



SECTION BREAKS IN WORD

The Key to Controlling Layout, Formatting, and Page Numbering

Section breaks divide your document into parts so each part can have its own rules.

WHAT IS A SECTION BREAK?

A section break divides your document into separate sections. Each section can have its own layout, columns, margins, headers, footers, and page numbering.

Think of a section break as a fence that lets you change the rules on one side without affecting the other.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Without section breaks, any change you make—page numbers, headers, orientation, margins, or columns—affects the entire document.

With section breaks, you can have a title page with no number, Roman numerals in the front matter, Arabic numbers in the main text, and different headers for each part.

TYPES OF SECTION BREAKS

You'll find all of them on the Layout tab.

Layout
Breaks
Page
Page break
Column
Column break
Section Breaks
Next Page
Insert a section break and start the new section on the next page.
Continuous
Insert a section break and start the new section on the same page.
Even Page
Insert a section break and start the new section on the next even-numbered page.
Odd Page
Insert a section break and start the new section on the next odd-numbered page.

HOW TO INSERT A SECTION BREAK

1. Place the cursor where you want the new section to begin.
2. Go to **Layout** → **Breaks**.
3. Under **Section Breaks**, choose the type you need.
4. The break is invisible in Print Layout, but you can see it by clicking **Home** → **Show/Hide ¶**.

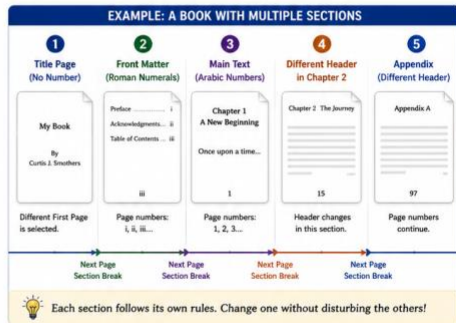
WORKING WITH SECTIONS

- ✓ Each section has its own header and footer.
- ✓ Double-click in the header or footer to edit it.
- ✓ Turn off **Link to Previous** in new sections to keep them independent.
- ✓ You can restart or change page numbering in any section (**Insert** → **Page Number** → **Format Page Numbers**).



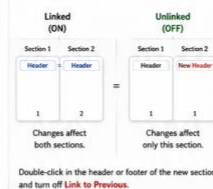
CURT'S QUICK CHECKLIST

- 1. Know what you want to change.
- 2. Insert the right type of section break.
- 3. Open the header or footer in the new section.
- 4. Turn off **Link to Previous** if needed.
- 5. Adjust page numbers or other settings.
- 6. Check your work in Print Preview.



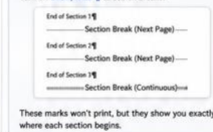
THE LINK TO PREVIOUS TRAP

When you create a new section, Word links its header and footer to the previous section by default.



WHERE WILL THE SECTION BREAK APPEAR?

Turn on **Show/Hide ¶** to see all breaks.



PRO TIP

Plan your sections before you start writing. It's much easier to insert section breaks as you go than to fix them later.

A little planning saves a lot of frustration!

RESTART OR CHANGE PAGE NUMBERS

1. Double-click in the header or footer of the section where you want to start a new number.
2. Go to **Insert** → **Page Number** → **Format Page Numbers**.
3. Choose the number format.
4. Select **Start at** and type the number you want to begin with.

Page Number Format

Number format: 1, 2, 3...

☐ Include chapter number

Chapter starts with style: Heading 1

Use separator: (hyphen)

Page numbering
☐ Continue from previous section
☒ Start at: 1

Start at a new number here.

OK Cancel

COMMON USES FOR SECTION BREAKS

- Different page numbering in front matter and main text
- Different headers or footers on certain pages
- Changing page orientation (portrait ↔ landscape)
- Different margins or column layouts
- Creating facing pages in books
- Starting a new page number in appendices
- Inserting footnotes in one section, endnotes in another

KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

Feature	What it Controls
Headers	Text or graphics at the top of pages
Footers	Text, page numbers, or fields at the bottom of pages
Page Numbers	Fields that update automatically
Section Breaks	Create sections so each part can have its own rules
Link to Previous	Keeps or breaks the connection between sections

★ Section breaks give you control. Use them with confidence—and Word will do the rest! ★

Section Breaks in Word

The Key to Controlling Layout, Formatting, and Page Numbering

By Curtis Jerry Smothers

The Feature That Solves Most Word Mysteries

If there's one Microsoft Word feature that frustrates more users than any other, it's **Section Breaks**. Mention the term to experienced Word users and you'll often get a knowing smile—or perhaps a painful memory of page numbers disappearing, headers mysteriously changing, or formatting spreading throughout an entire document.

The good news is that Section Breaks aren't difficult to understand once you know what they do. In fact, they're the secret behind many of Word's most powerful features. If you've ever wanted a title page without a page number, Roman numerals in the introduction, ordinary page numbers beginning with Chapter One, or landscape pages in the middle of a portrait document, Section Breaks make it possible.

Think of a Section Break as a fence. Everything on one side of the fence can follow one set of rules, while everything on the other side follows another.

Page Breaks vs. Section Breaks

Many users confuse **Page Breaks** and **Section Breaks**, but they accomplish very different jobs.

A **Page Break** simply tells Word to begin the next page. The formatting, headers, footers, margins, page numbering, and orientation remain exactly the same.

A **Section Break**, on the other hand, begins a new section that can have its own formatting rules. Each section can have different headers, footers, page numbering, margins, columns, orientation, or even paper size.

In other words, a Page Break changes where the next page begins. A Section Break changes the rules.

Why Section Breaks Matter

Without Section Breaks, an entire document behaves as one continuous unit. Change the page numbering, margins, headers, or orientation, and the change affects every page.

Section Breaks allow different parts of the same document to behave independently.

For example, you might want:

- A title page with no visible page number.
- Front matter numbered with Roman numerals.
- Chapter One beginning with page 1.
- Landscape pages for wide tables.
- Different headers in each chapter.
- Appendices with their own headings.

Every one of those changes requires a Section Break.

The Four Types of Section Breaks

Word provides four kinds of Section Breaks, although most users will rely primarily on one.

Next Page

This is the workhorse of Section Breaks. It begins a new section on the next page and is the type you'll use most often for reports, manuals, and books.

Where to find it: **Layout** → **Breaks** → **Next Page**.

Continuous

A Continuous Section Break creates a new section without starting a new page. It's useful when changing the number of columns, margins, or other formatting within the same page.

Even Page

This break begins the next section on the next even-numbered page. Publishers often use it so that every new chapter begins on the left-hand page of a printed book.

Odd Page

An Odd Page Section Break begins the next section on the next odd-numbered page. This is the more common choice for books because new chapters traditionally begin on the right-hand page.

Unless you're preparing a professionally printed book, you'll probably use **Next Page** almost exclusively.

Inserting a Section Break

Adding a Section Break is straightforward.

1. Place the insertion point where the new section should begin.
2. Select the **Layout** tab.
3. Click **Breaks**.
4. Under **Section Breaks**, choose the type you want.

Word immediately creates a new section. At first glance, nothing may appear different, but from that point onward the new section can have formatting that differs from the section before it.

Seeing the Invisible

One reason Section Breaks confuse people is that they're normally invisible.

To display them, click the **Show/Hide ¶** button on the Home tab. Word will display paragraph marks, page breaks, and Section Breaks throughout the document.

Where to find it: **Home** → **Show/Hide ¶**.

These symbols won't print, but they make troubleshooting much easier by showing exactly where one section ends and another begins.

Every Section Has Its Own Rules

Think of every section as its own miniature document.

Each section can have:

- Different headers
- Different footers
- Different page numbering
- Different margins
- Different columns
- Different page orientation
- Different paper size

This flexibility is what makes Word suitable for writing books, dissertations, technical manuals, and other complex documents.

The Link to Previous Setting

Creating a new section doesn't automatically make it independent.

By default, Word links the new section's headers and footers to those in the previous section through a setting called **Link to Previous**.

If the link remains active, changes you make to the new section's header or footer may also affect the previous section. Before creating different headers or page numbering, open the new section's header or footer and turn **Link to Previous** off.

Where to find it: Double-click the header or footer, then choose **Header & Footer** → **Link to Previous**.

Many Word users spend hours chasing mysterious formatting problems that can be traced to this one setting.

Common Uses for Section Breaks

Once you become comfortable with Section Breaks, you'll discover that they're useful in many kinds of documents.

Some common examples include:

- Removing the page number from a title page.

- Using Roman numerals in introductory pages.
- Restarting page numbering for the main text.
- Switching between portrait and landscape pages.
- Creating different headers for each chapter.
- Producing newsletters with multiple columns.
- Separating appendices from the main body.
- Giving each chapter its own page numbering.

Without Section Breaks, many of these layouts would be impossible.

Planning Ahead

One of the best habits you can develop is planning your sections before you begin writing.

Ask yourself:

- Will the title page need different numbering?
- Will the introduction use Roman numerals?
- Will any pages require landscape orientation?
- Will each chapter have its own header?
- Will the appendices require different formatting?

Thinking about these questions in advance makes document preparation far easier than trying to retrofit Section Breaks after hundreds of pages have already been written.

Curt's Quick Tip

Whenever Word begins behaving strangely, check for Section Breaks before changing anything else.

Turn on **Show/Hide ¶**, identify where each section begins, and determine whether the problem is really a Section Break, a linked header, or a page-numbering setting. Nine times out of ten, the answer lies there.

Section Breaks Give You Control

Many users avoid Section Breaks because they seem mysterious. In reality, they're one of the most valuable tools in Microsoft Word.

Rather than thinking of them as obstacles, think of them as organizational boundaries. They divide your document into manageable pieces, allowing each part to have its own appearance and formatting while remaining part of the same file.

Once you understand Section Breaks, you'll discover that many of Word's advanced features suddenly make sense. They are the foundation upon which professional-looking books, reports, manuals, and research papers are built.

And perhaps best of all, they transform Microsoft Word from a simple word processor into a true desktop publishing system.