Writer Guide

Chapter 1
Introducing Writer

The Word Processor Component of OpenOffice.org

OpenOffice.org

Copyright

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Publication date and software version

Published 20 May 2008. Based on OpenOffice.org 2.3.1.

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What is Writer?

Writer is the word processor component of OpenOffice.org (OOo). In addition to the usual features of a word processor (spell checking, thesaurus, hyphenation, autocorrect, find and replace, automatic generation of tables of contents and indexes, mail merge, and others), Writer provides these important features:

- Templates and styles
- Powerful page-layout methods (including frames, columns, and tables)
- Embedding or linking of graphics, spreadsheets, and other objects
- Built-in drawing tools
- Master documents—to group a collection of documents into a single document
- Change tracking during revisions
- Database integration, including a bibliography database
- Export to PDF, including bookmarks
- And many more

Styles are central to using Writer. Styles enable you to easily format your document consistently and to change the format with minimal effort. Often, when you format your document in Writer, you are using styles whether you realize it or not. A style is a named set of formatting options. Writer defines several types of styles, for different types of elements: characters, paragraphs, pages, frames, and lists. The use of styles is described in more detail in other chapters in this guide, including Chapter 6 (Introduction to Styles) and Chapter 7 (Working with Styles).

The other features of Writer listed above are also covered in detail in other chapters of this guide.

Starting Writer

If you are reading this document in OpenOffice.org, you already know how to start Writer. However, if this is a printed version or a PDF version, you may not know how to start Writer. So let's look at three ways to do that:

- From the system menu
- From an existing document
- From the command line

Starting from the system menu

Using the system menu is the most common way to start Writer. The system menu is the standard menu from which most applications are started. On Windows, it is called the **Start** menu. On GNOME, it is called the **Applications** menu. On KDE, it is identified by the KDE logo. On Mac OS X, it is the **Applications** menu.

When OpenOffice.org was installed, a menu entry was added to your system menu. The exact name and location of this menu entry depends on your graphical environment. This chapter looks at Windows, GNOME and KDE on Linux, and Mac OS X. The concepts should easily be applicable to another operating system.

Windows

On Windows, the OpenOffice.org menu is located in **Programs > OpenOffice.org 2.x**, where "2.x" corresponds to the version number of OpenOffice.org. Figure 1 shows a typical setup on Windows XP. Select **OpenOffice.org Writer** to start Writer with a blank document.
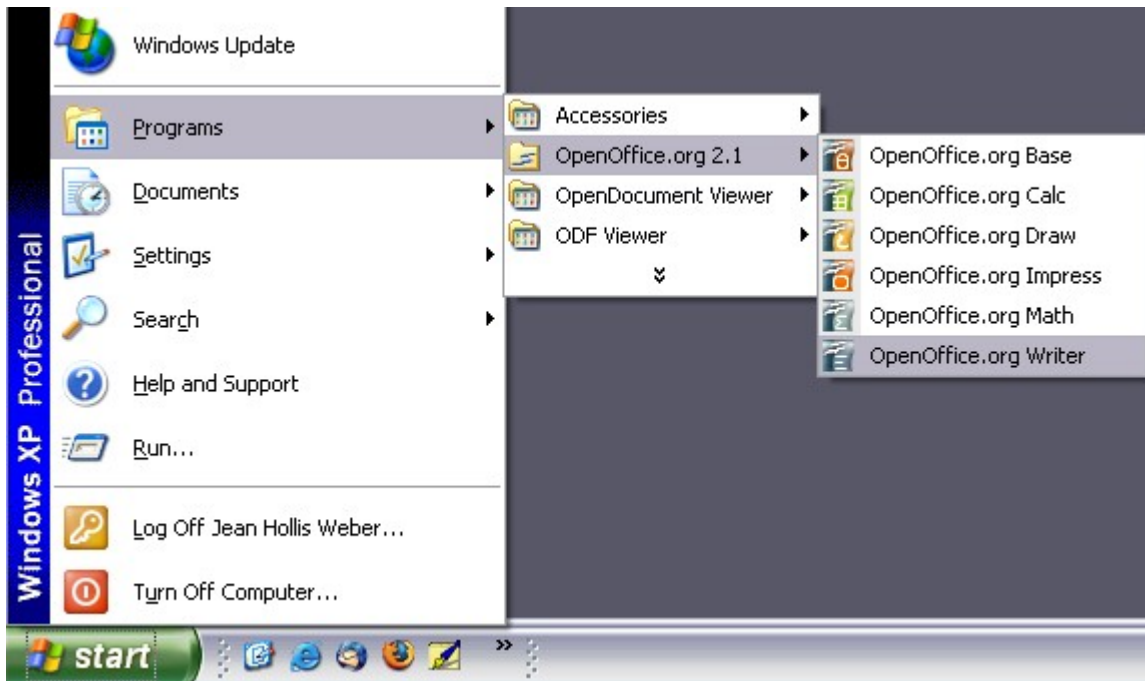
Figure 1. Starting Writer from the Windows XP Start menu

Linux/GNOME

GNOME installations differ from one distribution to the next. Most modern distributions come with OpenOffice.org already installed. You will find OpenOffice.org under **Applications > Office**, as shown in Figure 2.
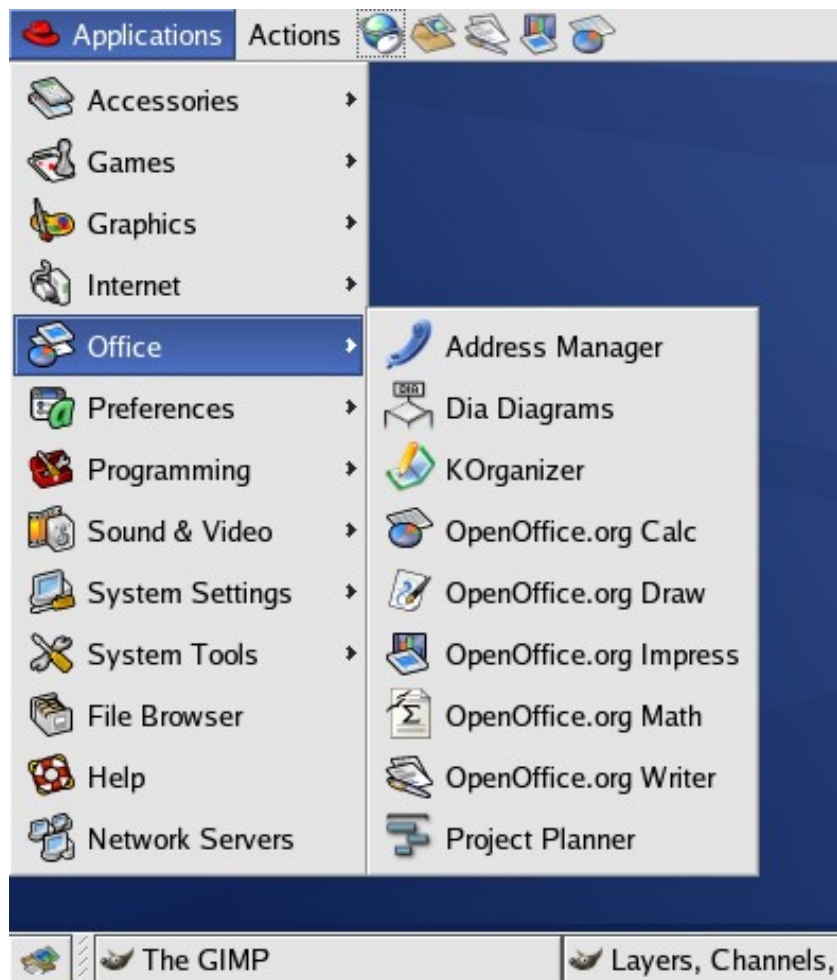
Figure 2. Starting Writer from the GNOME Applications menu

Fedora/Red Hat Enterprise Linux comes with OpenOffice.org installed. On the GNOME desktop, OOo can be found under **Main Menu > Office**. If you have installed a newer version of OOo, you will find it under **Main Menu > Office > More Office Applications**.

If you installed by downloading OOo from the http://www.openoffice.org website, it is under **Applications > Other**.

Linux/KDE

On KDE, OpenOffice.org is installed in its own menu, called **Office** (see Figure 3).
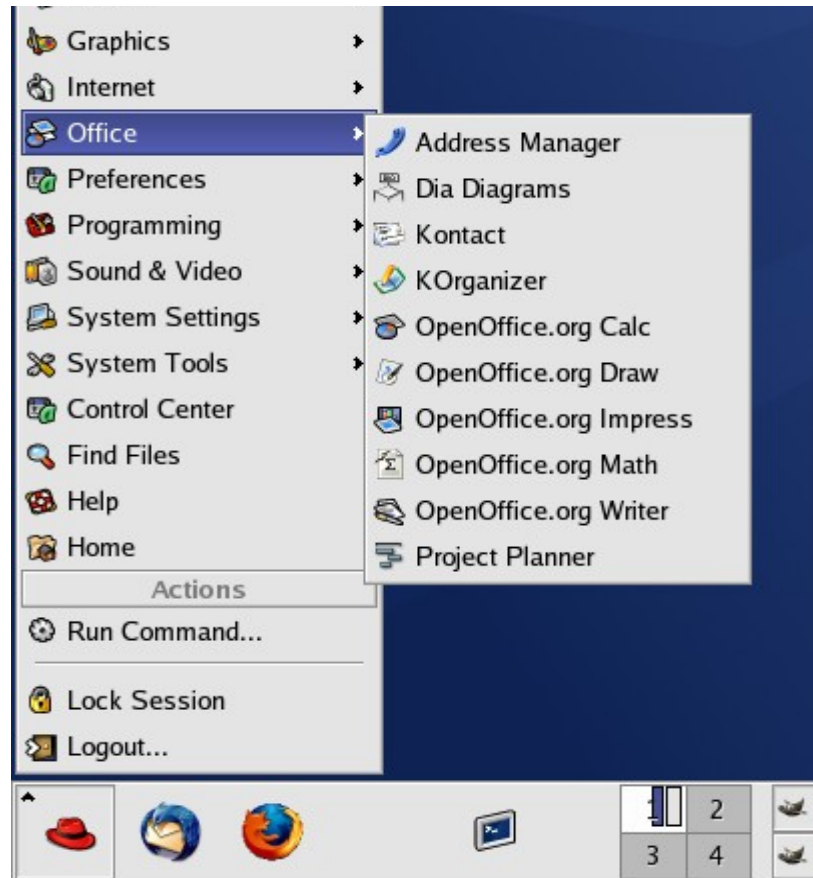
Figure 3. Starting OOo from KDE start menu

Some Linux distributions install OpenOffice.org in the Office submenu. Mandrake is such a distribution. In this case, to launch Writer, choose **Office > Word processors > OpenOffice.org Writer**. Figure 4 illustrates the OOo menu with **Math** selected.
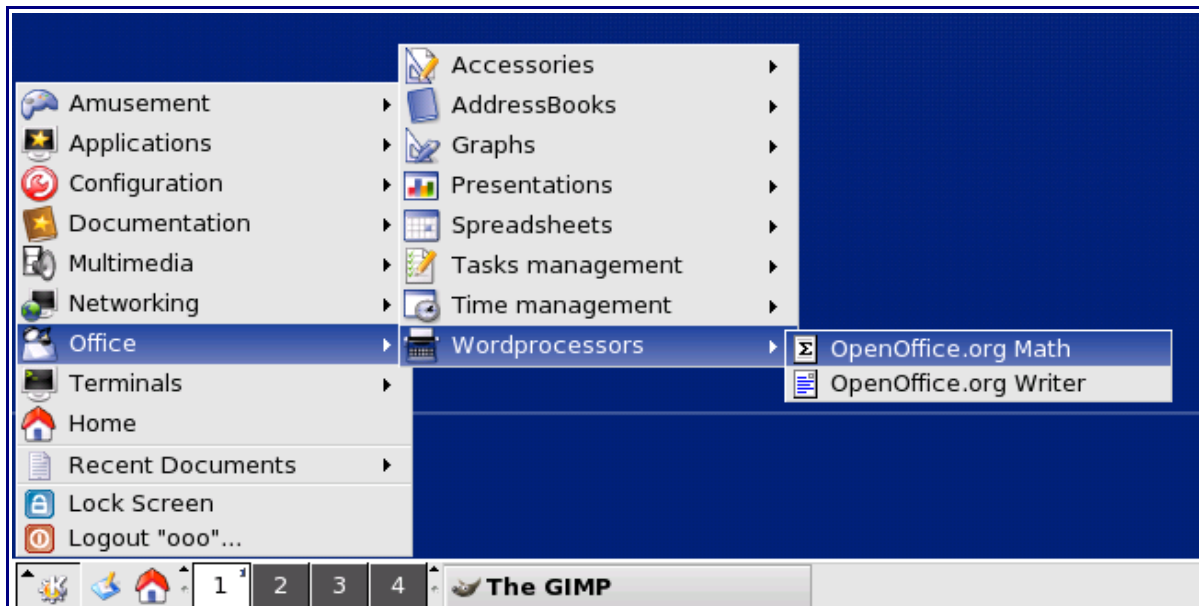
Figure 4: Starting OOo from Mandrake's KDE menu

Mac OS X

Go to the folder where you installed OpenOffice.org. You should see its icon in the Applications folder (Figure 5). To start Writer, double-click the OpenOffice.org icon.

Figure 5: Starting OpenOffice.org from the Mac Applications folder

To open the other components (Draw, Calc, Impress, Base), go to the **File** menu of the Writer window and select the component you want. See Figure 6.

Figure 6: Opening different OOo components on the Mac

Starting from an existing document

If you installed OpenOffice.org correctly, all Writer documents are associated with the Writer application. This means that you can start OpenOffice.org automatically, simply by double-clicking a Writer document in your favorite file manager (for example, Windows Explorer).
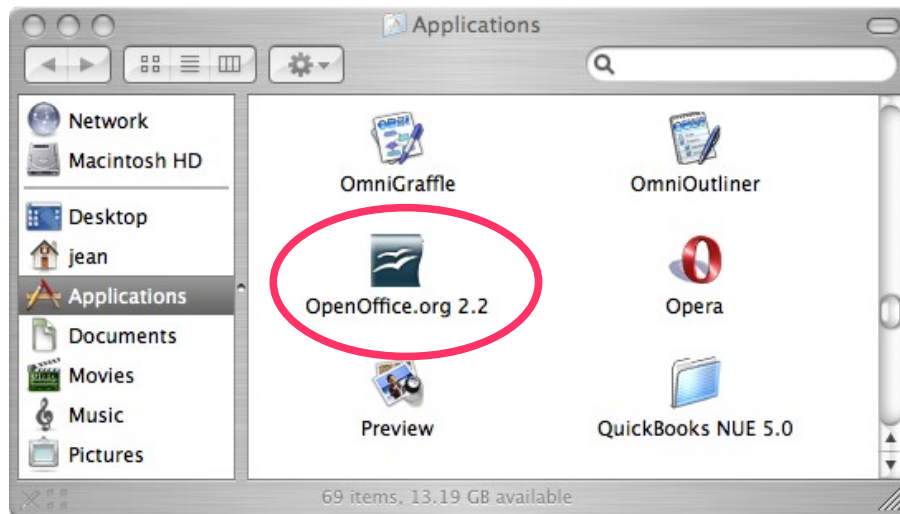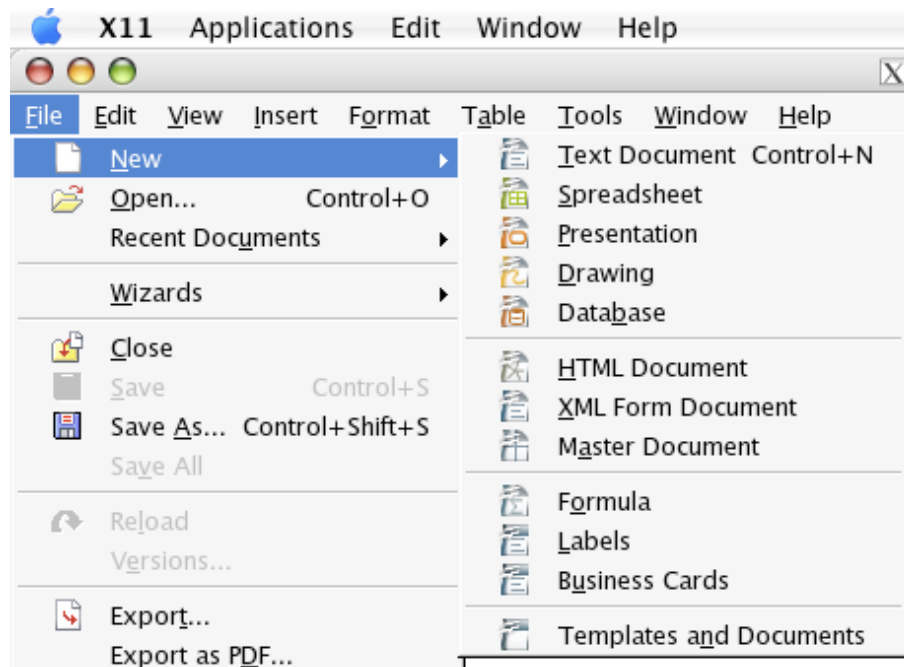
You can spot an OpenOffice.org Writer document by its icon: .

For Windows users

File associations are used to open certain types of files automatically with OpenOffice.org. When installing OOo, you could choose to associate Microsoft Office file types with OOo. If you chose to do this, then when you double-click on a *.doc file, it opens in OOo Writer.

If you did not associate the file types, then when you double-click on a Microsoft Word document, it opens in Microsoft Word (if Word is installed on your computer).

You can use another method to open *.doc files in OOo and save in the *.doc format from OOo. See "Opening an existing document" on page 17 for more information.

Using the Quickstarter under Windows

The Quickstarter is an icon that is placed in the Windows system tray during system startup. It indicates that OpenOffice.org has been loaded and is ready to use. (The Quickstarter loads library *.DLL files required by OOo, thus shortening the startup time for OOo components by about half.) If the Quickstarter is disabled, see "Reactivating the Quickstarter" on page 7 if you want to enable it.

Using the Quickstarter icon

Right-click the **Quickstarter** icon in the system tray to open a pop-up menu from which you can open a new document, open the Templates and Documents dialog box, or choose an existing document to open. (See Figure 7.) You can also double-click the **Quickstarter** icon to display the Templates and Documents dialog box.
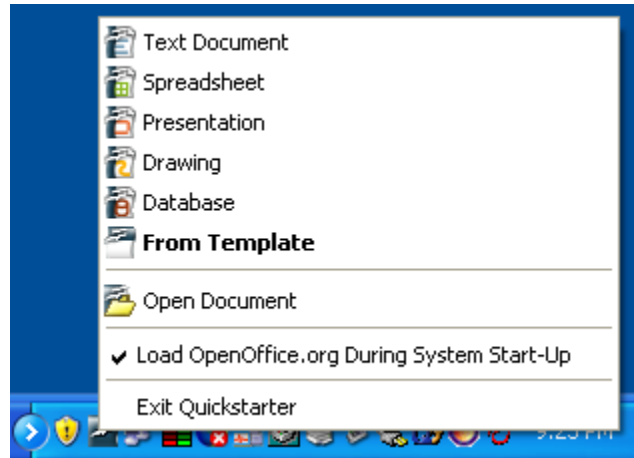

Figure 7: Quickstarter pop-up menu

Disabling the Quickstarter

To close the Quickstarter, right-click on the icon in the system tray and then click **Exit Quickstarter** on the pop-up menu. The next time the computer is restarted, the Quickstarter will be loaded again.

To prevent OpenOffice.org from loading during system startup, deselect the **Load OpenOffice.org During System Start-Up** item on the pop-up menu. You might want to do this if your computer has insufficient memory, for example.

Reactivating the Quickstarter

If the Quickstarter has been disabled, you can reactivate it by selecting the **Load OpenOffice.org during system start-up** checkbox in **Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org > Memory**.

Using the Quickstarter under Linux

Some installations of OpenOffice.org under Linux have a Quickstarter that looks and acts like the one described above for Windows (the checkbox on the Memory page is labeled **Enable systray quickstarter**).

Preloading OOo under Linux/KDE

In Linux/KDE, you can use KDocker to have OOo loaded and ready for use at startup. KDocker is not part of OOo; it is a generic "systray app docker" that is helpful if you open OOo often.

Starting from the command line

You may want to start Writer from the command line (using the keyboard instead of the mouse). Why? Well, by using the command line, you have more control over what happens when Writer is started. For example, using the command line, you can tell Writer to load a document and print it immediately, or to start without showing the splash screen.

Note	Most users will never need to do this.

There is more than one way to start Writer from the command line, depending on whether you have installed a customized version or the standard download from the OOo web site.

If you installed using the download on the OOo web site, you can start Writer by typing at the command line:

```
soffice -writer
```
or
```
swriter
```

Writer will start and create a new document.

To see a list of options you can use when starting Writer at the command line, type:

```
soffice -?
```

Below is a list of some of the more popular options.

Option	**Description**
`-help`	Get a complete list of options.
`-nologo`	Do not show the startup screen.
`-show <odp-file>`	Start presentation immediately.
`-view <documents ...>`	Open documents in viewer (read-only) mode.
`-minimized`	Start OOo minimized.
`-norestore`	Suppress restart/restore after fatal errors.
`-invisible`	No startup screen, no default document and no UI. This is useful for third-party applications that use functionality provided by OOo.

If you have a customized version of OOo (such as the one provided by Linux Mandrake or Gentoo), you can start Writer by typing at the command line:

```
oowriter
```

Note	Although the command syntax differs, the effect is identical: it starts OOo with an empty Writer document.

The Writer interface
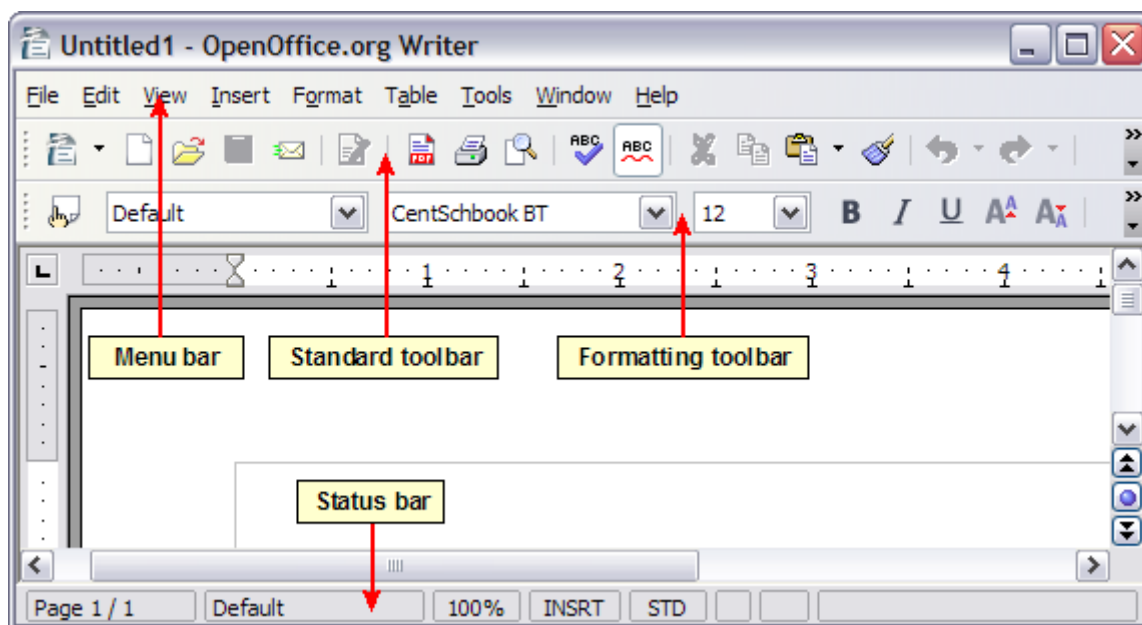
The main Writer workspace is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: The main Writer workspace in Print Layout view

Menus

Menus are located across the top of the Writer window. The main menu selections are **File**, **Edit**, **View**, **Insert**, **Format**, **Table**, **Tools**, **Window**, and **Help**. When you click one of the main menu names, a list of related options is displayed.

• **File** contains commands that apply to the entire document such as **Open**, **Save**, and **Export as PDF**.

• **Edit** contains commands for editing the document such as **Undo** and **Find & Replace**.

• **View** contains commands for controlling the display of the document such as **Zoom** and **Web Layout**.

• **Insert** contains commands for inserting elements into your document such as headers, footers, and pictures.

• **Format** contains commands for formatting the layout of your document, such as **Styles and Formatting**, **Paragraph**, and **Bullets and Numbering**.

• **Table** shows all commands to insert and edit a table in a text document.

• **Tools** contains functions such as **Spellcheck**, **Customize**, and **Options**.

• **Window** contains commands for the display window.

• **Help** contains links to the Help file, What's This?, and information about the program. See "Getting help" on page 20.

Toolbars

Writer has several types of toolbars: docked, floating, and tear-off. Docked toolbars can be moved to different locations or made to float, and floating toolbars can be docked.

The top docked toolbar (default position) is called the *Standard* toolbar. The Standard toolbar is consistent across the OpenOffice.org applications.

The second toolbar across the top (default location) is called the *Formatting* toolbar. It is a context-sensitive bar which shows the relevant tools in response to the cursor's current position or selection. For example, when the cursor is on a graphic, the Formatting bar provides tools for formatting graphics; when the cursor is in text, the tools are for formatting text.
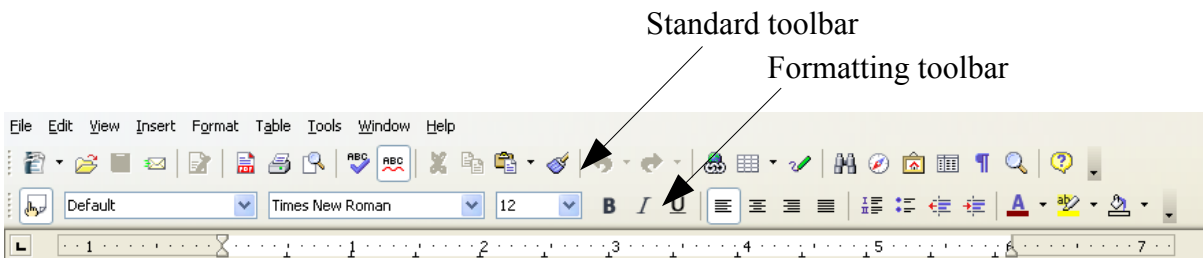
Standard toolbar

Formatting toolbar

Figure 9. Writer toolbars

Floating toolbars

Writer includes several additional context-sensitive toolbars, whose defaults appear as floating toolbars in response to the cursor's current position or selection. For example, when the cursor is in a table, a floating *Table* toolbar appears, and when the cursor is in a numbered or bullet list, the *Bullets and Numbering* toolbar appears. You can dock these toolbars to the top, bottom, or side of the window, if you wish (see "Moving toolbars" on page 11).

Long-click buttons and tear-off toolbars

Buttons with a small triangle to the right will display *submenus*, *tear-off toolbars*, and other ways of selecting things with a long click, depending on the button.

Figure 10 shows the Paste submenu.

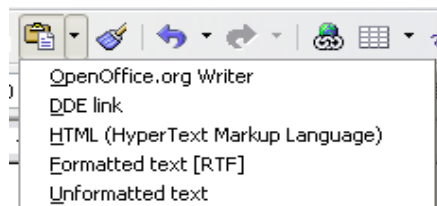Figure 11 shows a tear-off toolbar from the Drawing toolbar.

Figure 10. Example of a submenu

The tear-off toolbars can be floating or docked along an edge of the screen or in one of the existing toolbar areas. To move a floating tear-off toolbar, drag it by the title bar. See "Moving toolbars" below.

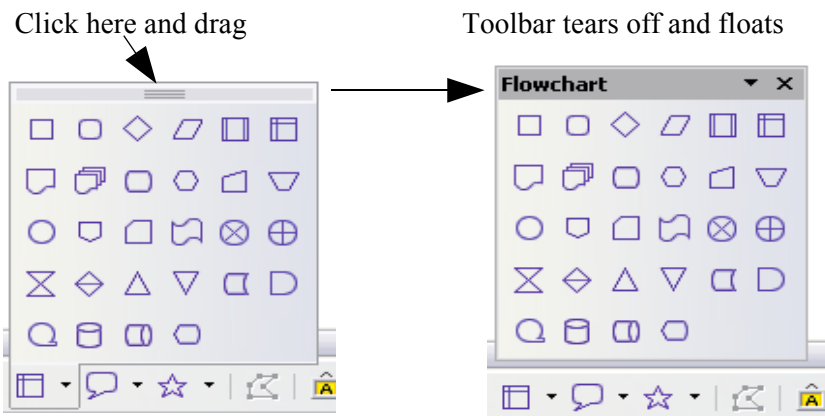Click here and drag   Toolbar tears off and floats

Figure 11: Example of a tear-off toolbar

Displaying or hiding toolbars

To display or hide toolbars, choose **View > Toolbars**, then click on the name of a toolbar in the list. An active toolbar shows a check mark beside its name. Tear-off toolbars are not listed in the View menu.

Moving toolbars

To move a docked toolbar, place the mouse pointer over the toolbar handle, hold down the left mouse button, drag the toolbar to the new location, and then release the mouse button (Figure 12.

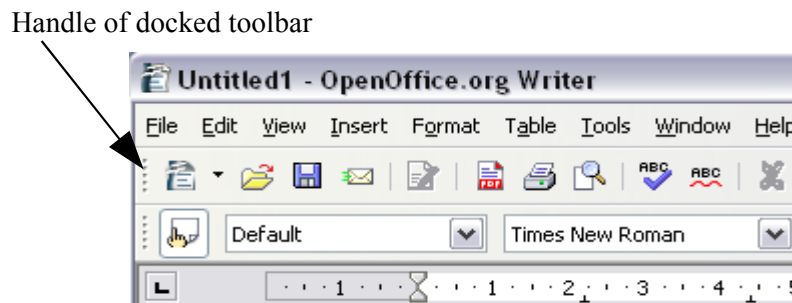To move a floating toolbar, click on its title bar and drag it to a new location. Figure 13 shows an example.

Handle of docked toolbar

Figure 12: Moving a docked toolbar
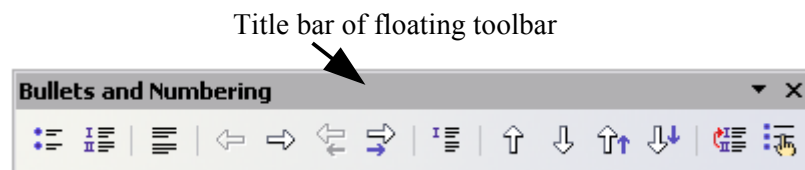
Title bar of floating toolbar

Figure 13: Moving a floating toolbar

Docking/floating windows and toolbars

Some windows in OpenOffice.org, such as the Navigator and the Styles and Formatting window, are dockable. You can move, resize, or dock them to an edge.

To dock a window, do one of the following:

- Click on the title bar of the floating window and drag it to the side until you see the outline of a box appear in the main window (see Figure 14) and then release the window. This method depends on your system's window manager settings, so it may not work for you.

- Hold down the *Control* key and double-click on a vacant part of the floating window to dock it in its last position. If that does not work, try double-clicking without using the *Control* key.

To undock a window, hold down the *Control* key and double-click on a vacant part of the docked window.

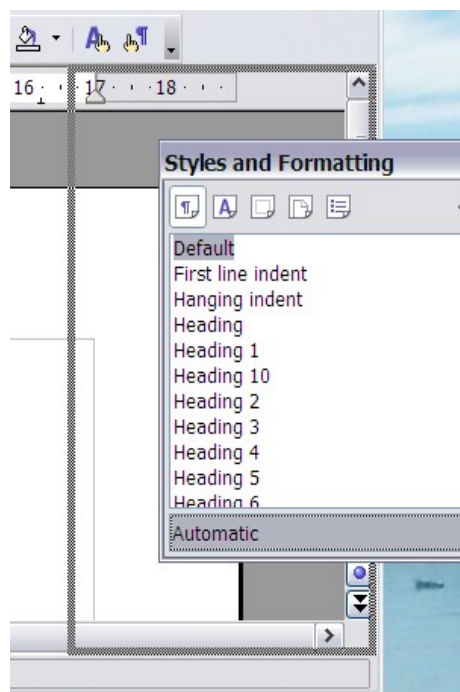| Note	The Styles and Formatting window can also be docked or undocked by using *Control+ double-click* on the gray area next to the icons at the top of the window.

Figure 14: Docking a window

Rulers

To show or hide rulers, choose **View > Ruler**. To show the vertical ruler, choose **Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org Writer > View** and select **Vertical ruler**.
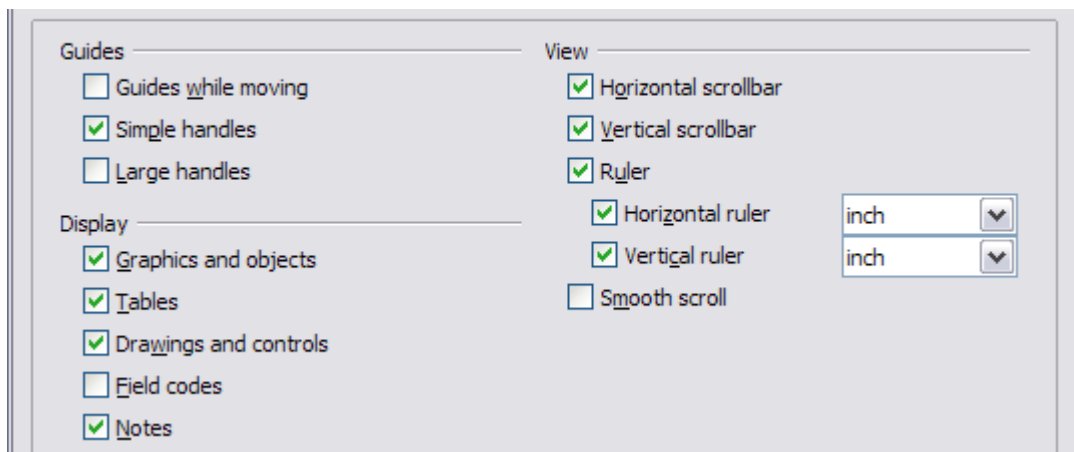

Figure 15. Turn on the vertical ruler using Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org Writer > View

Changing document views

OpenOffice.org has several ways to view a document: **Print Layout**, **Web Layout**, **Full Screen**, and **Zoom**. You can select these choices on the **View** menu. The only document view option with a submenu is **Zoom**. When you choose **View > Zoom**, the following dialog box appears.
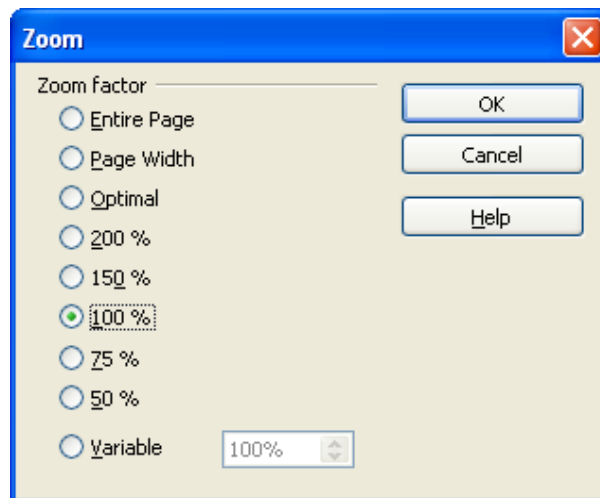
Figure 16. Selecting a zoom factor

- **Entire Page:** Displays the entire page on the screen (text may be too small to read).

- **Page Width:** Displays the complete width of the document page. The top and bottom edges of the page may not be visible.

- **Optimal:** Resizes the display to fit the width of the text in the document.

- **200%:** Displays the document at two times its actual size.

- **150%:** Displays the document at one and a half times its actual size.

- **100%:** Displays the document at its actual size.

- **75%:** Displays the document at 75% of its actual size.

- **50%:** Displays the document at half of its actual size.

- **Variable:** Enter the zoom factor (percentage) at which you want to display the document.

Using the Navigator

The Navigator displays all objects contained in a document. It provides a very convenient way to move around a document and find items in it. The Navigator button is located on the *Standard* toolbar. You can also display the Navigator by choosing **Edit > Navigator**, or open it quickly by pressing *F5*.
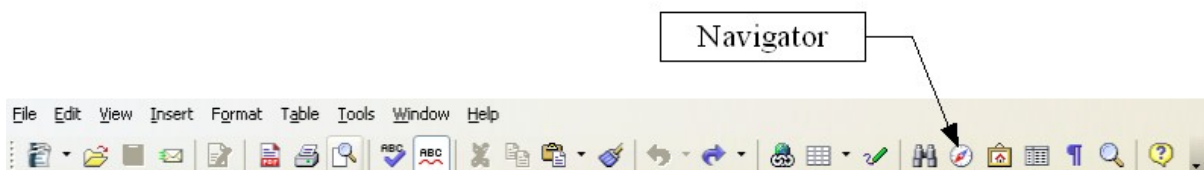

Figure 17. Navigator toolbar icon

The Navigator displays lists of Headings, Tables, Text frames, Graphics, Bookmarks, and other items. Click the + sign by any of the lists to display the contents of the list.

If you only want to see the content in a certain category, highlight the category and click the **Content View** icon.
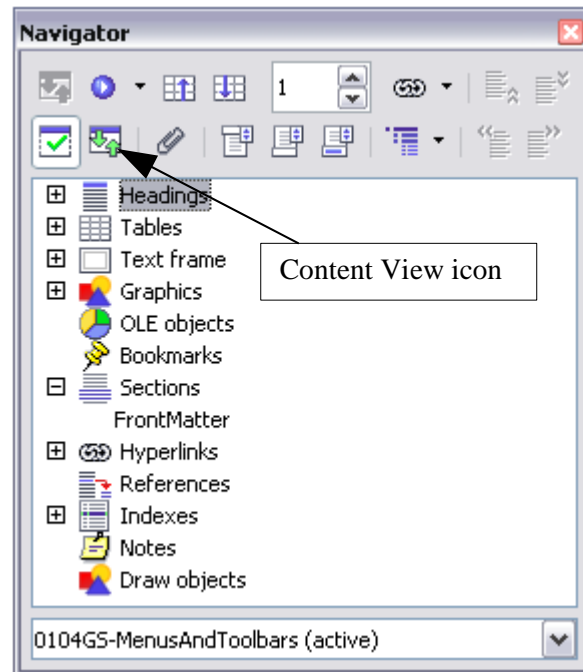
Figure 18. The Navigator

Note	The Navigator looks somewhat different in a master document. For more information, see Chapter 13 (Working with Master Documents).

The Navigator helps you to reach objects quickly. Double-click the object in the Navigator to jump directly to that object's position in the document, as shown in Figure 19.
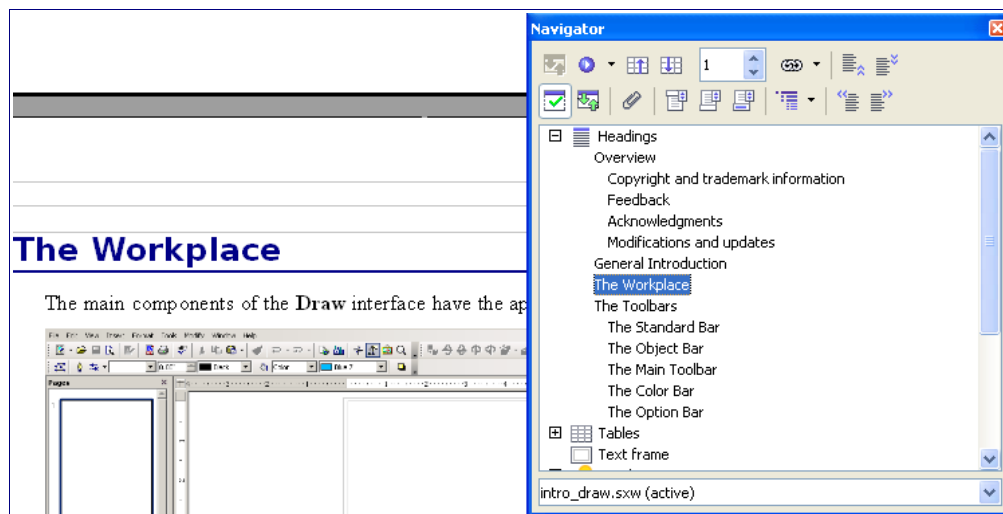

Figure 19. Using the Navigator to jump quickly to a heading

Arranging chapters using the Navigator

You can arrange chapters and move headings in the document by using the Navigator.

1) Click the **Content View** icon to expand the headings, if necessary.

2) Click on the heading in question.

3) Drag the heading to a new location on the Navigator or click the heading in the Navigator list, and then click **Promote Level**, **Demote Level**, **Promote Chapte**r, or **Demote Chapter**.
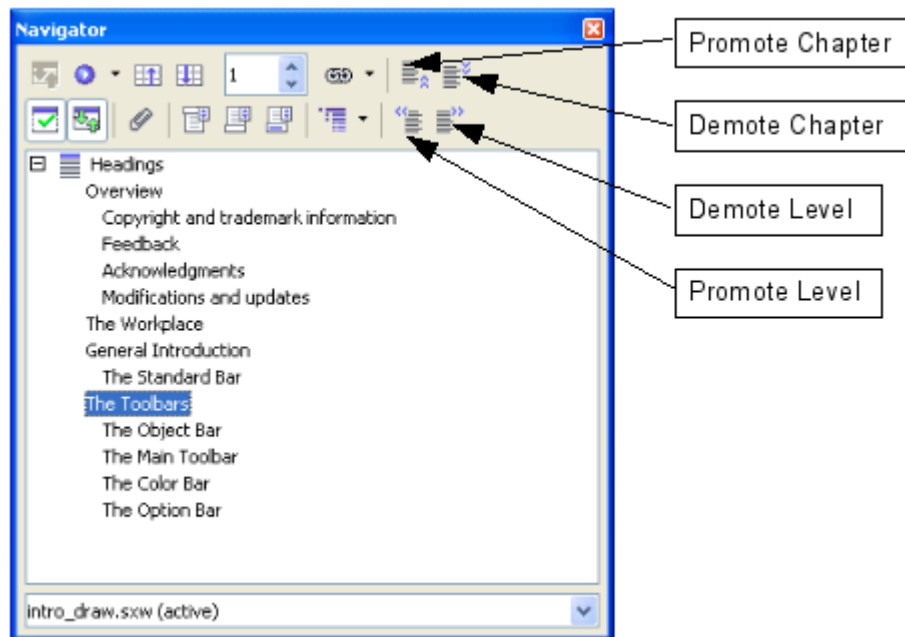

Figure 20. Reorganizing with the Navigator

Creating a new document

Creating a blank document

You can create a new, blank document in Writer in a number of ways:

- Press the *Control+N* keys. A new empty document opens. If you already have a document open, the new document appears in a new window.

- Use **File > New > Text Document**. The result is the same as pressing the *Control+N* keys.

- Click the **New** button on the main toolbar .

Creating a document from a template

You can use templates to create new documents in Writer. Templates serve as the foundation of a set of documents, to make sure they all have a similar layout. For example, all the documents of the *Writer Guide* are based on the same template. As a result, all the documents look alike; they have the same headers and footers, use the same fonts, and so on.

A new OpenOffice.org installation does not contain many templates. It is possible for you to add new templates to your installation and use them for new documents. This is explained in Chapter 10 (Working with Templates). Many more templates can be downloaded from http://extensions.services.openoffice.org/ and other websites.

Once you do have templates on your system, you can create new documents based on them by using **File > New > Templates and Documents**. This opens a window where you can choose the template you want to use for your document.

The example shown in Figure 21 uses a template called "Book" in the My Templates folder. Select it, then click the **Open** button. A new document is created based on the formats defined in the template.
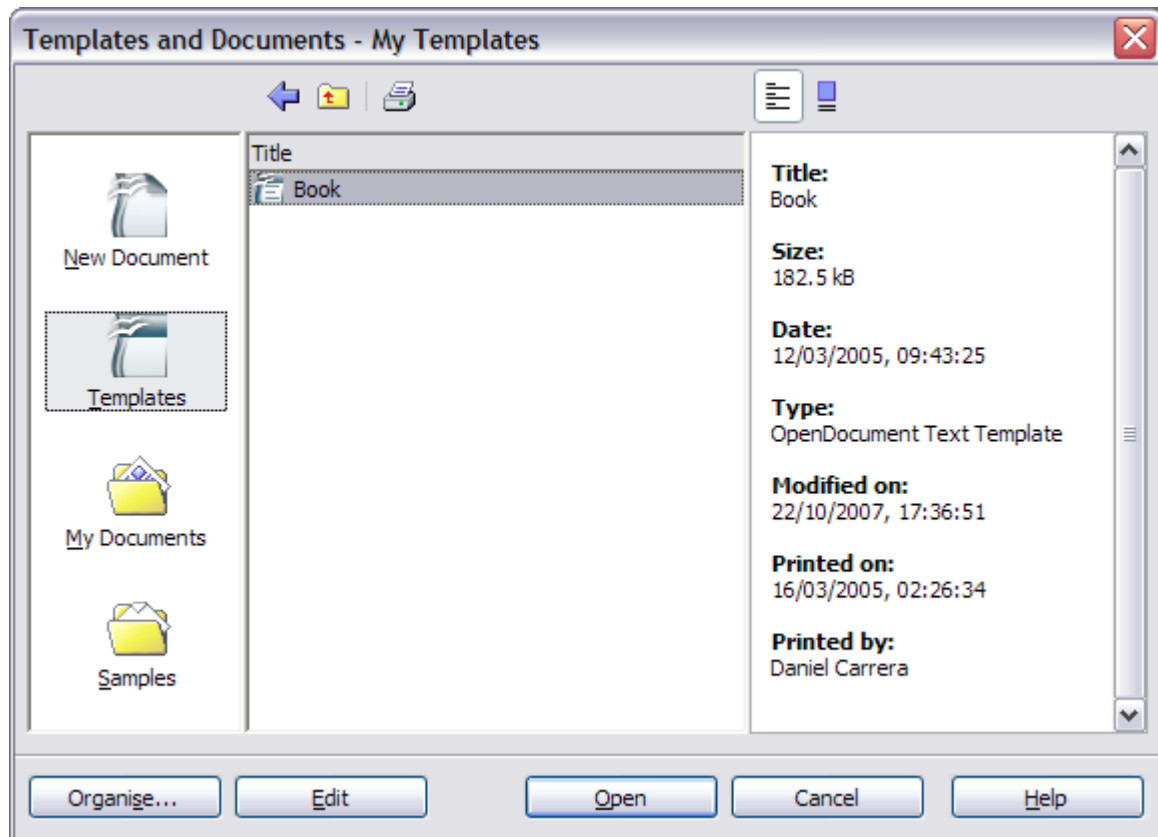

Figure 21. Creating a document from a template

Opening an existing document

Here is one way to open an existing document in Writer:

1) Click **File > Open** (or press *Control+O*).

2) In the file chooser, you can reduce the list of files by selecting the type of file you are looking for. If you choose **Text documents** as the file type, you will only see documents Writer understands.

3) Select the file you want, and then click **Open**.

Note	This method opens Word (*.doc) files, as well as OOo files and other formats.

You can also open an existing OOo Writer document using the same methods you would use to open any document in your operating system.

Saving a document

There are three ways to save a document in Writer:

- Press *Control+S*.
- Select **File > Save**.
- Click the **Save** button on the main toolbar.

You also can tell Writer to save your document automatically at regular intervals. To enable this, you must configure OpenOffice.org to save all documents automatically.

1) Select **Tools > Options**. The Options window appears.

2) Select **Load/Save > General**.

3) Click on **Save AutoRecovery information every**. This enables the box to set the interval. The default value is 30 minutes. Enter the value you want by typing it or by pressing the up or down arrow keys.

Saving as a Microsoft Word document

You may need to share your documents with other people who do not use OpenOffice.org, but use Microsoft Word instead. Fortunately, OpenOffice.org can read and write Word files. To save a document as a Microsoft Word file:

1) First save your document in OpenOffice.org's format (*.odt). If you do not, any changes you made since the last time you saved will only appear in the Microsoft Word version of the document.

2) Then click **File > Save As**. The Save As dialog box (Figure 22) appears.

3) In the **Save as type** drop-down menu, select the type of Word format you need.

4) Click **Save**.

From this point on, *all changes you make to the document will occur only in the Microsoft Word document*. You have actually changed the name of your document. If you want to go back to working with the OpenOffice.org version of your document, you must open it again.

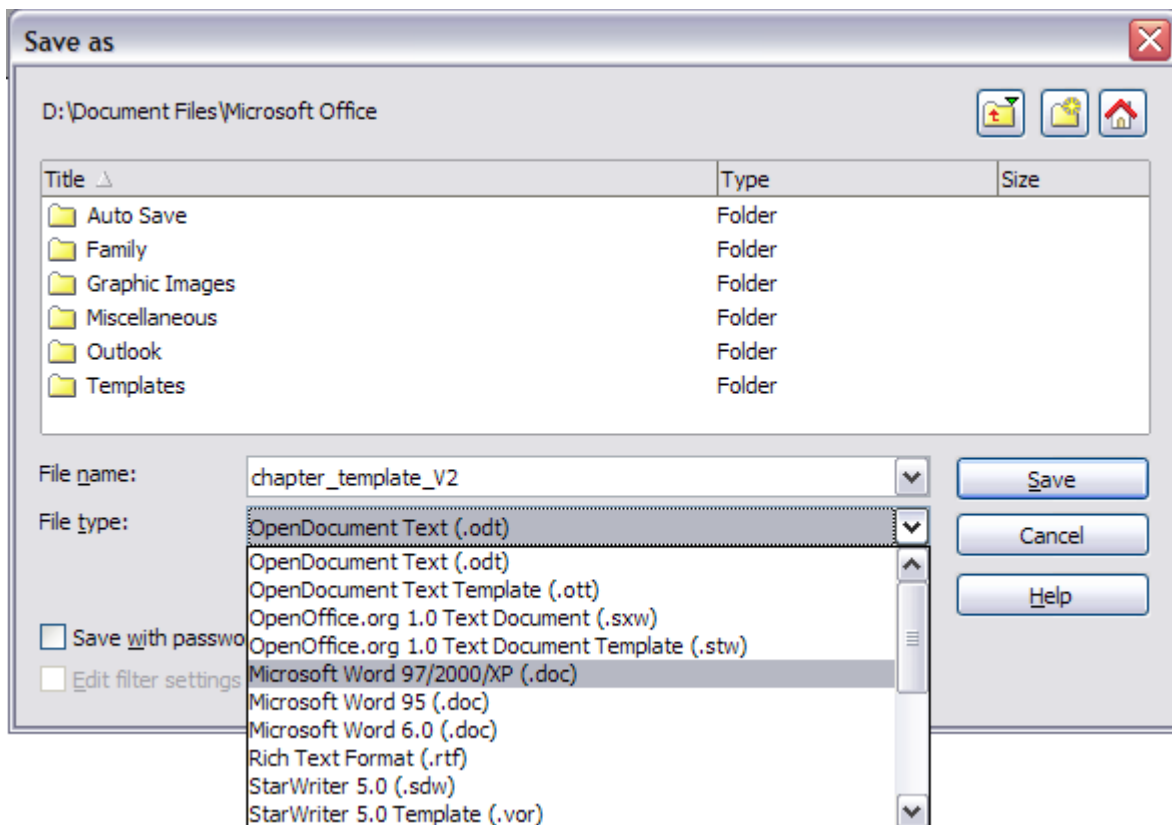| Tip	To have OOo save documents by default in the Microsoft Word file format, go to **Tools > Options > Load/Save > General**. In the section named *Default file format*, under *Document type*, select **Text document**, then under *Always save as*, select your preferred file format.

Figure 22. Saving a file in Microsoft Word format

Printing a document

For more information about printing documents, see Chapter 5 (Printing, Faxing, Exporting, and E-mailing).

Quick printing

Click the **Print File Directly** icon 🖨 to send the entire document to the default printer defined for your computer.

Controlling printing using the Print dialog box

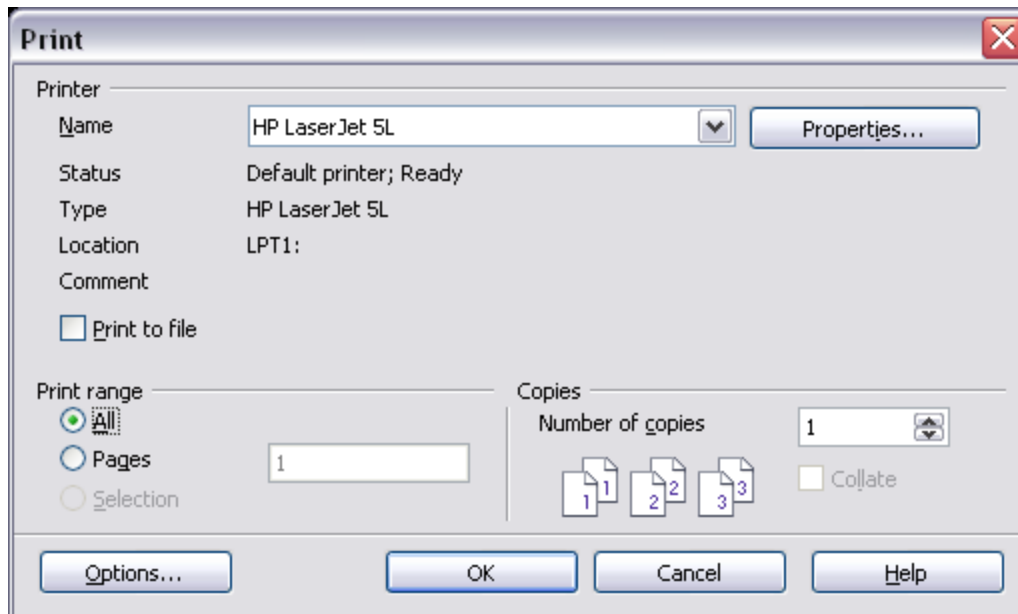For more control over printing, use **File > Print** to display the Print dialog box (Figure 23).

Figure 23. The Print dialog box

On the Print dialog box, you can choose:

- Which printer to use (if more than one are installed on your system) and the properties of the printer—for example, orientation (portrait or landscape), which paper tray to use, and what paper size to print on. The properties available depend on the selected printer; consult the printer's documentation for details.

- Which pages to print, how many copies to print, and in what order to print them.

    - Use dashes to specify page ranges and commas or semicolons to separate ranges; for example, 1, 5, 11–14, 34–40.

    - **Selection** is the highlighted part of a page or pages.

- Which items to print. Click the **Options** button to display the Printer Options dialog box. For details about print options and setting defaults for Writer, see Chapter 5 (Printing, Faxing, Exporting, and E-mailing).

Previewing pages before printing

The normal page view in Writer shows what each page will look like when printed, but it shows only one page at a time. If you are designing a document to be printed double-sided, you may want to see what facing pages look like. OOo provides a way to do this in Page Preview. For more information, see Chapter 5 (Printing, Faxing, Exporting, and E-mailing).

1) Click **File > Page Preview**, or click the **Page Preview** button .

    The Writer window changes to display the current page and the following page and shows the Page Preview toolbar (Figure 24) in place of the Formatting toolbar.
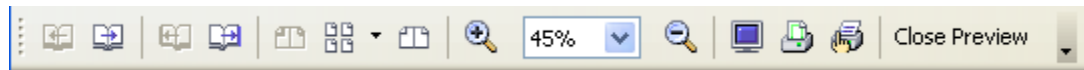
Figure 24. Page Preview toolbar

2) Click the **Book Preview** icon to display left and right pages in their correct orientation (facing pages).

3) To print the document in this page view, click the **Print page view** icon .

4) To choose margins and other options for the printout, click the **Print options page view** icon to display the Print Options dialog box.

Exporting to PDF

OpenOffice.org can export documents to PDF (Portable Document Format). This industry-standard file format for file viewing is ideal for sending the file to someone else to view using Acrobat Reader or other PDF viewers.

Quick export to PDF

Click the **Export Directly as PDF** icon to export the entire document using the default PDF settings. You are asked to enter the file name and location for the PDF file, but you do not get a chance to choose a page range, the image compression, or other options.

Controlling PDF content and quality

For more control over the content and quality of the resulting PDF, use **File > Export as PDF**. The PDF Options dialog box opens. This dialog box has four pages (General, Initial View, User Interface, and Security). Here you can choose which pages to include in the PDF, the type of compression to use for images (which affects the quality of images in the PDF), and other options.

Make your selections, and then click **Export**. Then you are asked to enter the location and file name of the PDF to be created, and click **Save** to export the file.

For more information, see Chapter 5 (Printing, Faxing, Exporting, and E-mailing).

Getting help

Writer provides several forms of help. In addition to a full Help file, you can choose whether to activate tooltips, extended tips, and the Help Agent.

Placing the mouse pointer over any of the icons displays a small box, called a *tooltip*. It gives a brief explanation of the icon's function. For a more detailed explanation, select **Help > What's This?** and hold the mouse pointer over the icon you need more help with.

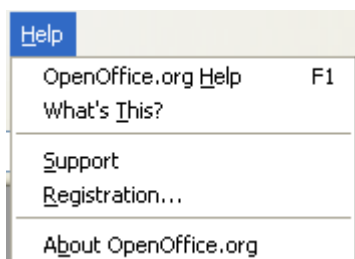| **Note**	The extended tips option in OOo 2.x cannot be accessed from the Help menu as it was in OOo 1.x. Tips and extended tips can be turned on or off from **Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org > General**. *What's This?* help is a new feature in OOo 2.0.

Figure 25. The Help menu

Closing a document

To close a document, click **File > Close**.

You can also close a document by clicking on the **Close** icon on the document window. In Windows XP, this button looks like the red X shown in Figure 26.

If more than one OOo window is open, each window looks like the sample shown on the left in Figure 26. Closing this window leaves the other OOo windows open.

If only one OOo window is open, it looks like the sample shown on the right in Figure 26. Notice the small black X below the large red X. Clicking the small X closes the document but leaves OOo open. Clicking the large red X closes OOo completely.

Figure 26. Close icons in Windows XP

If the document has not been saved since the last change, a message box is displayed. Choose whether to save or discard your changes.

- **Save**: The document is saved and then closed.
- **Discard**: The document is closed, and all modifications since the last save are lost.
- **Cancel**: Nothing happens, and you return to the document.

Caution

Not saving your document could result in the loss of recently made changes, or worse still, your entire file.

Closing Writer

To close Writer completely, click **File > Exit,** or close the last open document as described in "Closing a document" on page 21.

If all the documents have been saved, Writer closes immediately. If any documents have been modified but not saved, a warning message appears. Follow the procedure in "Closing a document" to save or discard your changes.