Setting Up a Page in Word 2007/2010

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Most Word users know that when composing a document, they can select the font (style) and size of the text and can apply effects to the text, such as bold or italic. But many users don't think about how important the page set up is. Here's an overview of the useful tools to make the text fit on the page you way you want it to. These tools are located in the Page Setup group on the Page Layout tab in Word 2007 and 2010. Almost all of them are also present in Word 2003, but the locations are different.
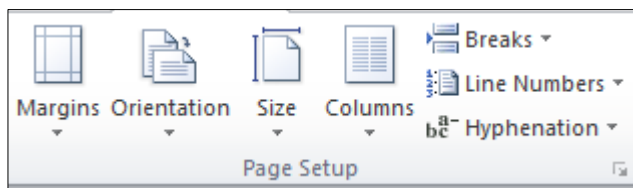
Margins
Word 2007 simplified its approach to margin-setting. Clicking the Margins button reveals seven thumbnails of page margin choices. Normal is one inch on each side. Moderate is the Word 2003 pattern of .75 inches left and right and 1.0 inch top and bottom. Narrow, wide, and mirrored (for a two-page layout) complete the standard choices. With your cursor anywhere in the document, click a choice and watch the margins change. I find it useful to try different margin patterns when I want to get rid of that pesky one or two lines of text that have spilled onto the next page. Narrowing the margins often solves my problem. Of course, you can also customize margins by clicking "Custom Margins" in the Margins menu and typing specific measurements. Be careful not to set them too narrow or the edge text might not print.

Orientation
Most documents look best taller than they are wide, known as Portrait view. Since this is the default orientation in Word, many people don't even think that some documents might be more effective in Landscape view, or wider than they are tall. For instance, if you are creating a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses, they would be more likely to fit on one line in Landscape than in Portrait orientation. Landscape is also good when creating a folded booklet from a standard sheet of paper or when printing a page from the Internet.

Paper Size
This convenient button lets you choose from many paper sizes. Clicking the Size button drops down a menu showing standard sizes at the top, followed by numerous others with specific measurements listed for each. Clicking "More paper sizes" lets you create a custom size. These options are useful when creating notes to fit odd-sized envelopes

or creating a large sign. They let you work with the full range of paper that your printer is equipped to handle.

Columns
This command is the lifeline for those of us who write newsletters, but it has other uses as well. Open any document and with a couple of clicks you can display it in column format – almost any number of columns, evenly or unevenly spaced. The thumbnails in the columns list make it easy to see how the columns will look on the page. Click "More Columns" to customize. For those new to columns, the text on a page will fill in the first column, then wrap to the top of the next column as in a newspaper. Besides newsletters, setting up a directory of names and addresses in two or three columns lets you insert a new person in the correct alphabetical spot without disturbing the list layout.

Breaks
Adding a break between pages in a document is so important to me that I keep the Breaks button on my Quick Access Toolbar at the top of the Word window. So many times in drafting articles or other documents longer than one page, I want to keep paragraphs together or keep text on the same page as related graphics. The Breaks tool contains two categories: Page Breaks and Section Breaks, both with sub-categories. Section Breaks are invaluable in longer documents where, for example, you may want a section of text in columns for part of a page and full page width text on the rest. You insert a Section Break at the point where the layout begins and ends.

If you don't ever compose documents that complex, then Page Breaks should be your focus. With the cursor positioned at the place you want the page to end, click Breaks -- Page Break to move the text following the cursor to top of the next page. The page break will stay until you either delete it or position the cursor at the beginning of the page after the break and press the Backspace key. To see where page or section breaks exist in a document, on the Home tab, in the Paragraph group, click the Paragraph sign (top right corner). This tool shows the specific formatting of the page: spaces between words as dots, new paragraphs with the paragraph symbol, and breaks with a dotted line labeled 'page (or section) break'.

Line Numbers
In legal and other official documents, line numbers are often required for easy access to a specific line of text. This command will add line numbers continuously through a document, restart them on each page, and several other options.

Hyphenation
Hyphenation means splitting a word between syllables. Many newspapers and magazines use hyphenation to keep a more even space between words in a full-justified paragraph, where text is lined up evenly both left and right. With no hyphenation, which is the default in Word, each line of text on the page ends with a complete word. With automatic hyphenation, Word chooses where to break a word at the right end of a line. If you need to squeeze more text into one page than will fit easily, using hyphenation can buy you a bit more space because each line will be more completely filled. To turn

on hyphenation, just click the command button and choose Automatic hyphenation. If you want to be the one to decide where in a multi-syllable word to make the break, click Manual hyphenation.

The next time you compose a document in Word, try some Page Setup tools to create a more professional layout.