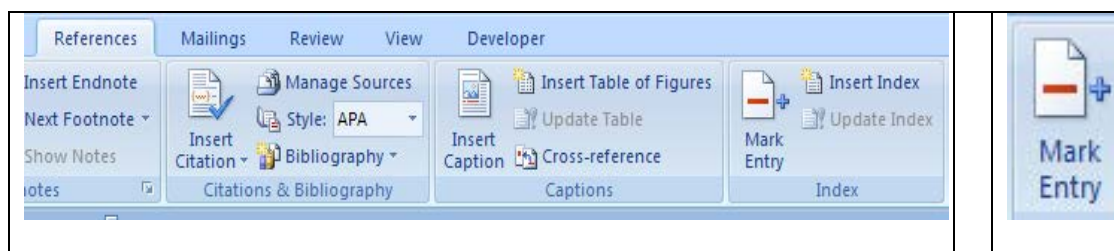
Creating an index is a two-part process in Word. The first part is identifying in a document the words or phrases you want to place in the index. (This implies, obviously, that your document should be written before you index it.) The second part is building the index itself.

To flag a bit of text for inclusion in the index, follow these steps:

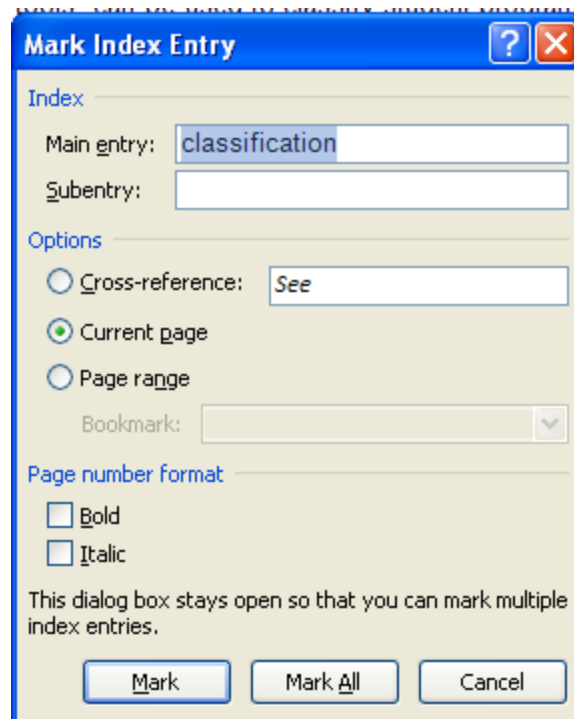
1. **Select the text you want to reference in the index.**

It can be a word, phrase, or any old bit of text. Mark that text as a block.

2. **Select the References tab** and in the **Index** section click on **Mark Entry**.



The **Mark Index Entry** dialog box appears, as shown below. Notice that the text you selected in your document appears in the **Main Entry** box. (You can edit that text if you wish).



3. Click either the **Mark** button or the **Mark All** button.

The **Mark** button marks only this particular instance of the word for inclusion in the index. Use this button if you want to mark only instances that you think will benefit the reader the most. The **Mark All** button directs Word to seek out and flag all instances of the text in your document, creating an index entry for each and every one. Use this option if you would rather leave it to your reader to decide what's relevant.

You can mess with other options in the **Mark Index Entry** dialog box as well. Frolic and play!

When you mark an index entry, Word switches to **Show Codes** mode, where characters such as spaces, paragraph marks, and tabs appear in your document. Don't let it freak you out. **Step 6** tells you how to turn that thing off.

You also see the Index code appear in the document, surrounded by curly brackets (or braces).

4. Continue scrolling through your document, looking for stuff to put into the index.

The **Mark Index Entry** dialog box stays open, allowing you to continue to create your index: Just select text in the document and then click the **Mark Index Entry** dialog box.

The selected text appears in the **Main Entry** box. Click the **Mark** or **Mark All** button to continue building the index.

5. Click the Close button when you're done.

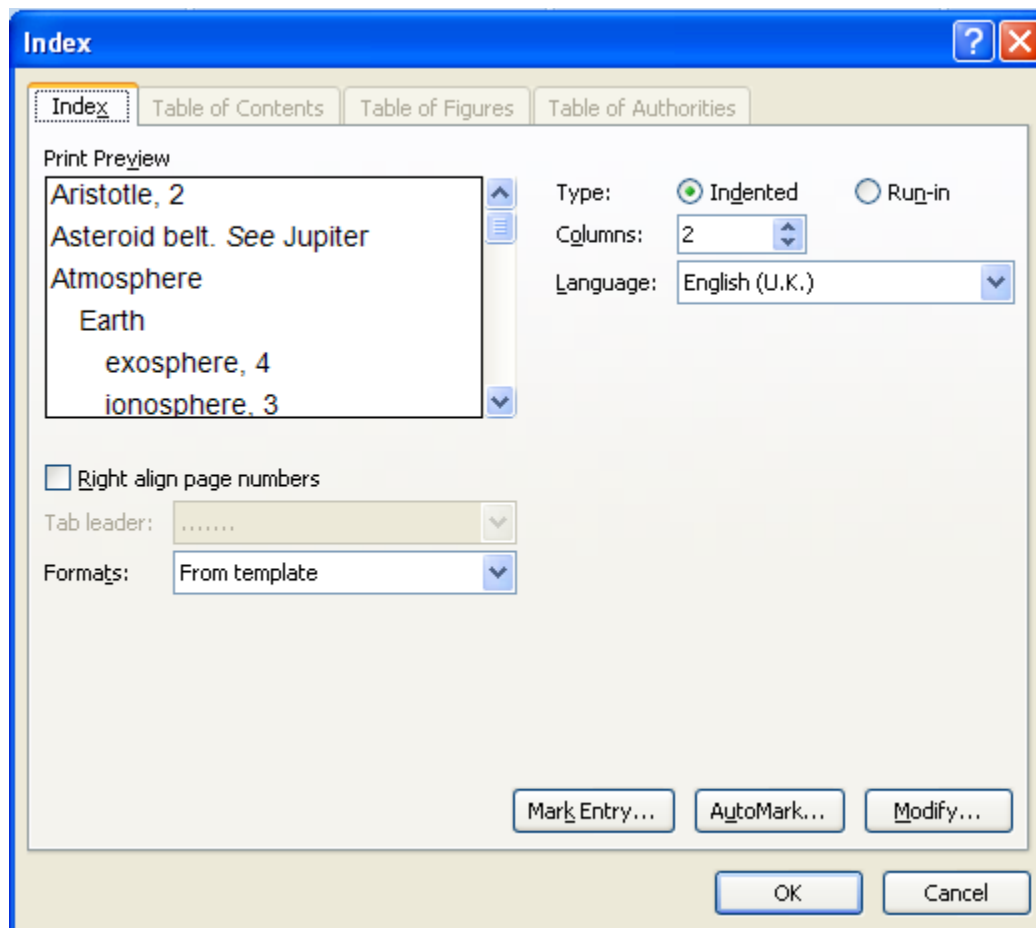
The Mark Index Entry dialog box goes away.

6. Press the button on the Home tab to disable Show Codes mode.

With all the bits and pieces of text flagged for the index, the next step is to create the index:

7. Position the cursor where you want the index to appear.

8. Select the References tab and click the Insert Index button on the Index section.



9. Optionally, mess with the dialog box.

You can choose an index style from the **Format** drop-down list. Use the **Print Preview** window to see how your choice affects the final product.

The **Columns** list tells Word how many columns wide to make the index. Note that two columns are standard, though there's no specific reason for that.

10. Click OK.

The index is inserted into your document in its own section.

classification, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	Prometheus, 3
complexity, 1, 2	software agent, 1
complexity measures, 2	SQL, 2, 4, 6
Goal Overview Diagram, 3	student programmer, 1, 6, 7
monitor, 1	Visual Studio, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Multi-threading, 2	Watcher function, 5

Studies done by people wearing white lab coats have shown that more readers refer to an **Index** than to a **Table of Contents**. Therefore, make sure that your index is good and thorough.

Feel free to **Undo (Ctrl + Z)** your index if you hate it. In fact, test your indexing skills on a few sample documents before you plan on showing something to the boss.

Activity:

Have a go at creating an index in a document of your choice. Use a document you have already created in a previous activity or use one of your own if you wish. Remember to save it with a different file name.

