The conventions for bullet lists

The use of bullet lists follows well-defined conventions:

- Are used only when the order of the points is irrelevant. You might want to arrange points for rhetorical effect, starting with one fairly important point and ending with your strongest point, but readers do not actually need to know one point before another.
- Are introduced in the last sentence in the body text above them, either without any punctuation or with a colon.
- Consist of points that are all grammatical completions of the last sentence in the paragraph before them. That means that each point has a similar grammatical structure to the others. In this bullet list, for instance, each point starts with a present tense verb.
- May be sentence fragments, but should be consistent with each other. For example, they could be all nouns or participles.
- Start with a bullet on, or indented from, the left margin, then indent for the text. If they are lists within lists, then the bullet has the same indent as the text in the top level list.
- Can start with either an upper or lower case letter, as long as the convention is consistent throughout the list and the document.
- End each point with the same punctuation. Commas, semi-colons, periods, or no punctuation are all valid choices. What matters is the consistency of list items and of all lists within the document.
- Are generally no more than 6–8 items long. Much longer, and the ease of reading is lost.
- Do not use an "and," "or," or any other word to introduce the last point in the list, even though that would be grammatically correct.
- Are sometimes considered too informal to use. When in doubt, avoid them.

Numbered lists

While people number lists all the time, the convention is that numbered lists should only be used when the order of the information matters. For instance, in a procedure from a technical manual, one step might be impossible – or even dangerous – without doing another one first.

Writer provides several pre-defined numbered list styles (see Figure 268), and you can define others.

Figure 268: Writer's pre-defined numbered lists