

Formatting text in Google Docs

Note: This document is presented in landscape mode to make the screenshots legible

Introduction

Formatting text in Google Docs is very similar to Microsoft Word

Headings

Applying a predefined format to heading is very easy because both Google Docs and MS Word use the concept of Heading styles, such as Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3 ...

Of course, you are not obliged to use heading styles. Many people just use normal text, make it bold/increase the font size/change the text colour etc, and that's a perfectly valid way to do it. But using heading styles is easier because:

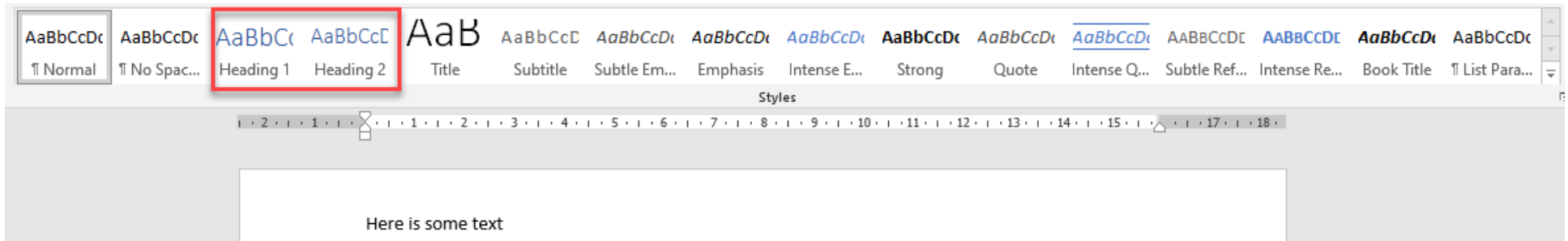
- It's quicker
- It allows you to create document outlines, tables of content and bookmarks easily
- If you use bold and a larger font to create a heading, you have to remember to manually revert the style to normal when you move to the next line, or the heading format will continue
- Heading styles also automatically apply before-and-after spacing to separate out the heading from the surrounding text
- They make your document look more presentable too

Using heading styles is therefore recommended

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Make a heading

MS Word

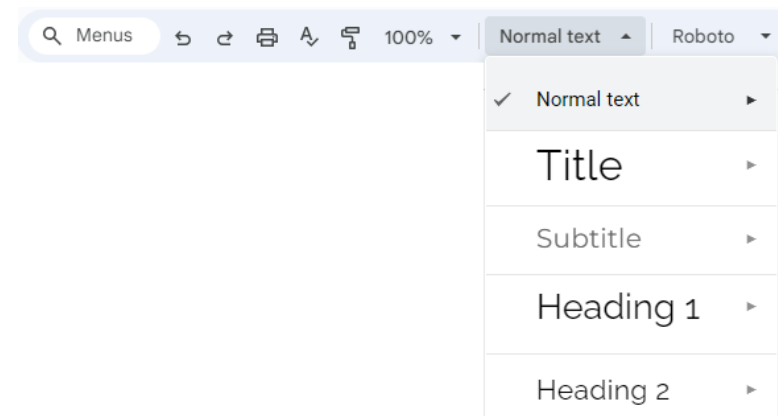


When you create a document, the default ribbon contains a formatting section. Type some text and it defaults to normal text but picking one of the heading styles will transform the text to that style. MS Word shows two levels of heading by default but when you click on Heading 2, Heading 3 will appear in the ribbon

Google Docs

Google Docs has the same feature but as a drop down menu instead of a ribbon.

To make a heading, type the text and then choose the heading style from the drop down menu. The style will be applied and when you move to the next line, new text will revert to normal format, just like it does in Word.

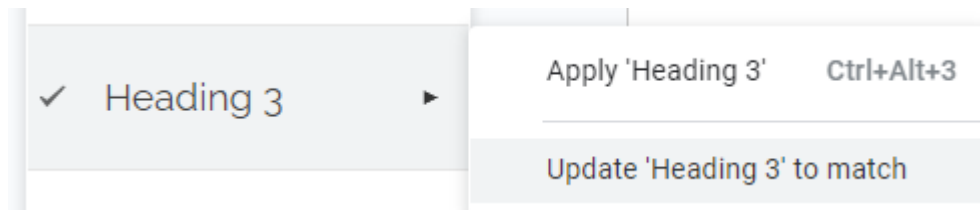


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- You don't have to highlight the text to apply the style - you just need to be on the same line, because a heading style will apply to the entire line.
- You can also select the heading style *before* you start to type the text.
- Instead of using the menu, you can also apply heading styles using keyboard shortcuts
 - Heading 1: Ctrl+Alt+1
 - Heading 2: Ctrl+Alt+2
 - etc

Changing a heading style

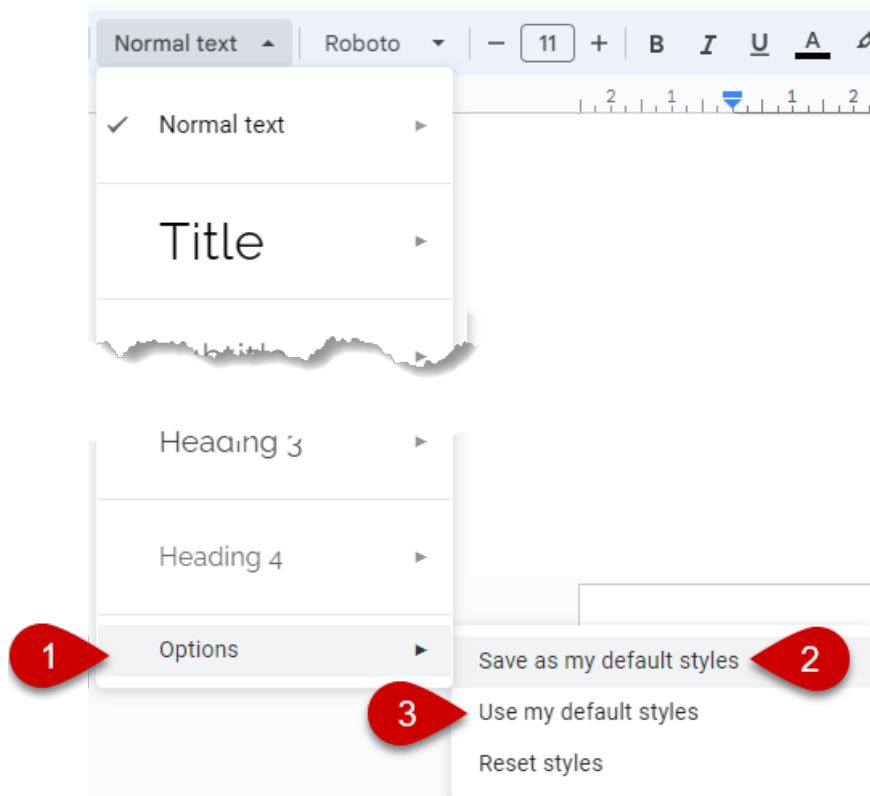
If you don't like a heading style you can edit it to meet your needs, Then you can apply it to every other heading of that level in your document by doing this:



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Using your own styles

If you edit all the styles to suit your preference, you can save and use them on future documents with these options:



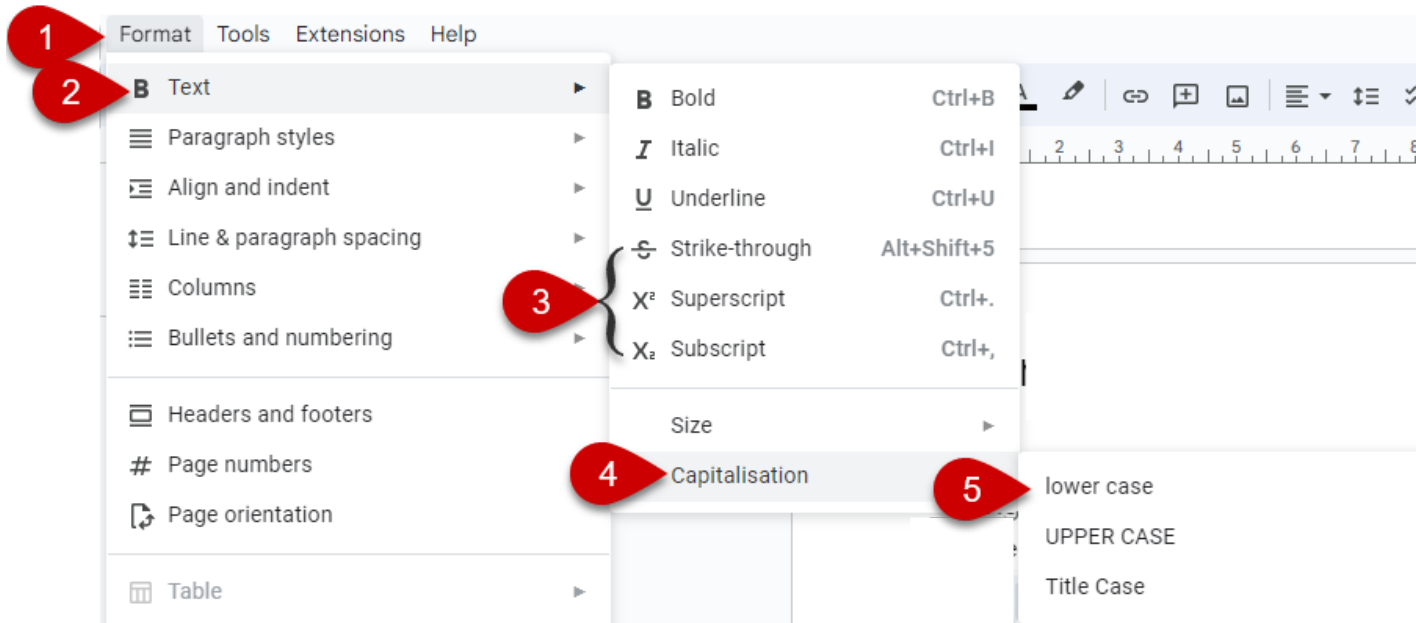
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Bold/Italics/Underline

You toggle these on/off using the same keyboard shortcuts as Word - Ctrl+b, Ctrl+i, Ctrl+u (upper or lower case). The only difference is that to add them to an existing word in MS Word you just have to have the cursor **on** the word; in Docs you have to **select** the word

Other text formatting

Other options can be found here:



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Options 4 and 5 in the screenshot are useful if you're not a touch typist. How many of us have typed a whole sentence only to discover that caps lock was on by mistake? In Word there is a useful shortcut where you could select the text and press Shift+F3 to toggle the case. In Google Docs, these two options do the same thing.

See also: ***Using templates for a quick start***

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