Word 2016 and 2019 cheat sheet: Ribbon quick reference

Find the most popular commands on the Ribbon in Microsoft Word 2016 and 2019 for Windows.

by Preston Gralla | August 2019

For the most part, the Ribbon interface in Word 2016 and 2019 is intuitive to use, but it's not always easy to figure out where each command is located. To help, the charts below detail the most commonly used commands on each Ribbon tab; we've also included keyboard shortcuts for accomplishing these tasks.

File tab

The File tab behaves a little differently from the other Ribbon tabs. Instead of seeing a set of commands on the Ribbon above your document, when you click the File tab you're taken to an area that Microsoft calls "Backstage."

Rather than making changes within a document, this area lets you work with a document and Word overall. You'll find common tasks such as opening, saving and printing a document, as well as special screens for managing the document (the Info screen shown above), customizing Word (the Options screen) and managing your Office account (the Account screen).

| Useful File tab/Backstage commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the File tab	File tab	Alt-F
Start a new document	File tab > New	Ctrl-N *or* Alt-F, N
Open a document	File tab > Open	Ctrl-O *or* Alt-F, O
Close a document	File tab > Close	Ctrl-W *or* Alt-F, C
Save a document	File tab > Save	Ctrl-S *or* Alt-F, S
Save a document with a different file name or in a different location	File tab > Save As	F12 *or* Alt-F, A
Print a document	File tab > Print	Ctrl-P *or* Alt-F, P
Set a document's permissions	File tab > Info > Protect Document	*n/a*
Inspect a document for hidden properties, accessibility and compatibility with earlier versions of Word	File tab > Info > Check for Issues	*n/a*
Recover an earlier version of a document	File tab > Info > Manage Documents	*n/a*
Share a document via email, the web, SharePoint, etc.	File tab > Share	Alt-F, H
Convert a document to a different file format	File tab > Export	Alt-F, E
Customize the way Word looks and works, including the commands shown on each Ribbon tab	File tab > Options	Alt-F, T
Manage your Office, Windows and OneDrive accounts	File tab > Account	Alt-F, D

Home tab
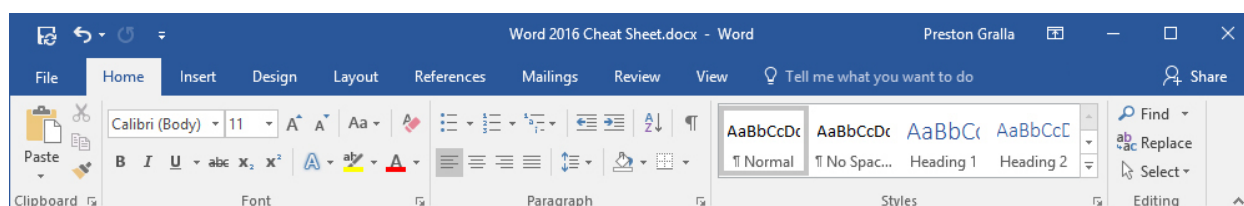
This tab contains the most-used Word features, such as tools for changing fonts and font attributes, customizing paragraphs, using styles, and finding and replacing text.

| Useful Home tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the Home tab	Home tab	Alt-H
Copy selection to the clipboard	Home tab > Clipboard group > Copy	Ctrl-C *or* Alt-H, C
Delete selection and copy it to the clipboard	Home tab > Clipboard group > Cut	Ctrl-X *or* Alt-H, X
Paste from the clipboard	Home tab > Clipboard group > Paste > Keep Source Formatting	Ctrl-V *or* Alt-H, V, K
Paste from the clipboard and choose formatting	Home tab > Clipboard group > Paste	Alt-H, V
Format text (font, size, bold, italic, underline, color, highlighting, etc.)	Home tab > Font group	*Varies by command; use Alt-H to see shortcuts in Font group*
Format paragraph (line spacing, left/right alignment, indenting, bulleted/numbered lists, etc.)	Home tab > Paragraph group	*Varies by command; use Alt-H to see shortcuts in Paragraph group*
Apply preset styles for normal text, headings, etc.	Home tab > Styles group	Alt-H, L
Find a word, phrase or heading, or see thumbnails of all pages in the document	Home tab > Editing group > Find	Ctrl-F *or* Alt-H, FD, F
Find and replace a word or phrase	Home tab > Editing group > Replace	Ctrl-H *or* Alt-H, R
Select everything in the document	Home tab > Editing group > Select > Select All	Ctrl-A *or* Alt-H, SR, A

Insert tab
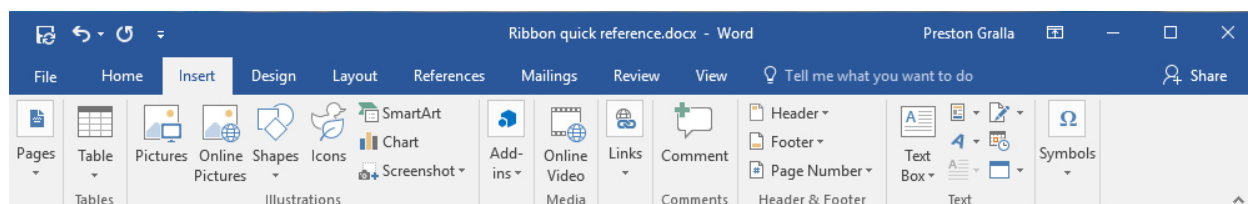
As you'd probably guess, this tab handles anything you might want to insert into a document, such as tables, pictures, videos, shapes, symbols, charts, hyperlinks, bookmarks, headers and footers... you get the idea.

Useful Insert tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the Insert tab	Insert tab	Alt-N
Insert a page break	Insert tab > Pages group > Page Break	Ctrl-Enter *or* Alt-N, B
Insert a cover page	Insert tab > Pages group > Cover Page	Alt-N, V
Insert a table	Insert tab > Tables group > Table	Alt-N, T
Insert a picture from your computer	Insert tab > Illustrations group > Pictures	Alt-N, P
Insert an online picture	Insert tab > Illustrations group > Online Pictures	Alt-N, F
Insert a shape	Insert tab > Illustrations group > Shapes	Alt-N, SH
Insert an icon	Insert tab > Illustrations group > Icons	Alt-N, Y
Insert SmartArt	Insert tab > Illustrations group > SmartArt	Alt-N, M
Insert a chart	Insert tab > Illustrations group > Chart	Alt-N, C
Take and insert a screenshot	Insert tab > Illustrations group > Screenshot > Screen Clipping	Alt-N, SC, C
Insert an online video	Insert tab > Media group > Online Video	Alt-N, NV
Insert a hyperlink	Insert tab > Links > Link	Ctrl-K *or* Alt-N, I, I
Insert a comment	Insert tab > Comments group > Comment	Alt-Ctrl-M *or* Alt-N, L
Insert a header	Insert tab > Header & Footer group > Header	Alt-N, H
Insert a footer	Insert tab > Header & Footer group > Footer	Alt-N, O
Insert page numbers	Insert tab > Header & Footer group > Page Number	Alt-N, NU
Insert a text box	Insert tab > Text group > Text Box	Alt-N, X
Insert WordArt	Insert tab > Text group > WordArt	Alt-N, W
Insert Date & Time	Insert tab > Text group > Date & Time	Alt-N, D
Insert an equation	Insert tab > Symbols group > Equation	Alt-N, E
Insert a symbol	Insert tab > Symbols group > Symbol	Alt-N, U

Design tab
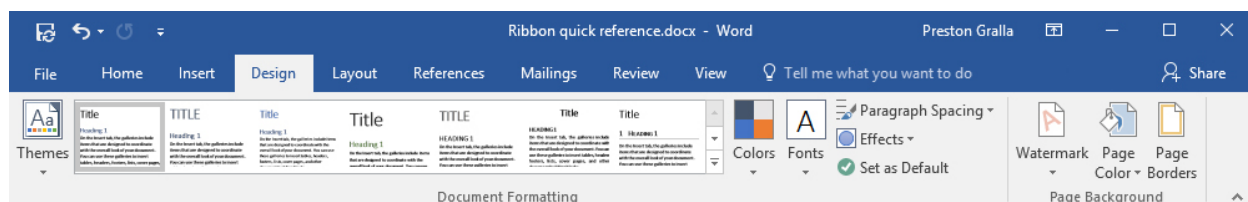
This tab lets you work with a document's overall design, from choosing a pre-designed template or theme to customizing colors, fonts, paragraph spacing and more. Some of its commands are similar to those found on the Home tab and Layout tab. But there's an overall difference: The Design tab is for changes affecting the entire document, and the other two tabs are generally for changes in individual parts of the document, like paragraphs.

| Useful Design tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/20019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the Design tab	Design tab	Alt-G
Choose a theme for the document	Design tab > Document Formatting group > Themes	Alt-G, TH
Choose a style for the document	Design tab > Document Formatting group > *select a style thumbnail*	Alt-G, S
Customize text colors for the whole document	Design tab > Document Formatting group > Colors	Alt-G, TC
Customize fonts for the whole document	Design tab > Document Formatting group > Fonts	Alt-G, TF
Set paragraph spacing for the whole document	Design tab > Document Formatting group > Paragraph Spacing	Alt-G, PS
Add borders, shadows, shadings, etc.	Design tab > Document Formatting group > Effects	Alt-G, TE
Set the current style as the default when starting a new document	Design tab > Document Formatting group > Set as Default	Alt-G, D
Add a watermark	Design tab > Page Background group > Watermark	Alt-G, PW
Customize the pages' background color or borders	Design tab > Page Background group > Page Color *or* Page Borders	*Page color:* Alt-G, PC *Page borders:* Alt-G, PB

Layout tab
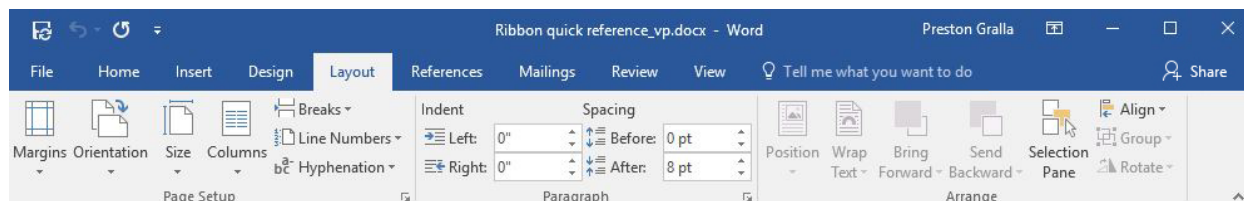
Here's where you change margins and page size and orientation, set up columns, align objects, add effects and so on. There are some gray areas between this tab, the Home tab and the Design tab. For example, on the Layout tab you set indents and spacing between paragraphs, while on the Home tab you set paragraph alignment and spacing between lines.

And while some commands are shared with the Design tab, the changes you make on the Layout tab generally affect individual paragraphs or sections of the document you've selected, whereas changes you make on the Design tab affect the entire document.

| Useful Layout tab commands		
Action	Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location	Keyboard shortcut
Go to the Layout tab	Layout	Alt-P
Set the margins for the document	Layout tab > Page Setup group > Margins	Alt-P, M
Set the page orientation	Layout tab > Page Setup group > Orientation > Portrait *or* Landscape	Alt-P, O
Set the page width and height	Layout tab > Page Setup group > Size	Alt-P, SZ
Designate the number of columns on the page	Layout tab > Page Setup group > Columns	Alt-P, J
Insert a page, column or section break	Layout tab > Page Setup group > Breaks	*Page break:* Ctrl-Enter *or* Alt-P, BP *Column break:* Ctrl-Shift-Enter *or* Alt-P, BC *Breaks menu for section breaks, other options:* Alt-P, B
Set the indentation style for the current paragraph or selected paragraphs	Layout tab > Paragraph group > Indent adjustment boxes	*Indent left:* Alt-P, IL *Indent right:* Alt-P, IR
Set paragraph spacing for the current paragraph or selected paragraphs	Layout tab > Paragraph group > Spacing adjustment boxes	*Spacing above paragraphs:* Alt-P, SB *Spacing below paragraphs:* Alt-P, SA
Position a picture in text	Layout tab > Arrange group > Position	Alt-P, PO
Wrap text around a picture	Layout tab > Arrange group > Wrap Text	Alt-P, TW
Align text	Layout tab > Arrange group > Align	Alt-P, AA

References tab
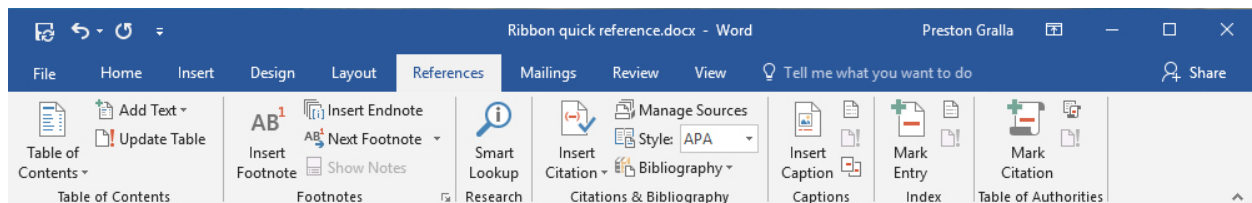
This tab handles tables of contents, footnotes, bibliographies, indexes and similar material. It also lets you insert a "Table of Authorities," which sounds like something straight out of a Soviet bureaucracy but in fact is a list of references used in legal documents.

Note that Smart Lookup, a new feature that searches the internet for information relevant to a word or set of words you select, is located on the References tab in Word 2019 but on the Review tab in Word 2016.

| Useful References tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the References tab	References	Alt-S
Add or format a table of contents	References tab > Table of Contents group	Alt-S, T
Insert a footnote	References tab > Footnotes group > Insert Footnote	Alt-Ctrl-F *or* Alt-S, F
Insert an endnote	References tab > Footnotes group > Insert Endnote	Alt-Ctrl-D *or* Alt-S, E
See all footnotes/endnotes	References tab > Footnotes group > Show Notes	Alt-S, H
Use Smart Lookup (in Word 2019)	References tab > Research group > Smart Lookup	Alt-S, RS
Add a bibliography	References tab > Citations & Bibliography group > Bibliography	Alt-S, B
Insert a citation	References tab > Citations & Bibliography group > Insert citation	Alt-S, C
Manage sources	References tab > Citations & Bibliography group > Manage Sources	Alt-S, M
Insert a figure caption	References tab > Captions group > Insert Caption	Alt-S, P
Insert or update a table of figures	References tab > Captions group > Insert Table of Figures *or* Update Table	*Insert:* Alt-S, G *Update:* Alt-S, V
Mark an index entry	References tab > Index group > Mark Entry	Alt-Shift-X *or* Alt-S, N
Insert an index or update the index	References tab > Index group > Insert Index *or* Update Index	*Insert:* Alt-S, X *Update:* Alt-S, D
Insert or update a table of authorities	References tab > Table of Authorities group > Insert Table of Authorities *or* Update Table	*Insert:* Alt-S, RT *Update:* Alt-S, RU

Mailings tab
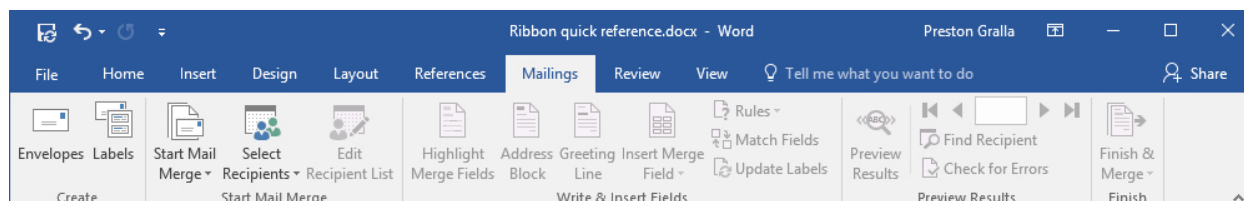
As the name says, this is where you'll go for anything to do with mailings, from something as simple as creating labels to the more daunting task of mail merges.

| Useful Mailings tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the Mailings tab	Mailings	Alt-M
Create envelopes or mailing labels	Mailings tab > Create group > Envelopes *or* Labels	*Envelopes:* Alt-M, E *Labels:* Alt-M, L
Begin a mail merge	Mailings tab > Start Mail Merge group > Start Mail Merge	Alt-M, S
Use the mail merge wizard	Mailings tab > Start Mail Merge group > Start Mail Merge > Step-by-Step Mail Merge Wizard	Alt-M, SW
Choose mail recipients	Mailings tab > Start Mail Merge group > Select Recipients *or* Edit Recipient List	*Select recipients:* Alt-M, R *Edit recipient list:* Alt-M, D
Highlight merge fields	Mailings tab > Write & Insert Fields group > Highlight Merge Fields	Alt-M, H
Create an address block	Mailings tab > Write & Insert Fields group > Address Block	Alt-M, A
Add a greeting line	Mailings tab > Write & Insert Fields group > Greeting Line	Alt-M, G
Insert a field into the merge	Mailings tab > Write & Insert Fields group > Insert Merge Field	Alt-M, I
Create rules for the mail merge	Mailings tab > Write & Insert Fields group > Rules	Alt-M, U
Preview the mailing	Mailings tab > Preview Results group > Preview Results	Alt-M, P
Check the mailing for errors	Mailings tab > Preview Results group > Check for Errors	Alt-M, K
Finalize the mail merge	Mailings tab > Finish group > Finish & Merge	Alt-M, F

Review tab
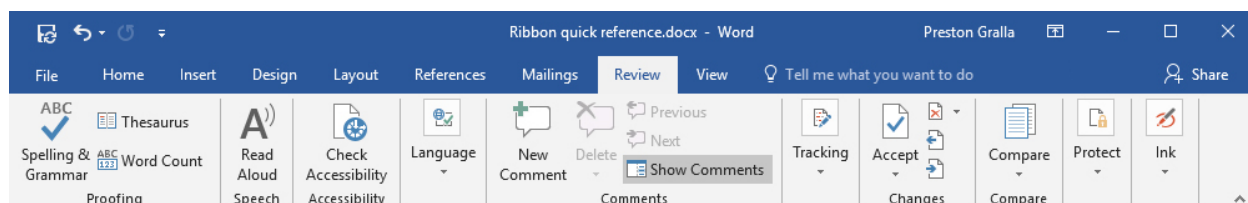
Need to check spelling or grammar, look up a word in a thesaurus, work in markup mode, review other people's markups or compare documents? This is the tab for you.

Note that Smart Lookup, a new feature that searches the internet for information relevant to a word or words you select, is located on the Review tab in Word 2016 but on the References tab in Word 2019.

| Useful Review tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the Review tab	Review	Alt-R
Run a spelling and grammar check	Review tab > Proofing group > Spelling & Grammar	F7 *or* Alt-R, S
Find synonyms for selected word	Review tab > Proofing group > Thesaurus	Shift-F7 *or* Alt-R, E
Use Smart Lookup (in Word 2016)	Review tab > Insights group > Smart Lookup	Alt-R, R
Have text read aloud (in Word 2019)	Review tab > Speech group > Read Aloud	Alt-R, R
Translate text	Review tab > Language > Translate > Translate Selection *or* Translate Document	*Translate selection:* Alt-R, LS *Translate document:* Alt-R, LT
Set the language used to proof the document	Review tab > Language > Language > Set Proofing Language	Alt-R, UL
Insert a comment	Review tab > Comments group > New Comment	Alt-Ctrl-M *or* Alt-R, C
Delete a comment	Review tab > Comments group > Delete	Alt-R, D
Go to previous comment	Review tab > Comments group > Previous	Alt-R, V
Go to next comment	Review tab > Comments group > Next	Alt-R, N
Show all comments in the document	Review tab > Comments group > Show Comments	Alt-R, K
Stop showing comments	Review tab > Tracking group > Show Markup > Comments	Alt-R, TMC
Turn change tracking on/off	Review tab > Tracking group > Track Changes	Ctrl-Shift-E *or* Alt-R, GG
Lock change tracking on	Review tab > Tracking group > Track Changes > Lock Tracking	Alt-R, GL
Show/hide markup	Review tab > Tracking group > Show Markup	Alt-R, TM, *then choose the kind of markup to show/hide*
Use Simple Markup view	Review tab > Tracking group > *change* All Markup *to* Simple Markup	Alt-R, TD, *then choose* Simple Markup
Show/hide Reviewing Pane	Review tab > Tracking group > Reviewing Pane	*Show as vert. pane:* Alt-R, TPV *Show as horiz. pane:* Alt-R, TPH
Review and accept or reject changes	Review tab > Changes group > Accept *or* Reject	*Accept:* Alt-R, A2 *Reject:* Alt-R, J
Compare two versions of a document	Review tab > Compare group > Compare > Compare	Alt-R, M, C
Combine revisions from multiple documents into a single document	Review tab > Compare group > Compare > Combine	Alt-R, M, M
Control who can edit the document or what changes can be made	Review tab > Protect group > Block Authors *or* Restrict Editing	*Block authors:* Alt-R, PB *Restrict editing:* Alt-R, PE

View tab
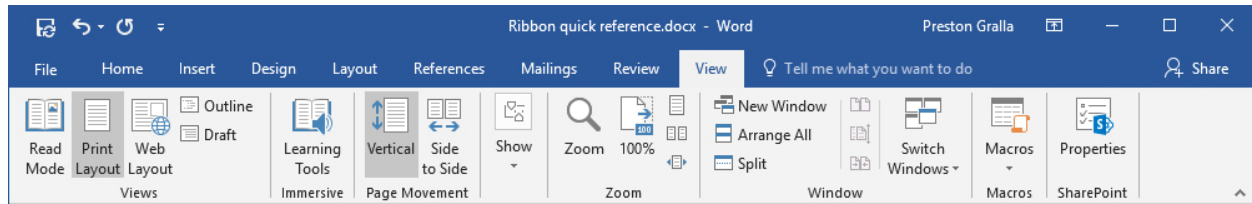
Here's where to go when you want to change the view in any way, including displaying a ruler and grid lines, zooming in and out, splitting a window in two and so on.

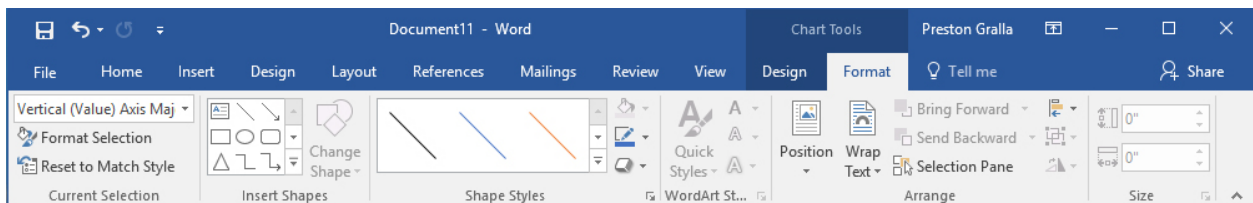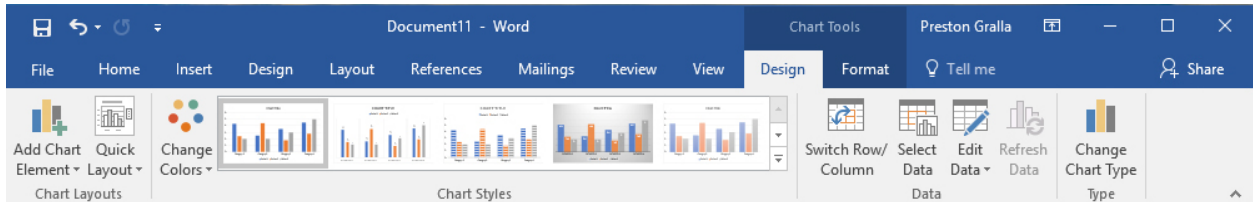| Useful View tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the View tab	View	Alt-W
Switch the view to Read Mode	View tab > Views group > Read Mode	Alt-W, F *or* Alt-V, R
Switch the view to Print Layout	View tab > Views group > Print Layout	Alt-Ctrl-P *or* Alt-W, P
Switch the view to Web Layout	View tab > Views group > Web Layout	Alt-W, L1 *or* Alt-V, W
Switch the view to Outline	View tab > Views group > Outline	Alt-Ctrl-O *or* Alt-W, U
Switch the view to Draft	View tab > Views group > Draft	Alt-Ctrl-N *or* Alt-W, E
Show/hide ruler or gridlines	View tab > Show > Ruler *or* Gridlines	*Ruler:* Alt-W, R *Gridlines:* Alt-W, G
Show the Navigation Pane	View tab > Show > Navigation Pane	Alt-W, K
Zoom the document view in or out	View tab > Zoom group > Zoom	Alt-W, Q *or* Alt-V, Z
View the document at full size	View tab > Zoom group > 100%	Alt-W, J
Open the same document in a new window	View tab > Window group > New Window	Alt-W, N
Split the current document window or remove a split	View tab > Window group > Split/Remove Split	Alt-Ctrl-S *or* Alt-W, S1
View macros	View tab > Macros group > Macros	Alt-W, MV
Record macros	View tab > Macros group > Macros > Record Macro	Alt-W, MR
Pause/resume recording	View tab > Macros group > Pause Recording/Resume Recorder	*Pause:* Alt-W, MP *Resume:* Alt-W, MR

Contextual tabs

Some tabs are not part of the basic Ribbon but appear only in certain contexts. For instance, the Picture Tools/Format tab appears only when you've inserted an image into your document and your cursor is positioned in the image area. It lets you do everything from cropping the image to positioning it on the page.
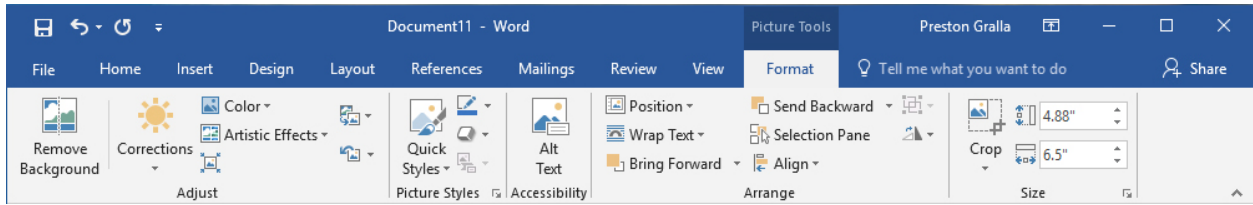
When you insert a table into your document and position your cursor in it, two new tabs appear: Table Tools/Design and Table Tools/Layout. The Design tab lets you control the table's style, including borders and shading, while the Layout tab lets you specify the number of rows and columns, merge and split cells, sort the table's data and more.
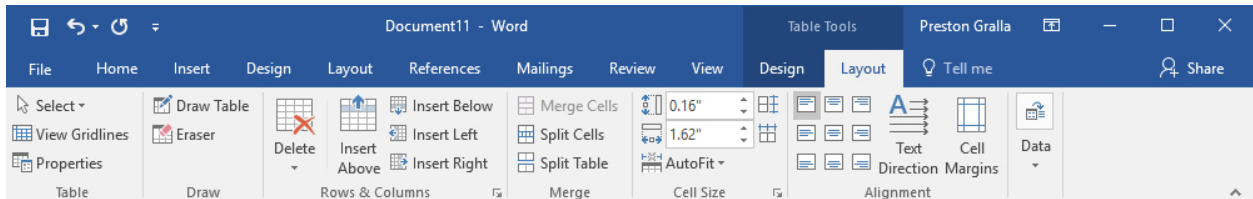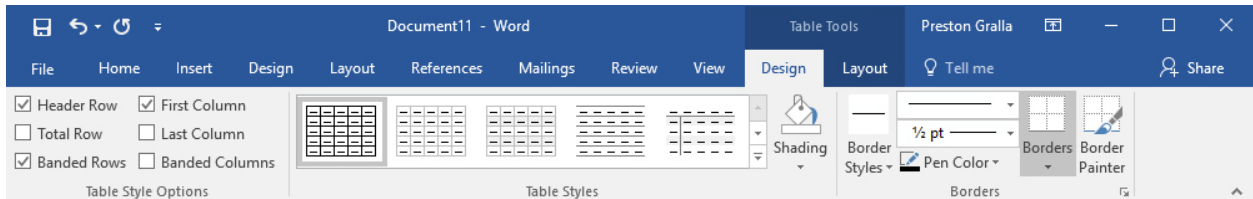
Similarly, when you insert a chart into your document and position your cursor in it, you see the Chart Tools/Design and Chart Tools/Format tabs. The Design tab lets you set what the chart looks like and what data appears in it, and the Format tab lets you control how it integrates with the page and do things such as change the styles of the shapes and lines in the chart.

Following are some of the most commonly used commands from these contextual tabs. Note that these keyboard shortcuts work only if your cursor is in the picture, table or chart.

Useful contextual tab commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Go to the Picture Tools/Format tab	Picture Tools/Format	Alt-JP
Select a picture style	Picture Tools/Format tab > Picture Styles group	Alt-JP, K
Sharpen, soften or change the brightness/contrast of a photo	Picture Tools/Format tab > Adjust group > Corrections	Alt-JP, R
Change the color saturation or tone of a photo, or re-color it	Picture Tools/Format tab > Adjust group > Color	Alt-JP, I
Go to the Table Tools/Design tab	Table Tools/Design	Alt-JT
Select a table style	Table Tools/Design tab > Table Styles group	Alt-JT, S
Go to the Table Tools/Layout tab	Table Tools/Layout	Alt-JL
Insert a row or column in the table	Table Tools/Layout tab > Rows & Columns group > Insert Above *or* Insert Below *or* Insert Left *or* Insert Right	*Insert row above:* Alt-JL, A *Insert row below:* Alt-JL, BE *Insert column to left:* Alt-JL, L *Insert column to right:* Alt-JL, R
Delete cells, columns, rows or the whole table	Table Tools/Layout tab > Rows & Columns group > Delete	*Delete cells:* Alt-JL, DD *Delete columns:* Alt-JL, DC *Delete rows:* Alt-JL, DR *Delete table:* Alt-JL, DT
Sort data in table	Table Tools/Layout tab > Data group > Sort	Alt-JL, SO
Insert a formula in the table	Table Tools/Layout tab > Data group > Formula	Alt-JL, UL
Go to the Chart Tools/Design tab	Chart Tools/Design	Alt-JC
Select a chart style	Chart Tools/Design tab > Chart Styles group	Alt-JC, S
Add or change chart elements such as axis titles, data labels or a legend	Chart Tools/Design tab > Chart Styles group > Add Chart Element	Alt-JC, A
Go to the Chart Tools/Format tab (when cursor is on a chart)	Chart Tools/Format	Alt-JA
Position the chart on the page	Chart Tools/Format tab > Position	Alt-JA, PO

Other Ribbon tabs and icons

Depending on your version of Office and the device you use, you might have access to additional main Ribbon tabs, such as Draw, which lets users with touch devices annotate and draw on their documents. Word 2019 also adds a Help tab to right end of the main Ribbon tabs. There are also icons to the right of the Ribbon tabs that for using the Tell Me feature and opening the share pane.

Other useful commands		
Action	**Word 2016/2019 Ribbon location**	**Keyboard shortcut**
Launch the Help pane (in Word 2019)	Help tab > Help	Alt-Y, H
Show online training (in Word 2019)	Help tab > Show Training	Alt-Y, S
Go to the "Tell Me" text box	"Tell me what you want to do" text box	Alt-Q
Open/close the Share pane	Share button	Alt-ZS

Preston Gralla is a contributing editor for Computerworld and the author of more than 45 books, including Windows 8 Hacks (O'Reilly, 2012) and How the Internet Works (Que, 2006).