

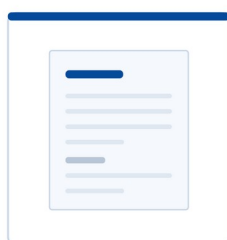


D I G I T A L K E Y S B O X . C O M

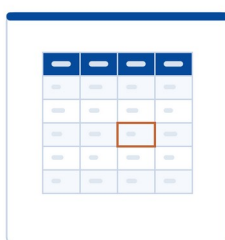
M I C R O S O F T

OFFICE 2024 LTSC

The Complete User Guide



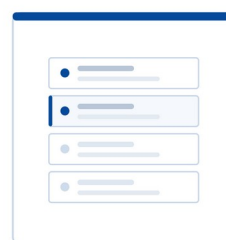
WORD



EXCEL



POWERPOINT



OUTLOOK

Thirty chapters · Thirty-two original diagrams
Written for people who have just bought a license

2 0 2 6 E D I T I O N

WELCOME

Why this guide exists

Thank you for your purchase. What follows is not a manual that was lying around and got attached to an order. It was written for this product, by the people who sell it, and for a specific reason.

Office is the most widely used software in the world and one of the least well understood. Most people acquire it, use perhaps a fifth of it, and spend years doing by hand the four fifths it would have done for them. That is not a failure of intelligence. It is a failure of instruction: the help built into the applications answers the question you already knew how to ask, and answers nothing else.

This guide is the other thing. It assumes you have just bought a license, that you would like it working within ten minutes, and that afterwards you want to be materially better at the four applications you will spend your working life inside. It moves in that order, and it does not pad.

What is different about it

- **Every illustration is original.** There are no screenshots of Microsoft software anywhere in this volume. All thirty-two illustrations were drawn for this guide, which means each one shows the idea rather than a particular build of a particular window on somebody else's monitor.
- **It says what the product does not do.** Where the honest answer is that a feature is absent, or that a subscription does something better, that is what is written. A guide that only ever agrees with the product it ships with is a guide nobody can use to make a decision.
- **It covers the whole suite.** Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook in depth, and enough of OneNote and Access to begin. Not a tour of menus, but the thirty or so decisions that separate somebody who uses these applications from somebody the applications use.
- **It was written against real questions.** The material was chosen from questions our support desk actually receives. The troubleshooting sections exist because those particular problems arrive by email every week.

What you will be able to do

By the end of Part II you will build documents that restyle themselves, produce a contents list that stays correct, and stop losing afternoons to a heading that will not behave. By the end of Part III you will structure data so that Excel can work on it, write formulas that survive being copied, and summarize ten thousand rows without typing a single one.

Part IV covers building presentations that support a speaker rather than replace one. Part V turns Outlook from a source of low-level dread into something closer to a system. None of it requires prior expertise, and none of it is simplified to compensate: where a subject is genuinely intricate, the guide slows down rather than skipping.

KEY POINT

If you want the license working before you read anything else, the next page is the whole procedure. Everything after it can wait until the software is installed.

The guide is yours to keep. It does not expire, it does not phone anywhere, and it will describe the software you bought just as accurately in 2029 as it does today. That is a property of the license you chose, and it is the reason a guide of this kind is worth writing at all.

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Every chapter is divided into numbered sections. A reference such as 15.3 means Chapter 15, section 3.

Chapter 4

Installation and Activation

Reproduced in full, including the twelve activation error codes

CHAPTER 4

Installation and Activation

This is the chapter that determines whether the next four years are quiet. Fifteen careful minutes here removes almost every problem people report afterwards.

4.1 Before you start

Three checks first. They take two minutes and each of them prevents a failure mode that is tedious to unwind afterwards.

System requirements

- **Operating system:** Windows 11, or a supported build of Windows 10. Office will install on Windows 10 but that operating system no longer receives mainstream security updates, so a machine running it should be planned for upgrade.
- **Memory:** 4 GB of RAM as a minimum, 8 GB or more if you work with large workbooks or long documents.
- **Disk:** About 4 GB of free space on the system drive.
- **Screen:** 1280 by 768 or higher.

Remove any competing Office installation

A trial of Microsoft 365, a preinstalled copy from the manufacturer, or an older Office release can all hold the licensing slot and cause your activation to appear to succeed and then silently revert. Open Settings, then Apps, then Installed apps, and uninstall anything named Microsoft 365, Office 365 or an earlier Office version before you begin. Uninstalling Office does not delete your documents.

Decide 32-bit or 64-bit

Install the 64-bit version unless you have a specific reason not to. The main reason to prefer 32-bit is an old add-in or a legacy macro library that exists only as a 32-bit component. If you are not aware of such a dependency, you do not have one.

WATCH OUT

You cannot mix architectures. A 64-bit Office will not install alongside a 32-bit Office, and the installer's error message on this point is not obvious. If an installation refuses to proceed and you previously had Office on the machine, an architecture clash is the first thing to check.

4.2 Downloading the installer

There are two installers, one for each edition, and they are not interchangeable. Your order confirmation names the edition your key is for. Both are self-contained packages, so the download is large and the installation afterwards does not depend on a fast or stable connection.

If your key is for	Download
Office LTSC Standard 2024	digitalkeysbox.com/Office_2024_EN_standard_64Bits.exe
Office LTSC Professional Plus 2024	digitalkeysbox.com/Office_2024_EN_64Bits.exe

The two installers are not interchangeable. A Standard key will not activate a Professional Plus installation, and the reverse is also true. If you are not certain which you have, the edition is named on your order confirmation and in the email that carried the key.

WATCH OUT

Installing the wrong edition is the commonest cause of a failed activation, and it does not announce itself until the last step. The error it produces is 0xC004E016, which section 4.7 explains. The fix is to uninstall, download the other installer and start again, so the ten seconds spent checking the order confirmation are worth it.

Some browsers warn about executable downloads by default. If the download is blocked, open the browser's downloads list and choose to keep the file. This is the browser applying a blanket rule to all .exe files rather than a judgment about this particular one.

4.3 Installing

1. Run the downloaded file. If Windows asks for permission to make changes to the device, allow it.
2. The installer runs largely without prompts. It copies files, registers the applications and adds them to the Start menu. Expect several minutes; on a slower disk, longer.
3. Do not restart or shut down while it is running. An interrupted Office installation is one of the harder things to repair cleanly.
4. When the installer reports that it has finished, close it. Office is installed but not yet activated.

4.4 Activating: the six steps

Activation tells Microsoft's servers that this installation is covered by your license. It runs once per computer and takes under a minute.

From download to activated



Activating Word activates Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and the rest. There is nothing to repeat.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Uninstall any Microsoft 365, Office 365 or earlier Office first. Your documents are not touched, and this single step prevents most of the activation failures we are asked about.

Activation runs once on this computer and takes under a minute. If it does not complete, section 4.7 lists the checks to make and the error codes that explain what went wrong.

FIGURE 4.1 The whole sequence, and the counter that decides how many machines a key covers.

1. Download and install Office using the steps above, if you have not already done so.
2. Open the Start menu and launch Word from there. Use the Start menu rather than double-clicking an existing document, because opening a file first can put the application into a state where the licensing pane behaves inconsistently.
3. In Word, click File in the top-left corner to open the Backstage view, then choose Account in the left-hand column.
4. Click Change Product Key. On some builds this button is labeled Change License, and it may sit behind an Activate Product button. All three lead to the same dialog.
5. Type or paste your 25-character product key and click Activate. Enter it without spaces; the dialog inserts the dashes for you.
6. Allow the online confirmation to complete. When the Product Information block reads that the product is activated, close and reopen the application once so every Office program picks up the new license state.

PRACTICAL NOTE

Activating in Word activates the whole suite. There is no need to repeat the procedure in Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook or the rest, since they share a single license state on the machine.

4.5 Where your files and settings live

Knowing these locations turns most “where did it go” questions into a thirty-second answer. Paths below assume a default installation.

What	Where
The Office programs	C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\root\Office16
Your documents by default	C:\Users\<you>\Documents

What	Where
Word AutoRecover files	C:\Users\<you>\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word
Custom templates	C:\Users\<you>\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Templates
The Normal template (Normal.dotm)	Same Templates folder as above
Custom spelling dictionary	...\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\UProof\CUSTOM.DIC
Outlook offline data (.ost)	...\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook
Outlook archives (.pst)	C:\Users\<you>\Documents\Outlook Files

The AppData folder is hidden by default. To reach it, press Windows and R together, type the folder name in percent signs, for example the roaming Office path, and press Enter, or switch on hidden items from the View menu in File Explorer.

4.6 Backing up and moving to a new computer

Office itself does not need backing up; you can reinstall it from the same download. What is worth preserving is everything you have customized, because none of it is stored with your documents.

- **Your documents.** Copy the entire Documents folder, or wherever you actually save. This is the part people remember.
- **Your templates.** Copy Normal.dotm and any custom templates from the Templates folder. Normal.dotm holds your default font, margins and styles for new documents.
- **Your Outlook data.** If you use POP mail or have archived mail into .pst files, copy those files. Mail left on an IMAP or Exchange server will re-download by itself; mail that exists only in a local .pst will not.
- **Your dictionary.** Copy CUSTOM.DIC so the new machine does not flag every proper noun you have already taught it.
- **Your toolbar.** In File, Options, Quick Access Toolbar, use Import/Export to save a settings file, then import it on the new machine.

On the new computer: install Office, activate it with your key, then restore those files to the equivalent locations. Restore templates and dictionaries with the Office applications closed, otherwise they may be overwritten when you exit.

4.7 If activation does not complete

Work through these in order. In practice the first three resolve the overwhelming majority of cases.

1. Check the key character by character. The most common failures are a transposed pair of characters, a leading or trailing space from a copy-paste, and the digit 0 confused with the letter O.

2. Confirm the internet connection is live and that no VPN or corporate proxy is blocking the activation service. Switch the VPN off, activate, then switch it back on.
3. Close every Office application completely, including Outlook and anything sitting in the notification area, then reopen Word from the Start menu and try again. A partially loaded license state is a real and common cause.
4. Check that no other Office edition is still installed. Settings, Apps, Installed apps. Remove anything that is not the version you just installed, restart, and try again.
5. Run Word as administrator once (right-click the Start menu entry and choose Run as administrator), then activate. Some machines will not write the license state from a standard user context.
6. If it still fails, note the exact error code and send it to support. The code says what went wrong, and quoting it turns a long exchange into a short one.

What the error codes mean

Windows reports activation problems as a hexadecimal code. The code looks alarming and is actually useful: it tells you which of four things went wrong. Find yours below and act on the right-hand column.

Code	What went wrong	What to do
0xC004F074	The activation service could not be reached	Turn off any VPN or proxy, confirm the internet is working, wait a minute and try again
0x80072EE2	The connection timed out	Same as above. A corporate or hotel network is the usual culprit
0x80072EFD	No connection to the activation server	Check the connection, then check the date and time on the computer are correct
0xC004F050	The key was not accepted as valid	Re-enter it character by character. Zero and the letter O are the usual mix-up
0xC004E016	The key does not match the edition installed	You have Standard installed and a Professional Plus key, or the reverse. Contact support
0xC004F017	The same mismatch, reported differently	As above. Check the edition on your order confirmation first
0xC004C060	The server declined the key	Contact support and quote the code. Do not keep retrying
0xC004C003	The server declined the key	Contact support and quote the code
0x80070005	Access denied on this computer	Close Word, right-click it in the Start menu, Run as administrator, then activate

Code	What went wrong	What to do
0x8004FC12	A permissions problem in your Windows profile	Run as administrator as above. If it persists, try a different Windows account
0x8007000D	The installation itself is damaged or incomplete	Uninstall Office, restart the computer, install again from the original download
0x80004005	Unspecified failure, usually a broken install	Same as above. Restart before reinstalling, not after

Four families, then. Anything beginning 0x8007 or 0x80072 is your computer or your connection. Anything beginning 0xC004 is the key or the edition. A code that is not in this table should be sent to us as it appears on screen.

COMMON MISTAKES

Entering the key into a document instead of the Change Product Key box. Copying it from an email and bringing a trailing space with it. Opening Word by double-clicking a file rather than from the Start menu. Leaving an old Microsoft 365 trial installed. Between them these four account for most of the activation mail we receive.

TIP

To see the license state in detail, open Command Prompt as administrator and run the ospp.vbs script from the Office folder with the /dstatus switch. It reports the installed license, the last five characters of the key in use, and the remaining grace period, which is often enough to identify the problem immediately.

Chapter 8

Styles and Templates

Reproduced in full. The chapter the rest of Part II depends on

CHAPTER 8

Styles and Templates

This is the chapter that separates people who use Word from people whom Word uses. Everything in Part II that follows depends on it.

8.1 What a style actually is

A style is a named bundle of formatting. Heading 1 is not just “big and bold”; it is a font, a size, a color, spacing before and after, a keep-with-next setting, an outline level and a language, all stored under one name. Applying the style applies all of it at once.

That is the small benefit. The large benefit is that the formatting stays connected to the name. Change what Heading 1 means, and every Heading 1 in the document changes with it, instantly and without exception. Formatting applied by hand has no such connection: each heading is an island, and there is no way to change them all except by finding them all.

The same document, two ways of building it



FIGURE 8.1 The same content, formatted by hand and formatted with styles.

The second large benefit is invisible until you need it. Heading styles carry an outline level, and Word uses that level to build the navigation pane, generate the table of contents, drive cross-references, and export PDF bookmarks. A heading formatted by hand is, as far as Word is concerned, an ordinary paragraph that happens to be large. None of those features can see it.

KEY POINT

If you take one thing from this guide, take this: never make a heading big and bold. Apply Heading 1, Heading 2 or Heading 3, then change what those styles look like. The result is identical on screen and completely different in what the document can do.

8.2 Applying styles

The Styles gallery sits on the Home tab. Click inside a paragraph and click a style; there is no need to select the text first because styles are, in the main, paragraph formatting.

From the keyboard, Control, Alt and 1, 2 or 3 apply Heading 1, 2 and 3 respectively, and Control, Shift and N returns a paragraph to Normal. Those four shortcuts will cover most of a working day.

The gallery shows only some of the available styles. Open the full Styles pane with Control, Alt and Shift and S, and it docks to the side of the window showing every style in the document, with a dropdown on each for modifying, selecting all instances, or removing it.

8.3 The styles worth knowing

Style	Use
Normal	Body text, and the parent of most other styles. Changing Normal changes almost everything.
Heading 1 to 9	Document structure. Levels 1 to 3 cover nearly all real documents.
Title and Subtitle	The document's own name on a cover or first page, outside the heading hierarchy.
Quote and Intense Quote	Set-off passages, indented and visually distinct from body text.
Caption	Automatically applied to figure and table captions inserted through References.
List Paragraph	Applied automatically to bulleted and numbered lists.
Emphasis and Strong	Character styles for italic and bold that survive a change of body font.
No Spacing	Normal without space before or after. Useful for address blocks and tight lists.

Note the distinction between paragraph styles and character styles. A paragraph style formats the whole paragraph; a character style formats a selection within it, and is shown with a small letter a in the styles pane. Using the character style Strong instead of pressing Control and B means that if you later decide emphasis should be small capitals rather than bold, one change does it everywhere.

8.4 Modifying a style

There are two ways, and only one of them is reliable.

The reliable way

1. Right-click the style in the gallery or the styles pane and choose Modify.

2. Set the font, size, color and so on directly, or use the Format button at the foot of the dialog for paragraph settings, borders, numbering and language.
3. Decide the scope. “Only in this document” changes this file. “New documents based on this template” writes the change into the template, usually Normal.dotm, and applies it to everything you create afterwards.
4. Click OK. Every paragraph carrying that style updates immediately.

The convenient way, with a caveat

Format one paragraph the way you want it, then right-click the style and choose “Update to Match Selection”. This is quick and works well, but it copies everything about that paragraph including anything you did not intend, so check the result before moving on.

WATCH OUT

Be careful with “New documents based on this template” when the template is Normal.dotm. It changes the default for every new document on that computer. That is exactly what you want when setting your own preferred body font, and exactly what you do not want when adjusting something for one client's report.

8.5 Style sets and themes

The Design tab holds style sets, which are coordinated collections of heading and body formatting, and themes, which are coordinated collections of fonts and colors. Choosing a style set restyles the whole document at once, but only for the parts that use styles. A document formatted by hand will not respond at all, which is a fast way to discover whether a document is properly built.

Fonts and colors can be set separately from the same tab. Setting theme fonts rather than picking a font directly means the document can be restyled later without touching a single paragraph.

8.6 Multilevel lists linked to headings

Numbered headings, of the form 1, 1.1, 1.1.1, should never be typed. Link a multilevel list to the heading styles once and Word numbers them for the life of the document, renumbering automatically whenever sections are added, deleted or dragged into a new order.

1. Click in a Heading 1 paragraph.
2. On the Home tab, open the Multilevel List gallery and choose “Define New Multilevel List”.
3. Click “More” in the lower left corner to reveal the extra options.
4. With level 1 selected, set “Link level to style” to Heading 1. Select level 2, link it to Heading 2, and so on for as many levels as you use.
5. For each level below the first, tick “Include level number from” and choose the level above, which produces 1.1 rather than a bare 1.

6. Click OK. Every heading in the document is now numbered, and cross-references can point at those numbers.

8.7 Templates

A template is a document that acts as a mold. Opening a template creates a new document containing its styles, its page setup, its headers and footers and any boilerplate text, while the template itself remains untouched.

Normal.dotm

Every blank document is created from Normal.dotm, which lives in the Templates folder listed in Chapter 4. Changing a style with the “new documents” option selected edits it. If Word ever starts behaving strangely across all new documents, closing Word and renaming Normal.dotm forces a clean one to be rebuilt, and is the standard first move in troubleshooting.

Building your own

1. Create a document and set it up completely: styles, margins, header and footer, logo, any standing text.
2. Delete anything that should not appear in every new document.
3. File, Save As, and choose Word Template (*.dotx) as the type. Word switches to the Custom Office Templates folder automatically; save it there so it appears under File, New, Personal.
4. To create a document from it afterwards, use File, New, Personal, and click the template. Do not open the .dotx directly unless you intend to edit the template itself.

For a business this is worth an afternoon once. A letterhead template with correct styles, margins and footer means every document that leaves the company is consistent without anybody having to think about it.

PRACTICAL NOTE

You do not have to build this one from scratch. DKB_Word_Template.dotx is supplied with the guide with every style in this chapter already set up, the heading numbering already linked, and a contents field already in place. Download it from digitalkeysbox.com/guide-files and open it as a template rather than as a document.

8.8 Diagnosing a document that will not behave

Styles solve most formatting problems and create one of their own: direct formatting layered on top of a style. The paragraph carries Heading 2, but somebody also pressed Control and B and changed the color, so it no longer matches its siblings and modifying the style does not fix it.

Seeing what is actually applied

- **Reveal Formatting:** Shift and F1 opens Reveal Formatting, a pane that reports every setting on the current selection and separates what came from the style from what was applied on top. Ticking “Distinguish style source” makes that separation explicit.

- **Style Inspector:** At the foot of the Styles pane, the middle button opens the Style Inspector, which shows the paragraph style and the character style separately, each with a Reset button that strips the direct formatting from that level alone.
- **The two reset keys:** Control and Q removes direct paragraph formatting; Control and Space removes direct character formatting. Together they return a paragraph to exactly what its style says, which is the fastest repair available.

Cleaning a document that arrived from elsewhere

Documents pasted together from several sources accumulate dozens of near-identical styles with names like Normal1 and Default Paragraph Font2. The Styles pane, with Options set to show all styles, reveals the extent of it.

The repair is systematic rather than clever. Select all, Control and Q, Control and Space to strip direct formatting. Apply Normal to everything. Then reapply heading styles from the top, using the Navigation pane to check the structure as it emerges. On a badly assembled fifty-page document this takes about twenty minutes and is faster than any alternative.

PRACTICAL NOTE

In the Styles pane, clicking a style's dropdown and choosing "Select All Instances" shows you every paragraph carrying it. If a style you never intended to use has forty instances, that is where a document's inconsistency is hiding.

That was two chapters out of thirty

The complete guide runs to 170 pages: Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook in depth, 32 original diagrams, an index of 174 entries, and three companion files you can start working in today.

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|-----------------|--|
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| Part II | Word: styles, long documents, mail merge, review, working faster |
| Part III | Excel: data layout, formulas, functions, PivotTables, charts |
| Part IV | PowerPoint: the master, slides that support a speaker, presenting |
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