Insert and format field codes in Word

⊟ Hide All

Fields in Microsoft Office Word are used as placeholders for data that might change in a document and for creating form letters and labels in mail-merge documents. These kinds of fields are also called field codes, and they are different from the type of fields that are used to enter information, such as on a form. For information about adding form fields to a document, see Create a printed form, Create forms that users complete in Word, or Make a checklist in Word

Word inserts fields automatically when you use particular commands, such as when you insert a page number, when you insert a document building block such as a cover page, or when you create a table of contents. You can also manually insert fields to automate aspects of your document, such as merging data from a data source or performing calculations.

In Microsoft Office Word 2007, there is little need to insert fields manually, because built-in commands and content controls provide most of the capabilities that fields provided for many versions of Word. You are more likely to encounter fields in documents that were created in an earlier version of Word. You can use the information in this article to understand and work with the fields.

Security Because field codes can be visible to anyone reading your document, be sure that the information you place in field codes is not information that you want kept private.

NOTE   The information in this article applies to any field code in Word. For information about a particular field code, search Word help for the name of the field code, such as **IF**.

What do you want to do?

⇓ Learn more about fields

⇓ Insert a field

⇓ Edit a field

⇓ Display field results

⇓ Control how fields are updated

Learn more about fields

You can insert a field if you want to:

- Add, subtract, or perform other calculations. To do so, use the = (Formula) field.

- Work with documents in a mail merge. For example, insert ASK and FILLIN fields to display a prompt as Word merges each data record (data record: A complete set of related information that corresponds to one row of information in the data source. All information about one client in a client mailing list is an example of a data record.) with the main document.

In other cases, it is simpler to use the commands and options that are provided in Word to add the information that you want. For example, you can insert a hyperlink (hyperlink: Colored and underlined text or a graphic that you click to go to a file, a location in a file, a Web page on the World Wide Web, or a Web page on an intranet. Hyperlinks can also go to newsgroups and to Gopher, Telnet, and FTP sites.) by using the HYPERLINK field, but it is easier to use the **Hyperlink** command in the **Links** group on the **Insert** tab. You can also insert information about a document, such as the author's name or the document title, by using the AUTHOR field or the TITLE field. However, it is easier to insert one of the **Property** content controls from the **Quick Parts** menu to do this.

NOTE   You cannot insert field code brackets by typing the brace characters on the keyboard. To insert field code brackets, press CTRL+F9.

Field code syntax

Field codes appear between curly brackets (**{ }**). Fields behave like formulas in Microsoft Office Excel — the field code is like the formula, and the field result is like the value that the formula produces. You can switch between displaying field codes and results in your document by pressing ALT+F9.

When you view a field code in your document, the syntax looks like this:

{ *FIELD NAME Properties Optional switches* **}**

- **FIELD NAME**   This is the name that appears in the list of field names in the **Field** dialog box.

- **Properties**   These are any instructions or variables that are used in a particular field. Not all fields have parameters, and in some fields, parameters are optional instead of required.

- **Optional switches**   These are any optional settings that are available for a particular field. Not all fields have switches available, other than those that govern the formatting of the field results.

Example

For example, you can place the title of your document anywhere in the document by placing the TITLE field in the document. (The title of your document is in the **Title** box in the **Document Information Panel**, which is visible when you click **Properties** in **Show/Hide** group on the **View** tab).

NOTE   The TITLE field is shown here as an example of field code syntax. An easier way to place the document title in your document is to go to **Quick Parts** on the **Insert** tab, point to **Property**, and then click **Title**.

The syntax for the TITLE field code looks like this:

{ TITLE ["*NewTitle*"] **}**

The *NewTitle* property is optional, indicated by braces ([]). If you leave the property blank, the field result displays the current document title. However, if you type **Quarterly Report** into the *NewTitle* property, the **Title** box in the **Document Information Panel** updates to **Quarterly Report**, and the result of the TITLE field, when you press ALT+F9, also displays **Quarterly Report**.

The TITLE field has no optional switches.

Insert a field

1. Click where you want to insert a field.

2. On the **Insert** tab, in the **Text** group, click **Quick Parts**, and then click **Field**.
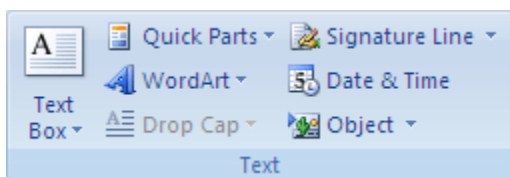
3. In the **Categories** list, select a category.

4. In the **Field names** list, select a field name.

5. Select any properties or options that you want.

NOTES

- If you want to see the codes for a particular field in the **Field** dialog box, click **Field Codes**.

- To nest a field within another field, first insert the outer, or container, field, by using the **Field** dialog box. In your document, place the insertion point inside the field code where you want to insert the inner field. Then use the **Field** dialog box to insert the inner field.

TIP If you know the field code for the field that you want to insert, you can also type it directly in your document. First press CTRL+F9, and then type the code within the brackets.

Edit a field

1. Right-click in the field, and then click **Edit Field**.

   NOTE For some fields, you must display the field code to edit the field. To do this, click the field, and then press SHIFT+F9. Or, to display all the field codes in the document, press ALT+F9.

2. Change the field properties and options. For information about the properties and options available for a particular field, search on the field name in Help.

   ⊟ If field properties and field options are displayed

   Select the new properties and options that you want. If you want to work directly in the field code but you don't see it, click **Field Codes** to view the code, and then click **Options** to add field switches or other options.

   ⊟ If only the advanced field properties (field codes) are displayed

   You can work directly in the field code to edit the field, or you can click **Options** to add field switches or other options.

Display the field results

By default, Word displays the field results seamlessly with the content of your document so that someone reading the document is unaware that part of the content is in a field. However, fields can also be displayed with a shaded background, to make them more visible in the document.

You can make the field results blend into the content of the document by turning off the option to display fields with a shaded background and by formatting the field results.

If you want to call attention to fields, you can display them with a shaded background, either all the time or only when the field is selected.

You can format the field results by applying text formatting to the field or by adding formatting switches (switch: When working with fields, a special instruction that causes a specific action to occur. Generally, a switch is added to a field to modify a result.) to the field code.

Change the shaded background of fields

1. Click the **Microsoft Office Button** , and then click **Word Options**.

2. Click **Advanced**.

3. Under **Show document content**, in the **Field shading** list, do one of the following:

    - To make fields stand out from the rest of the document content, select **Always**.

    - To make fields blend in seamlessly with the document content, select **Never**.

    - To make users of Word aware that they have clicked in a field, select **When selected**.

      NOTE   When the field shading option is set to **When selected**, the field displays a gray background when you click within the field. However, the gray shading does not indicate that the field is selected. When you select the field by double-clicking or dragging the mouse, highlighting that indicates selection is added to the gray shading.

Apply text formatting to a field

- Select the field that you want to format, and then apply the formatting by using the commands in the **Font** group on the **Home** tab.
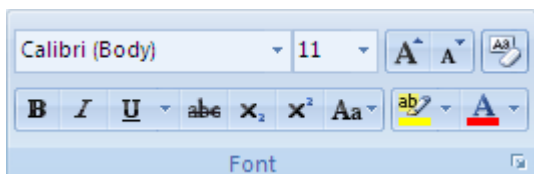
For example, to underline the name that is inserted by an AUTHOR field, select the entire field code, including brackets (or select the entire field result), and then click **Underline** in the **Font** group on the **Home** tab.

NOTE   If you update a field, any formatting that you applied to the field results may be lost. To retain the formatting, include the * MERGEFORMAT switch in the field code. When you insert fields by using the **Field** dialog box, the * MERGEFORMAT switch is included by default.

Add a formatting switch to a field code

1. Right-click the field, and then click **Edit Field**.

2. Do one of the following:

   - If **Field properties** and **Field options** are displayed, select the formatting options that you want.

   - If only the field code is displayed, click **Options**, and then select the formatting options that you want.

     If the **Options** button appears dimmed, additional formatting options may not be available.

You can use three formatting switches to format field results:

- Format switch (*)

- Numeric format switch (\#)

- Date-Time format switch (\@)

Format switch

The Format field switch (*) defines how to display field results. The format instructions determine the following:

- The use of uppercase and lowercase letters

- Number formats — for example, whether **9** is displayed as **ix** (roman numerals) or **ninth** (ordinal text)

- character formats (character formatting: Formatting you can apply to selected text characters.)

Format switches also retain a field result's formatting when the field is updated.

⊟ Capitalization formats

The following is a list of switches and the items that they capitalize:

- *** Caps** This switch capitalizes the first letter of each word. For example, **{** FILLIN "Type your name:" * Caps **}** displays **Luis Alverca** even if the name is typed in lowercase letters.

To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **Title case**.

- *** FirstCap** This switch capitalizes the first letter of the first word. For example, **{** COMMENTS * FirstCap **}** displays **Weekly report on sales**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **First capital**.

- *** Upper** This switch capitalizes all letters. For example, **{** QUOTE "word" * Upper **}** displays **WORD**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **Uppercase**.

- *** Lower** This switch capitalizes none of the result; all letters are lowercase. For example, **{** FILENAME * Lower **}** displays **weekly sales report.doc**.

  NOTE   This switch has no effect if the entire field that contains the switch is formatted as small capital letters.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **Lowercase**.

⊟ Number formats

The following is a list of number switches and their results:

- ***alphabetic** This switch displays results as alphabetic characters. The result has the same case as the word "alphabetic" in the field code. For example, **{** SEQ appendix * ALPHABETIC **}** displays **B** (instead of 2), and **{** SEQ appendix * alphabetic **}** displays **b**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **a, b, c,**.

- ***Arabic** This switch displays results as Arabic cardinal numerals. For example, **{** PAGE * Arabic **}** displays **31**.

  NOTES

  - If the **Number format** setting in the **Page Number Format** dialog box is not Arabic, this switch overrides the **Number format** setting.

  - For page numbers only, there is also an ArabicDash format, which displays results as Arabic cardinal numbers surrounded by hyphen characters. For example, **{** PAGE * ArabicDash **}** displays **- 31 -**.

To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **1, 2, ,3, ...**.

- ***CardText** This switch displays results as cardinal text. The result is formatted in lowercase letters unless you add a format switch to specify a different capitalization. For example, **{** = SUM (A1:B2) * CardText **}** displays **seven hundred ninety**, and **{** = SUM(A1:B2) * CardText * Caps **}** displays **Seven Hundred Ninety**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **One, Two, Three**.

- ***DollarText** This switch displays results as cardinal text. Word inserts **and** at the decimal place and displays the first two decimals (rounded) as Arabic numerators over 100. The result is formatted in lowercase letters unless you add a format switch to specify a different capitalization. For example, **{** = 9.20 + 5.35 * DollarText * Upper **}** displays **FOURTEEN AND 55/100**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **Dollar Text**.

- ***Hex** This switch displays results as hexadecimal numbers. For example, **{** QUOTE "458" * Hex **}** displays **1CA**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **hex ...**.

- ***OrdText** This switch displays results as ordinal text. The result is formatted in lowercase letters unless you add a format switch to specify a different capitalization. For example, **{** DATE \@ "d" * OrdText **}** displays **twenty-first**, and **{** DATE \@ "d" * OrdText * FirstCap **}** displays **Twenty-first**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **First, Second, Third, ...**.

- ***Ordinal** This switch displays results as ordinal Arabic numerals. For example, **{** DATE \@ "d" * Ordinal **}** displays **30th**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **1st, 2nd, 3rd**.

- ***Roman** This switch displays results as Roman numerals. The result has the same case as the word "roman" in the field code. For example, **{** SEQ CHAPTER * roman **}** displays **xi**, and **{** SEQ CHAPTER * ROMAN **}** displays **XI**.

  To select this option in the **Field Options** dialog box, click **I, II, III,**.

⊟ Character formats and protecting previously applied formats

The following are character formatting switches and their results:

- ***Charformat** This switch applies the formatting of the first letter of the field name to the entire result. The result of the following example has bold formatting because the R in REF is bold.

  { REF chapter2_title * Charformat **}** displays **Whales of the Pacific** in bold text.

  NOTE   To add this switch, type it in the field code or in the **Field codes** box in the **Field** dialog box.

- ***MERGEFORMAT** This switch applies the formatting of the previous result to the new result. For example, if you select the name displayed by the field **{** AUTHOR * MERGEFORMAT **}** and apply bold formatting, Word retains the bold formatting when the field is updated to display a new author name.

  NOTE   When you insert fields by using the **Field** dialog box , the *MERGEFORMAT switch is included by default. You can turn this option off by clearing the **Preserve formatting during updates** check box in the **Field** dialog box.

Back to the formatting switches

Numeric format switch

The Numeric format switch (\#) specifies the display of a numeric result.

For example, the switch \# $#,##0.00 in **{** = SUM(ABOVE) \# $#,##0.00 **}** displays a result such as "$4,455.70." If the result of a field is not a number, this switch has no effect.

NOTE   Quotation marks are not required around simple numeric formats that do not include spaces — for example, **{** MarchSales \# $#,##0.00 **}**. For more complex numeric formats and those that include text or spaces, enclose the numeric format in quotation marks, as shown in the following examples. Word adds quotation marks to numeric format switches if you insert a field by using the **Field** dialog box or the **Formula** command in the **Data** group of the **Layout** tab (**Table Tools** contextual tab).

Combine the following format items to build a numeric format switch:

- **0 (zero)** This format item specifies the requisite numeric places to display in the result. If the result does not include a digit in that place, Word displays a 0 (zero). For example, **{** = 4 + 5 \# 00.00 **}** displays **09.00**.

- **#** This format item specifies the requisite numeric places to display in the result. If the result does not include a digit in that place, Word displays a space. For example, **{** = 9 + 6 \# $### **}** displays **$ 15**.

- **x** This format item drops digits to the left of the "x" placeholder. If the placeholder is to the right of

the decimal point, Word rounds the result to that place. For example:

{ = 111053 + 111439 \# x## } displays **492**.

{ = 1/8 \# 0.00x } displays **0.125**.

{ = 3/4 \# .x } displays **.8**.

- **. (decimal point)** This format item determines the decimal point position. For example, { = SUM (ABOVE) \# $###.00 } displays **$495.47**.

  > NOTE Use the decimal symbol that is specified as part of the regional settings in Control Panel.

- **, (digit grouping symbol)** This format item separates a series of three digits. For example, { = NetProfit \# $#,###,### } displays **$2,456,800**.

  > NOTE Use the digit grouping symbol that is specified as part of the regional settings in Control Panel.

- **- (minus sign)** This format item adds a minus sign to a negative result or adds a space if the result is positive or 0 (zero). For example, { = 10 - 90 \# -## } displays **-80**.

- **+ (plus sign)** This format item adds a plus sign to a positive result, a minus sign to a negative result, or a space if the result is 0 (zero). For example, { = 100 - 90 \# +## } displays **+10**, and { = 90 - 100 \# +## } displays **-10**.

- **%, $, *, and so on** This format item includes the specified character in the result. For example, { = netprofit \# "##%" } displays **33%**.

- **"*example formatting for positive; negative*"** This format item specifies different number formats for positive and negative results, separated by a semicolon. For example, if the bookmark (bookmark: A location or selection of text in a file that you name for reference purposes. Bookmarks identify a location within your file that you can later refer or link to.) Sales95 is a positive value, the field { Sales95 \# "$#,##0.00;-**$#,##0.00**" } displays the value with regular formatting — for example, "$1,245.65". A negative value is displayed with bold formatting and a minus sign — for example, **-$ 345.56**.

- **"*example formatting for positive; negative; zero*"** This format item specifies different number formats for a positive result, a negative result, and a 0 (zero) result, separated by semicolons. For example, depending on the value of the Sales95 bookmark, { Sales95 \# "$#,##0.00; ($#,##0.00);**$0**" } displays positive, negative, and 0 (zero) values as follows: $1,245.65, ($ 345.56), **$0**.

- **'*text*'** This format item adds text to the result. Enclose the text in single quotation marks. For example, { = { Price } *8.1% \# "$##0.00 'is sales tax' " } displays **$347.44 is sales tax**.

- **`*numbereditem`*** This format item displays the number of the preceding item that you numbered by using the **Caption** command (**References** tab, **Captions** group) or by inserting a SEQ field. Enclose the item identifier, such as "table" or "figure," in grave accents (`). The sequential number is displayed in Arabic numerals. For example, **{** = SUM(A1:D4) \# "##0.00 'is the total of Table' `table`" **}** displays **456.34 is the total of Table 2**.

Back to the formatting switches

Date-Time format switch

The Date-Time format switch (\@) specifies the display of a date or time.

For example, the switch \@ "dddd, MMMM d, yyyy" in the field **{** DATE \@ "dddd, MMMM d, yyyy" **}** displays "Friday, November 23, 2007." Combine the following date and time instructions — day (d), month (M), and year (y); hours (h) and minutes (m) — to build a date-time format. You can also include text, punctuation, and spaces.

Date instructions

⊟ Month (M)

The letter **M** must be uppercase to distinguish months from minutes.

- **M** This format item displays the month as a number without a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit months. For example, July is **7**.

- **MM** This format item displays the month as a number with a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit months. For example, July is **07**.

- **MMM** This format item displays the month as a three-letter abbreviation. For example, July is **Jul**.

- **MMMM** This format item displays the month as its full name.

⊟ Day (d)

The letter **d** displays the day of the month or the day of the week. The letter **d** can be either uppercase or lowercase.

- **d** This format item displays the day of the week or month as a number without a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit days. For example, the sixth day of the month is displayed as **6**.

- **dd** This format item displays the day of the week or month as a number with a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit days. For example, the sixth day of the month is displayed as **06**.

- **ddd** This format item displays the day of the week or month as a three-letter abbreviation. For example, Tuesday is displayed as **Tue**.

- **dddd** This format item displays the day of the week as its full name.

Time instructions

⊟ Hours (h)

A lowercase **h** bases time on the 12-hour clock. An uppercase **H** bases time on the 24-hour, or military, clock; for example, 5 P.M. is displayed as **17**.

- **h or H** This format item displays the hour without a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit hours. For example, the hour of 9 A.M. is displayed as **9**.

- **hh or HH** This format item displays the hour with a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit hours. For example, the hour of 9 A.M. is displayed as **09**.

⊟ Minutes (m)

The letter **m** must be lowercase to distinguish minutes from months.

- **m** This format item displays minutes without a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit minutes. For example, **{** TIME \@ "m" **}** displays **2**.

- **mm** This format item displays minutes with a leading 0 (zero) for single-digit minutes. For example, **{** TIME \@ "mm" **}** displays **02**.

⊟ A.M. and P.M. (AM/PM)

This displays A.M. and P.M. To change the A.M. and P.M. symbols for Microsoft Windows, change the regional settings in Control Panel.

- **am/pm or AM/PM** This format item displays A.M. and P.M. as uppercase. For example, **{** TIME \@ "h AM/PM" **}** and **{** TIME \@ "h am/pm" **}** display **9 AM** or **5 PM**.

Other text and punctuation

- ***'text'*** This format item displays any specified text in a date or time. Enclose the text in single quotation marks. For example, **{** TIME \@ "HH:mm 'Greenwich mean time' " **}** displays **12:45 Greenwich mean time**.

- *character* This format item includes the specified character in a date or time, such as a : (colon), - (hyphen), * (asterisk), or space. For example, **{** DATE \@ "HH:mm MMM-d, 'yy" **}** displays **11:15 Nov-6, '99**.

- `` `*numbereditem*` `` This format item includes in a date or time the number of the preceding item that you numbered by using the **Caption** command in the **Captions** group (**References** tab), or by inserting a SEQ field. Enclose the item identifier, such as **table** or **figure**, in grave accents (`` ` ``). Word displays the sequential number in Arabic numerals. For example, **{** PRINTDATE \@ "'Table' `table` 'was printed on' M/d/yy" **}** displays **Table 2 was printed on 9/25/02**.

NOTE   Quotation marks are not required around simple date-time formats that do not include spaces or text — for example, **{** DATE \@ MM/yy **}**. For more complex date-time formats and those that include spaces or text, enclose the entire date-time format in quotation marks, for example, **{** DATE \ @ "dddd MMMM d, yyyy', at' h:mm" **}**. Word adds quotation marks to date-time format switches if you insert a field by using the **Date and Time** command in the **Text** group of the **Insert** tab or the **Field** dialog box.

Control how fields are updated

By default, Word automatically updates fields when a document is opened. That way, information stays up to date. There are situations where you might not want this to happen, however. For example, you may want the date in the header to reflect a particular date rather than automatically updating to the current date every time the document is opened.

Fields can also be updated by right-clicking a field and then clicking **Update Field** or by clicking in a field and then pressing F9.

NOTE   To manually update all the fields in the main body of a document, press CTRL+A, and then press F9. Fields in headers, footers, or text boxes must be updated separately. Click within the header, footer, or text box, press CTRL+A, and then press F9.

You can lock fields to prevent automatic or inadvertent updating of the field.

Lock or unlock a particular field

Do one of the following:

- To lock a field so that field results are not updated, click the field, and then press CTRL+F11.

- To unlock a field so that field results can be updated, click the field, and then press

CTRL+SHIFT+F11.

Lock results of BOOKMARK, INCLUDETEXT, and REF fields

The Lock Result (\!) field switch prevents a field that is included in the result of a BOOKMARK, INCLUDETEXT, or REF field from being updated unless the field result in the original location has changed. Without this switch, Word updates fields that are included in a field result whenever the BOOKMARK, INCLUDETEXT, or REF field is updated.

For example, the field **{** INCLUDETEXT C:\\Sales\Qtr4 Sales.doc \! **}** inserts the contents of the document "Qtr4 Sales.doc," which contains a DATE field and an EMBED field. If you update the INCLUDETEXT field, the \! switch prevents Word from updating the DATE and EMBED fields in the included text unless they are first updated in the original document ("Qtr4 Sales.doc"). The switch ensures that the text inserted by the INCLUDETEXT field matches the text in the original document.

To update the DATE and EMBED fields in both locations, update fields in the original document (Qtr4 Sales.doc), and then update the INCLUDETEXT field.