

# Advanced Writer

If you're going to write more than a few pages, learning a few of Writer's more advanced features could save you hours of effort

**S**o, you've mastered the basics in *Writer* and can easily tap out an email, a letter to your bank manager, and even a lengthy report. You are now ready to tackle some of the more specialist functions that *Writer* offers to the power user. These functions are advanced only because they're specific. You don't need to be any kind of genius to use them, just ready to find out some of the more esoteric and fine-tuned features that *Writer* has to offer. Even if you're only ever planning to use *Writer* for letters, you're still going to find some of these features useful. And when you're ready to write that one novel that's inside everybody, *Writer* is the perfect choice to catch your words.

## Master Documents

Another reason for moving onto some of *Writer*'s more advanced features is that you've started to use it professionally. *Writer* is more than capable of providing the backbone to writing for business, with features that will suite the strict criteria of technical writers, as well as more general office use. One such important feature is the use of master documents. Master documents can be thought of as containers holding other documents. They're widely used on large documents as well as by small teams working together on the same project. You can almost think of a master document as the cover that bind the

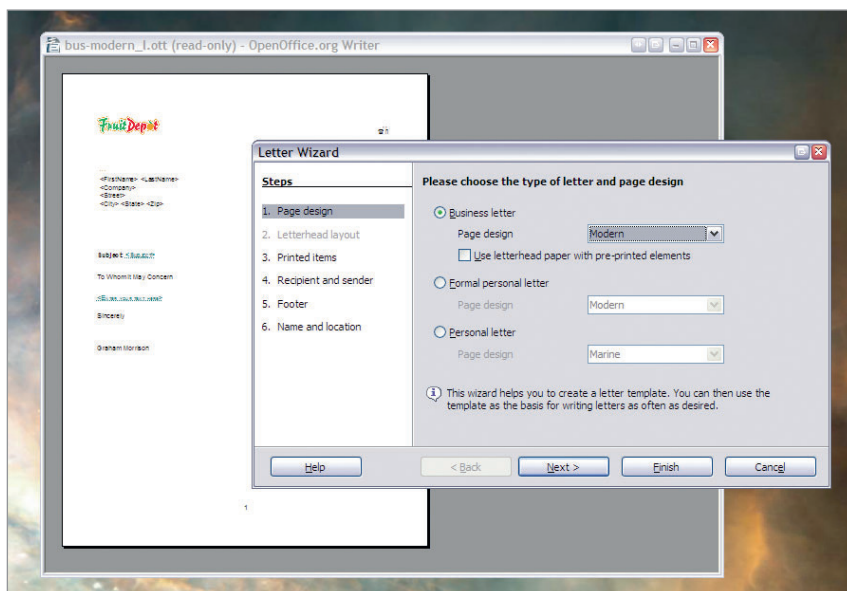
› **The radio buttons let you access drop-down lists full of options that will help you in writing your letter; thankfully, there's no irritating dancing paperclip!**

## Quick tip

Hold down shift when pasting and you can choose the format of the pasted text. Useful to avoid embedding HTML in your documents by accident.

pages, each of which are made from other *Writer* files. In the lingo of master documents, these are known as 'sub-documents'. The advantage with using a master document is that you can manage things like the index, contents and page number across many different sub document from a single document. This is essential with larger projects. The most important thing to bare in mind though, is that all the sub-documents are well formatted. This means marking up your text using styles as we covered in the previous section. But there's one important difference. You should only use the styles that are defined in the master document. If you imported sub-document does use styles that are also defined in the master document, then the styles in the master document are going to take precedence over those defined in the original document. This restriction is designed to give complete control over formatting of documents to the person in control of the master document. For a team of writers, this form of standardisation is essential, and it also means that the master document understand the context of the text within each document.

To create a master document, use the New File drop-down menu and select Master Document . The only immediate difference between the new master document window and a regular *Writer* window is the addition of a small floating pane called Navigator. This smaller window will contain a single entry labelled 'Text' and the first thing you're going to want to do is import a document or two to manage from the master document. This is accomplished through the deceptively small icon in the navigator window with a small green 'plus' symbol in it. Click and hold down this icon and select File. You will then get the regular file requester, and be able to select the *Writer* document you want to insert into the master document. You can add as many files as you want, and they will each be loaded into the main window behind the navigator. If you want to change the order of this files within the master document, simply drag and drop their names within the navigator window. You will notice that you can't edit the documents you've loaded into the master



## Quick tip

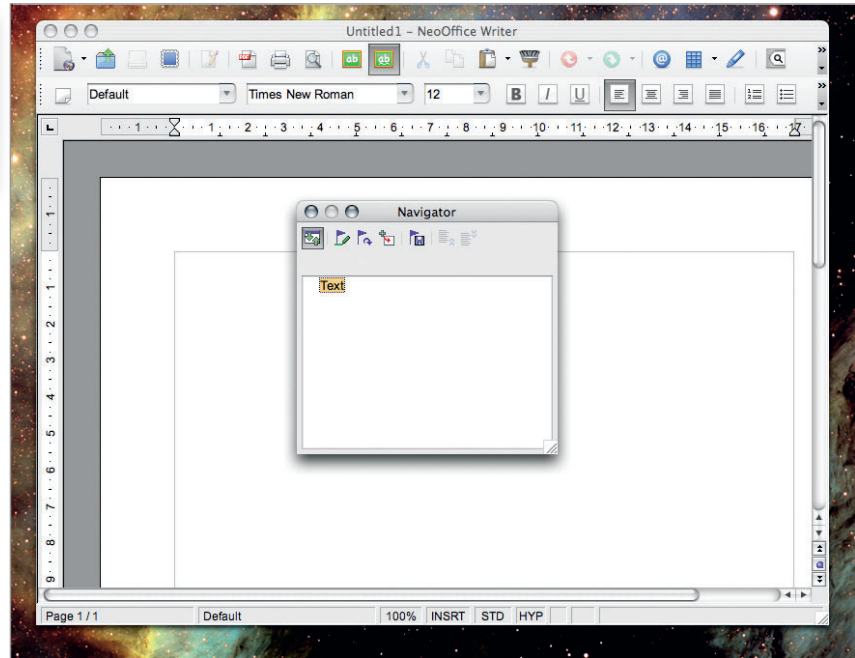
The Template Wizard saves your settings as you type them, so that they're already in the correct fields the next time you run the wizard.

document – this is because they're inserted as read-only. This is where the single 'Text' entry in the navigator comes into play. Using this text section within your master document allows you to add text in between the sub-documents, and it's also this small section you use to define your own styles for the entire master document. If you need more text sections, they can be added using the same icon you used to add documents. If you want to actually change the source document, rather than add text to the master document, then you have to edit the original. You can do this from the navigator by double clicking on the file you want to edit. This will then be loaded into a new *Writer* window where you can make the changes you need. This should be enough to get you started with master documents, but you can find much more information in the *OpenOffice.org* online help, including a useful tip that will change the heading style to add a page break, so that each of the documents you import into the master document start on a new page.

## Templates

Similar to master documents, but on a much smaller scale, are templates. These are the outlines of documents you might frequently want to create, such as press releases, family news updates or tax returns. The great thing about templates is that only a small part of them can be modified when you're filling in the details. This gives them more consistency and is great for an office environment where you want all faxes and letters to use the same formatting. If you want to edit the layout, you need to edit the template itself. Fortunately, *Writer* includes many pre-designed templates for you to use, as well as a helpful wizard to guide you through the data entry stage.

The wizard can be started from the File menu by selecting the type of document you want to create from the Wizards submenu. There are standard templates to create a letter, a fax and an agenda. Each wizard is slightly different, but they typically



► At this point, it is likely that you will need to use the Navigator window to import text from other documents with which to construct your master document, like letter heads or logo graphics for instance.

enable you to change the style of the template and the wording. With the Letter Wizard, for example, you can select between a business letter, a format personal letter and a simple personal letter. Each style uses different images and different language, and you can even fine-tune each style with a further drop-down list. Clicking the Next button in the wizard will let you add and modify the various components in the letter, such as the logo, the return address, the type of salutation used (selected from another drop-down list) and the complimentary closure for the letter. When you've finished skipping through the wizard, you're left with the letter template. You now only need to enter the bare text that you want to write – the template should already have everything else. But this is also a regular *Writer* document, and you can edit any part of it as you would a normal document. You might want to scale the logo, change the image, move the address, remove the page numbering for example. And when you've finished, you might also want to save your own template for future use. You could just save the file without the text you want to write, but these files are easy to lose, and you might also forget you ever made it. Far better to save the document as a template. To do this, just select Templates > Save from the File menu. This will open a small window which lists the available templates, as well as providing a folder for your own. Type a name for your new template into the New Template field, and click on OK. You can now load your new template at any time by selecting Templates and Documents from the New file button/menu. Your template will be listed, along with all the internal ones. If you need to delete this template at any time, just go back to the original templates menu and click on Organize. The Template Manager window will appear. Templates are just specially formatted files saved to a specific location on your hard drive. You can either update them from this window, or delete them from the drop down list on the left. Select the template file you want to remove, right-click and choose Delete. Choosing Edit will open the template as writeable into the *Writer* window, from which you can save your modifications. »

## Keyboard shortcuts

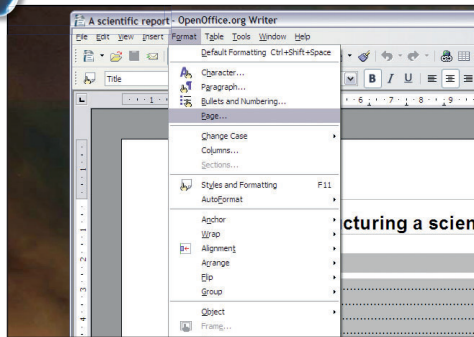
<b>Ctrl + O</b>	Open document
<b>Ctrl + S</b>	Save document
<b>Ctrl + N</b>	New document
<b>Shift + Ctrl + N</b>	New document from template
<b>Ctrl + P</b>	Send document to printer
<b>Ctrl + Q</b>	Quit OpenOffice.org
<b>Ctrl + X</b>	Cut
<b>Ctrl + C</b>	Copy
<b>Ctrl + V</b>	Paste
<b>Ctrl + Shift + V</b>	Choose paste format
<b>Ctrl + A</b>	Select all
<b>Ctrl + Z</b>	Undo
<b>Ctrl + Y</b>	Redo
<b>Ctrl+F</b>	Find and replace
<b>Ctrl + Shift + F</b>	Repeat last search
<b>Ctrl + Shift + J</b>	Fullscreen view
<b>Ctrl + Shift + R</b>	Redraw
<b>Ctrl + I</b>	Toggle italics
<b>Ctrl + B</b>	Toggle bold
<b>Ctrl + U</b>	Toggle underline

**For NeoOffice running on Mac OS X, substitute the Ctrl key for the Option key.**

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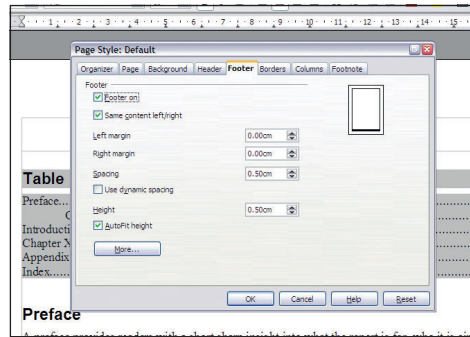
# Writer: advanced techniques

## Writer: page numbering



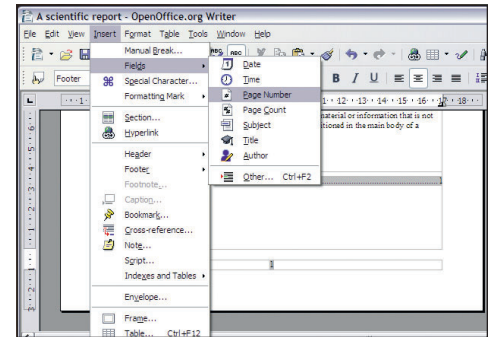
### 1 First footing

Page numbers are easy to add to your documents; the trick is to add a footer to your document. This is a section of fixed formatting that will appear the same on every page. Select Page from the Format menu to open the Page Style window.



### 2 On me header, son!

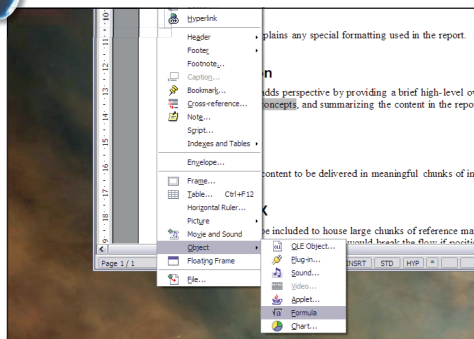
You can add all kinds of things to documents from the Page Style window, like picture backgrounds and headers (the opposite of a footer); we need to switch to the Footer tab and click on the Footer On check box. This will add a footer to your document.



### 3 Number and text insertion

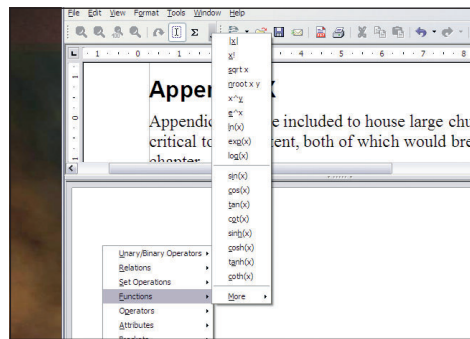
The footer is now at the bottom of any page in your document. If you place the cursor in this section, anything you type here will appear in every page in the same place. Add page numbers by selecting Fields > Page Number from the Insert menu.

## Writer: mathematical formulas



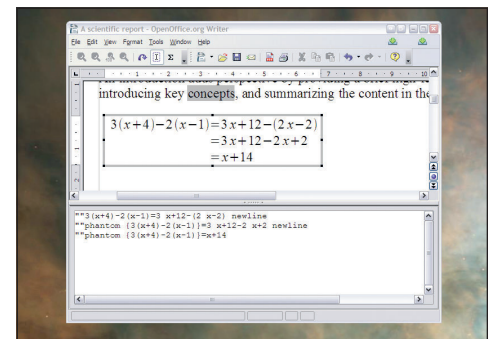
### 1 Formulas or formulae?

As our example is a scientific report, it's fitting to add a mathematical formula. *OOo* has a mini programming language for handling the complexities of formulas; the editor is launched from the Insert > Object > Formula menu option.



### 2 Insert the maths

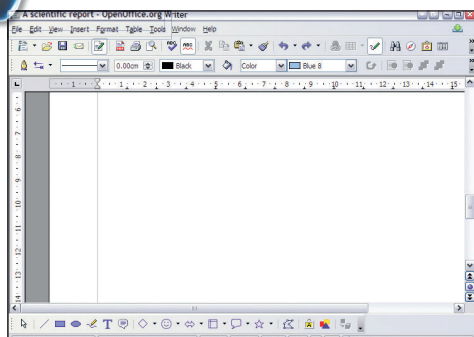
The editor fills the bottom half of your document window. Right-click in this area to add the various parts that make up a formula. You can format these any way you wish, and the formula will be inserted into the document as you make changes.



### 3 Special commands

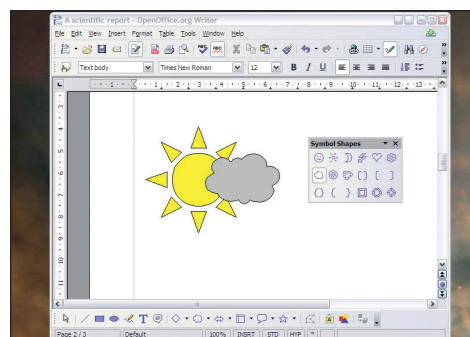
Complex rules govern formula formatting; they're listed in the *OOo* documentation. Special commands like **newline** will change the way formulas will appear; there are other commands for placing symbols anywhere you need them.

## Writer: illustrate your words



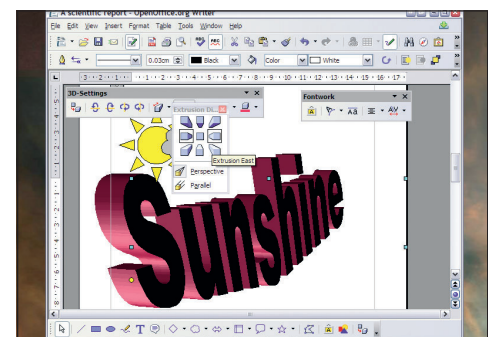
### 1 Speaks a thousand words...

Even if you don't have an appropriate image to import into *Writer*, you can still draw your own. Click on the small Pen icon in the toolbar, and a new drawing toolbar appears at the bottom of the document window.



### 2 Predefined shapes

Several icons in this toolbar draw pre-defined shapes; drag these out of the toolbar and onto your document. Change colours with the drop-down colour menu, and stretch the images with the handles at the edge of your illustrations.

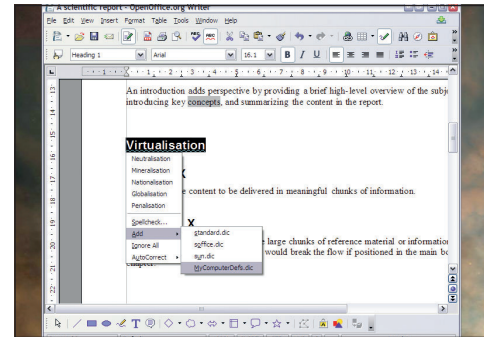
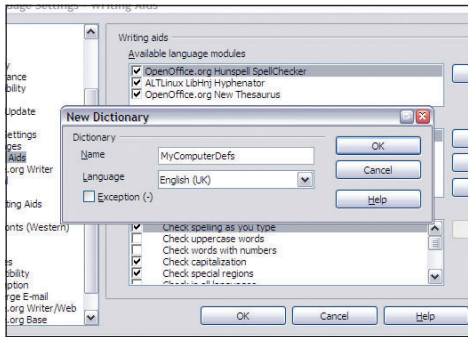
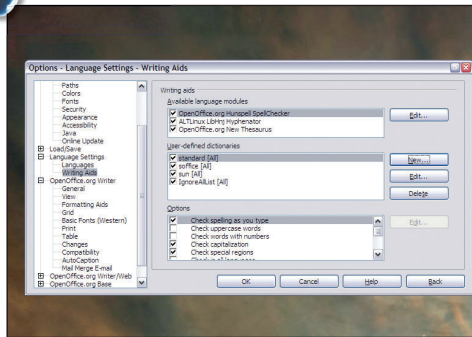


### 3 3D lettering and more!

*Fontwork* is a powerful three-dimensional font tool. Click on the briefcase icon and change the default text to whatever you need. You can change almost anything about the font rendering, from the angle and lighting to the material fonts are made from.



## Writer: custom dictionary



### 1 Get recognition for words

You often have words you want to spell your way, or those that are too new for the dictionary. To add words to a personal dictionary, go **Tools > Options menu**, and select **Writing Aids** from the list of panels on the left of the window.

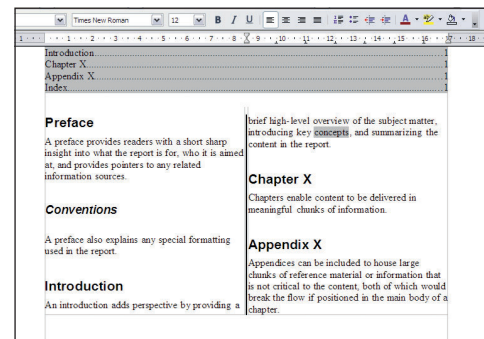
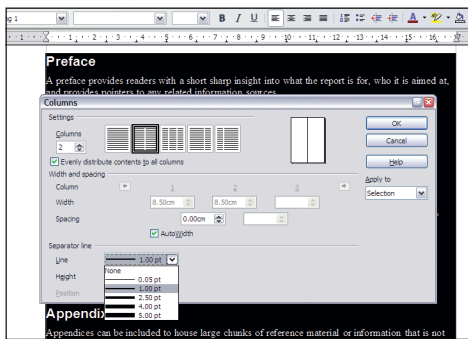
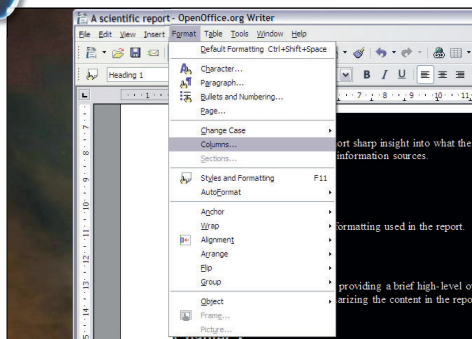
### 2 make your own dictionary

*Writer* already includes several dictionaries. Click the **New** button to add your own. Select the language for your dictionary and also name your dictionary relevant to the words you want to add, then enable it in the list.

### 3 Add words to the dictionary

When you find a word you want to add, right-click on the word and select **'Add'**. Your dictionary is listed with those already included in *Writer*; select yours from the list. You can take your dictionary with you when you move to a different machine.

## Writer: columns



### 1 Desktop publishing – almost!

*Writer* isn't quite a DTP app, but it's not far off. You can create columns of text out of any selected area, for example. Highlight the area where you want to create columns, select **Columns** from the **Format** menu, and a large window with options will appear.

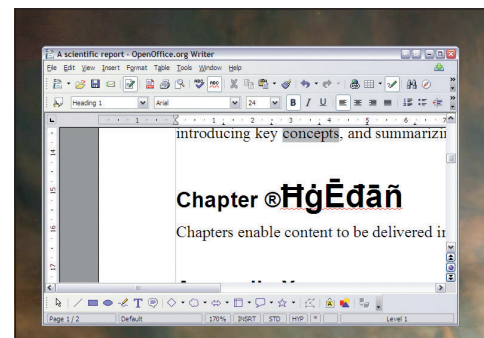
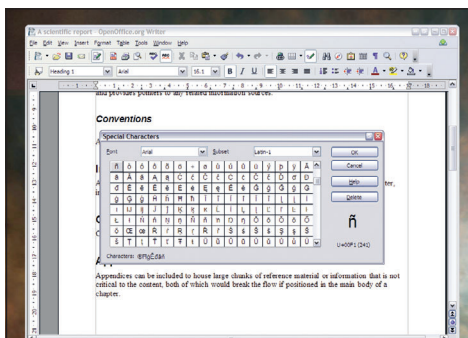
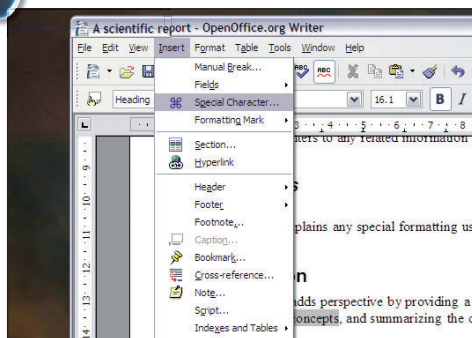
### 2 Layout options

Choose how many columns you want from the icons in the top left, change the spacing and width between columns collectively or individually. A separator line can be drawn between them; choose the weight of this from a drop-down menu.

### 3 Toggle new choices

Click **OK** to apply the changes to a selected region of text. Change settings by opening the **Columns** window while the cursor is in the same area of the document, or **undo/redo** to preview changes. Use **columns** to break up huge chunks of text.

## Writer: special characters



### 1 Stop hunting, save time

Don't spend ages looking for key combinations to insert a Euro or Sigma symbol. *Writer* has a better option – a window that lists them all so you can insert it into your document. Choose **Special Character** from the **Insert** menu.

### 2 Special characters limited

**Special Characters** are limited by the font you're using. Switch fonts from the **special characters** window, this won't guarantee correct output if you share a document with people without the font. Just click on the characters you want to insert.

### 3 Spoilt for choice

**Special Characters** can be copied and pasted just like any normal characters, and they can also have bold, italics and underline applied to them. The only problem is in the number of characters you have to sift through to find the one you need to use. **UXP**