

kobo™



WRITING LIFE

Content Conversion Guidelines

Revised September 2015

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Welcome to Kobo Writing Life! These guidelines are intended to help you format your book so that it uploads smoothly into our store and displays beautifully on all devices.

This resource will provide an overview of file types and sizes that can be loaded into our system, best practices for cover images, instructions on formatting Word documents for conversion to ePub, steps for using our WYSIWYG editor, and guidance should you encounter errors during the upload process for your book.

Note that these guidelines do not include information on how to create an .ePub file from scratch, as this requires an understanding of html and is beyond the scope of this document.

While formatting is the responsibility of the author or publisher, we are always happy to help, so please feel free to contact us if you have any questions at writinglife@kobo.com.

FILE TYPES & SIZES

You can upload your content file in any of the following formats and they will be converted into a Kobo formatted ePub:

- .doc and .docx
- .odt
- .ePub
- .mobi

Regardless of the file type, the file size for your book cannot exceed 100MB.

BOOK COVER

We ask that you include your book cover in **two** locations when you are setting up your book in your Kobo Writing Life (KWL) account:

1. Uploaded in the **Describe your eBook** step.
2. As the first page of the book file that you upload in the **Add eBook content** step.

File size

Your cover image should be no larger than 5MB.

File format

Both .jpg and .png files are accepted.

Resolution

For best results, your image should be 900 DPI (dots-per-inch). However, files as low as 300 DPI are also fine.

Dimensions

Our device screen sizes have a width to height ratio of 3:4. It is therefore a good idea for you to make sure that the width of your cover image is $\frac{3}{4}$ of its height.

WORD DOCUMENTS

For Word document to ePub conversion, files should be as simple as possible to ensure the smoothest conversion experience.

There are two types of Word documents that can be uploaded: .doc and .docx.

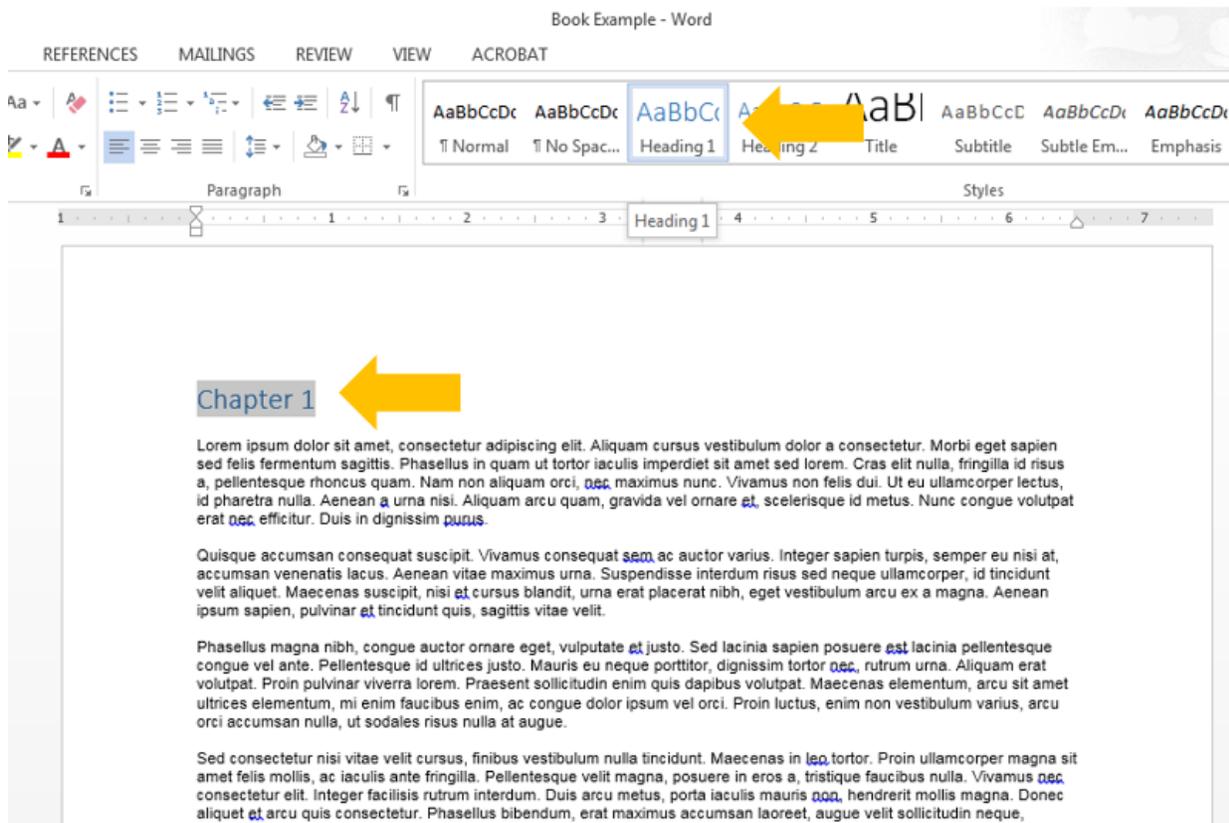
.docx is the file extension of Word documents created in the latest version of Microsoft Office, while .doc is a file extension for documents created in an older version of Microsoft Office. Note that if you are able to create a .docx file, then you can also still create a .doc file, by changing the file type to “Word 97-2003 Document” when saving your file.

Table of Contents

If you would like there to be a Table of Contents page inside your book, then you will need to create one inside your document. However, note that even without creating this page, if you have formatted your chapter headers properly, when users read your book using our app or devices, they will be able to navigate to the various chapters of your book using a built-in navigation function.

How to set up page navigation

For chapter titles to appear in the navigation pane for your book, you need to format them as “Heading 1”. This can be done by highlighting the chapter title text, and then selecting “Heading 1” under the **Styles** menu. The location of this menu may vary depending on the version of Word you are using. Generally, this is near to where font selections are made.



Formatting your chapter titles in this manner is highly recommended as it enhances the reading experience.

How to set up a Table of Contents page

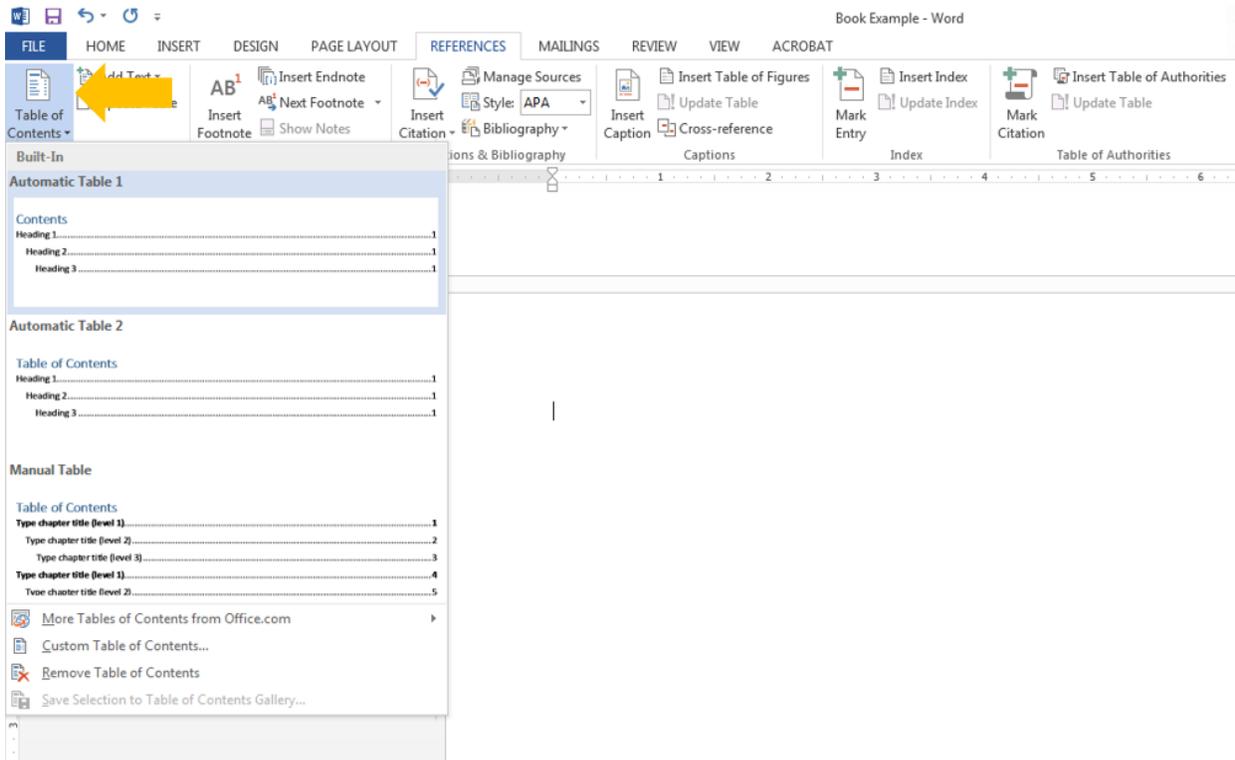
Setting up a Table of Contents (TOC) within the book itself is entirely up to you. As mentioned previously, for this is not needed for the purposes of navigation; however, you may still feel that it would be of interest to your readers.

When deciding whether or not to include a TOC, you may want to keep in mind that when you publish your book to Kobo, a preview of the first 5% of the book is made available to readers. If you would like readers to be able to immediately dive into the first chapter, then perhaps you would not want to include a TOC. However, in other cases, particularly for non-fiction or cookbooks, prospective readers might enjoy perusing the TOC to see get an overview of the contents of the book.

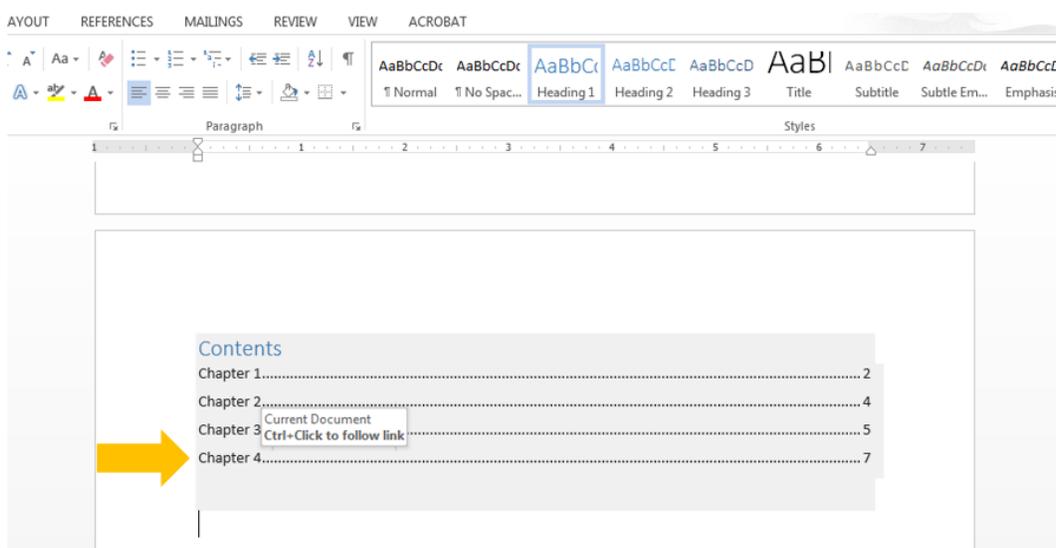
To set up a TOC:

1. Ensure that all headings that you would like to appear in the TOC (i.e. chapter titles) are formatted as "Heading 1". (See [How to set up page navigation](#) above for an example)

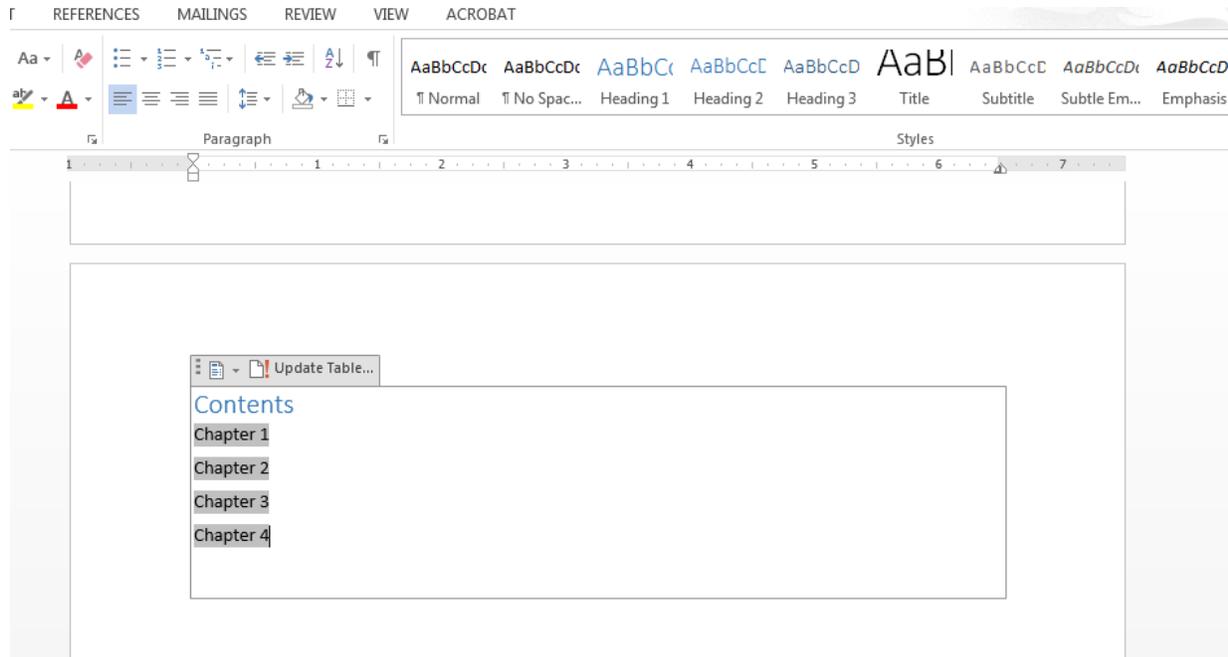
2. Insert the TOC by going to the **References** menu and selecting “Table of Contents”. A TOC will appear at the location of your cursor.



3. Verify that the headings in the TOC are hyperlinked to the correct location in the book.



4. Delete the page numbers that appear in the TOC.



It is extremely important to delete the page numbers because pages work differently in eBooks than in print books, or Word documents. Once your book is converted to an ePub, these numbers will be meaningless and could even possibly cause conversion errors.

Page Layout

eBook pages are **reflowable**. This means that the content that appears on a page is adjusted based on the size of the device the reader is using, and also based on their own preferences. Readers can enlarge or shrink font sizes, alter line spacing, and even change the font of the book they are reading. This is important to keep in mind as you are formatting your book.

Line spacing

You should only use soft returns (SHIFT+ENTER) between lines and paragraphs, instead of hard returns (ENTER). Using hard returns or adding extra lines will cause very large spaces between paragraphs.

To further increase the space between paragraphs, you can use the Word paragraph tool.

Page breaks

To start a new page, use the “Page Break” option. Do not insert a section break, as these are ignored in the manuscript conversion process. Also, do not use either hard or soft returns to start a new page, as these will add spaces between lines but will not guarantee that the text will actually appear on the next page once converted.

Paragraph indentation

To indent paragraphs, set up a first line indent using the Paragraph dialog box. Using the TAB key will cause issues during conversion.

Large indentation

To indent a large portion of text, for example when creating block quotes, use Word’s margin controls.

Columns

Do not use columns in your document. These are not supported.

Tables

Ensure that your tables can be viewed when your Word document is in Portrait mode, rather than in Landscape. This will guarantee that the tables fit on the page after conversion.

Lists

To create a bulleted list, use the built-in bulleted list tool. Do not insert symbols to create bullets – most symbols will translate into a question mark (“?”). To create a numbered list or multilevel outline, use the built-in numbered list tool.

Footnotes & Endnotes

Endnotes are supported, but footnotes are not.

Headers & Footers

Headers and footers are not supported.

Text

Fonts

Please use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier New. Bolding, italic, underlining, and strike-through are all supported.

Cases

To type in upper case, use Caps Lock. Do not use the Word format for “All Caps”.

For small caps, type in all capital letters and change the font size for the text area that you want to appear in small caps. Do not use the Word format for “Small Caps”.

Superscripts and subscripts

It is not recommended to use superscripts and subscripts, as these will cause extra leading (space between the lines of text).

Symbols

Avoid using most symbols. Also, ensure that any fractions are kept in #/# format (ex: 1/4). Word will automatically format fractions to appear as symbols, which will not translation correctly at conversion to ePub.

Images

File size

We recommend that images are no larger than 3MB. It is also important to keep in mind that the maximum file size for the entire book (images included) is 100MB.

File format

Both .jpg and .png files are accepted.

Resolution

For best results, your image should be 900 DPI (dots-per-inch). However, files as low as 300 DPI are also fine.

Alignment

Images can be formatted as flush left, flush right, or centered.

Text wrapping

Text wraps should be above and below the images, not around the image.

Page Numbers

Once converted to an ePub, your book will be **reflowable**. This means that the content on a page will vary, based on the device it is viewed on and on reader preferences. For example, when viewed on a tablet, there will be more words displayed on each page than if viewed on a mobile phone.

As a result, we ask that you **do not insert page numbers** into your document. These will be ignored during the conversion process, and could potentially cause conversion errors.

EPUB FILES

If you have made your own ePub file, or have generated one through a different conversion service, make sure that you run the file through an ePub validator before uploading it to your Kobo Writing Life account. Note that there are many free ePub validators online.

ePub files will fail to upload to your Kobo Writing Life account if the file size is too large or if there are errors within the file.

If errors are flagged when you run your file through an ePub validator, be sure to correct those errors and run the ePub through the validator again before uploading the file to your account.

Files with errors in them may display properly on our devices and in our applications, but in order to guarantee that your readers can view the file on any device, we do not allow for files with any formatting issues. You will therefore receive an error message at file upload if your file contains any errors.

WYSIWYG EDITOR

When loading a new book to your Kobo Writing Life account, at the “Add eBook Content” step, we have made available a “What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get”, or “WYSIWYG” tool.

If you have a few small changes that you would like to make to the content that you uploaded, the WYSIWYG tool makes it simple to make these edits. Note, however, that if possible, it is always recommended that you perfect the file itself and upload a well-formatted and edited file to your account.

Making Changes

At any time before or after publishing your book to our site, you can make changes to the content of your book in one of two ways:

1. uploading a newly edited file
2. editing the content using our WYSIWYG tool

To use the WYSIWYG tool:

1. Select the blue “Edit this eBook” icon at the “Add eBook Content” step.

NEW eBook: TEST BOOK

ADD eBook CONTENT

You've completed 1 of 4 steps!

Ready to upload new content?

Supported file type(s): .epub, .doc, .docx, .mobi, .odt

Replace file

Last updated: 25/04/2015 17:14:02 GMT-0400

Done!

Download and preview this eBook.

Need to edit your book?
Click below to make changes to your soon-to-be masterpiece, or replace this file completely by uploading something new on the left.

Edit this eBook

Describe your eBook

Add eBook content

Choose content rights

Set the price

2. Make desired changes to your document within the tool.

NEW eBook: TEST BOOK

ADD eBook CONTENT

You've completed 1 of 4 steps!

Describe your eBook

Add eBook content

Choose content rights

Set the price

Next

Stop editing

Delete eBook

Clear all

Last saved at 4/25/2015 at 5:18:51 PM

Mark this eBook as complete

Download and preview this eBook.

body p

Chapter 2

Vivamus lectus justo, rutrum at bibendum vel, commodo pretium turpis. Nulla vel arcu non mi elementum iaculis at ut velit. Interdum et malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus. Donec sit amet bibendum enim. Sed et lacinia nisl. Donec laoreet imperdiet ante in volutpat. Sed iaculis bibendum libero in consequat. Nam tincidunt bibendum dui, in consequat sem aliquet id. Curabitur convallis felis sit amet sem condimentum, non rhoncus ex mollis. Suspendisse lacus est, laoreet in fringilla quis, ullamcorper ultricies magna. Phasellus finibus efficitur justo ut fermentum. Morbi ut arcu velit. Quisque eros magna, scelerisque ornare diam ut, sodales ullamcorper lorem.

Ut sit amet congue diam. Donec porta venenatis velit eu commodo. Vivamus et velit ut magna imperdiet pulvinar at nec mauris.

3. Below the WYSIWYG window, select the switch beside “Mark this eBook as complete” so that there is a green checkmark.



Editing Window

The eBook editor has two work areas:

1. Chapter window: This allows you to create, delete, and rename chapters and sub-chapters.
2. Content window: This allows you to enter and edit text, images, and charts.

Saving

You will see that there is no Save option in the editing window. This is because the editor automatically saves your changes as you work. At the bottom of the editing window is a section that tells you when the content was last saved.

Clear All

The “Clear All” button will undo any changes made within the WYSIWYG tool, but will leave intact the original file that was uploaded. If the WYSIWYG tool is open but you have decided to instead upload a new file, selecting “Clear All” will return you to the file upload page.

A pop-up warning will appear if “Clear All” is selected.

Mark this eBook as complete

There is a switch below the editing window where you can mark the eBook as complete. This allows you to move on to the next step in the publishing process.

PREVIEWING YOUR BOOK

When you upload your eBook file at the “Add eBook Content” step, your file is immediately converted to a Kobo formatted ePub. After conversion is complete, the page will appear as follows, with a new link that says “Download and preview your ePub”.

To preview your ePub file, select the “Download and preview this eBook” link, and open your file in an ePub viewer. If you do not have an ePub viewer on your computer, you will need to download one in advance of opening the file. Note that there are many free ePub viewers available online.

FILE UPLOAD OR CONVERSION ERRORS

At the “Add eBook Content” step, you may receive an error at file upload or at file conversion.

If you are uploading a .doc or .docx file, try the following:

- Ensure that your file adheres to the guidelines in this document, and try to re-upload.
- Re-save your .doc file as .docx, or your .docx file as a .doc, and try to re-upload.

If you are uploading an .epub file, try the following:

- Run your .ePub through an .ePub validator, correct any errors that are flagged, and try to re-upload.
- Try to upload your file in a different format (e.g. .doc, .docx).

If you are uploading a .mobi file, try the following:

- Try to upload your file in a different format (e.g. .epub, .doc, .docx).

Contact writingslife@kobo.com if the error persists.