

Introduction

This chapter covers the basics of formatting text in Writer, the word-processing component of LibreOffice:

- Formatting paragraphs and characters
- Using autoformatting
- Creating bulleted, numbered, and outline lists

It assumes that you are familiar with the text techniques described in Chapter 2, Working with Text: Basics and Chapter 3, Working with Text: Advanced.

We recommend that you also follow the suggestions in Chapter 20, Customizing Writer, about displaying formatting aids, such as end-of-paragraph marks, and selecting other setup options.

Page formatting is covered in Chapters 5 and 6.

Formatting: direct (manual) or styles

There are two basic ways to format text:

Direct (or Manual) formatting

Applies formatting directly to specific paragraphs, characters, pages, frames, lists, or tables. For example, you can select a word, then click on a button on the Formatting toolbar to format the text as bold or italics.

Styles

Bundles formatting options under one name. For example, a paragraph style defines numerous settings for options such as font type and size, whether paragraphs should be indented, the space between lines, how paragraphs should be aligned on the page, and many others.

Using styles is recommended

Writer is a style-based program. Because styles apply whole groups of formats at the same time, they enable you to easily format a document consistently and to change the formatting of an entire document with minimal effort. Therefore, the use of paragraph and character styles is highly recommended.

In addition, styles are used by LibreOffice for many processes, even if you are not aware of them. For example, Writer relies on heading styles (or other styles you specify) when it compiles a table of contents.

For information on styles and how to use them, see Chapters 8 and 9 in this book.

Applying styles is quick and easy using the Styles deck of the Sidebar.

Caution

Manual formatting (also called *direct formatting*) overrides styles, and you cannot get rid of the manual formatting by applying a style to it.

Removing manual formatting

To remove manual formatting, select the text and choose **Format > Clear Direct Formatting** on the Menu bar, or right-click and choose **Clear Direct Formatting** on the context menu, or click the **Clear Direct Formatting icon** on the Formatting toolbar, or press **Ctrl+M** on the keyboard.