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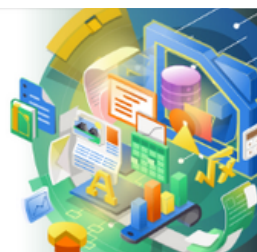
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Writer Guide

Preface

Who is this book for?

LibreOffice is a feature-rich, free, and open source office suite. It includes several powerful applications for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases, and formula editing. Writer is the word-processing application. It is compatible with a wide range of document formats including Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx), and you can export your work in several formats including PDF.

Anyone who wants to get up to speed quickly with Writer will find this book valuable. You may be new to word processing software, or you may be familiar with another office suite.

What's in this book?

This book introduces the main features of Writer, the word processor component of LibreOffice, and provides instructions for their use.

Minimum requirements for using LibreOffice

For a detailed list of requirements and operating systems supported, see the LibreOffice website, https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/system-requirements/.

How to get LibreOffice

Versions of LibreOffice Community for Windows, Linux, and macOS are freely available and can be downloaded from https://www.libreoffice.org/download. Linux users will also find a version of LibreOffice included by default in the majority of Linux distributions. Portable and other versions of LibreOffice are listed on the download page. Linux, Enterprise, Online, and other versions may differ in appearance and functionality from the descriptions in this book.

Installing LibreOffice

Information on installing and setting up LibreOffice on the various supported operating systems is given here: https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/install-howto/.

Setting up and customizing LibreOffice

You can change the default settings (options) in LibreOffice to suit your preferences. To change settings, go to **Tools > Options** on the Menu bar (**LibreOffice > Preferences** on macOS). Settings are described in the Help and in Chapter 2, Setting up LibreOffice, in the *Getting Started Guide*. Some settings of particular interest to users of Writer are covered in Chapter 20, Setting up Writer, in this book.

> 💡 **Tip**
>
> Many settings are intended for power users and programmers. If you do not understand what an option does, we recommend leaving it on the default setting unless instructions in this book recommend changing the setting.

You can customize menus, toolbars, and keyboard shortcuts in LibreOffice, add new menus and toolbars, and assign macros to events. See Chapter 20, Customizing Writer, for details.

Extensions and add-ons

You can add functionality to LibreOffice with extensions and add-ons. Several extensions are installed with the program and you can get others from the official extensions repository, https://extensions.libreoffice.org/ and from other sources. See Chapter 20, Customizing Writer, for more information on installing extensions and add-ons.

Where to get more help

This book, the other LibreOffice user guides, the Help system, and user support systems assume that you are familiar with your computer and basic functions such as starting a program, opening and saving files.

Help system

LibreOffice comes with an extensive online Help system. This is your first line of support. Windows and Linux users can choose to download and install the offline Help for use when not connected to the Internet; the offline Help is installed with the program on MacOS.

To display the Help system, press *F1* or select **Help > LibreOffice Help** on the Menu bar. If you do not have the offline help installed on your computer and you are connected to the Internet, your default browser will open the online Help pages on the LibreOffice website.

The **Help** menu includes links to other LibreOffice information and support resources. Notice that options marked with a ‡ sign are only accessible if your computer is connected to the Internet.

- **What's This?** For quick tips when a toolbar is visible, place the mouse pointer over any of the icons to see a small box ("tooltip") with a brief explanation of the icon's function. For a more detailed explanation, select **Help > What's This?** and hold the pointer over the icon. In addition, you can choose whether to activate Extended Tips using **Tools > Options > LibreOffice > General**.

- **User Guides** ‡ Opens your default browser at the Documentation page of the LibreOffice website https://documentation.libreoffice.org/en/. There you will find user guides (to download as free PDFs or buy as printed copies) and other useful information.

- **Show Tip of the Day** Opens a small window with a random tip on how to use LibreOffice.

- **Get Help Online** ‡ Opens your default browser at the Ask LibreOffice forum of questions and answers from the LibreOffice community https://ask.libreoffice.org/en/questions/.

- **Send Feedback** ‡ Opens your default browser at the Feedback page of the LibreOffice website https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/feedback/. From there you can report bugs, suggest new features and communicate with others in the LibreOffice community.

- **Restart in Safe Mode** Opens a dialog where you can restart LibreOffice and reset the software to its default settings.

- **Get Involved** ‡ Opens your default browser at the Get Involved page of the LibreOffice website, https://www.libreoffice.org/community/get-involved/. There you can choose a topic of interest to help improve the program.

- **Donate to LibreOffice** ‡ Opens your default browser at the Donation page of the LibreOffice website https://donate.libreoffice.org/.

- **License Information** Outlines the licenses under which LibreOffice is made available.
- **Check for Updates** ‡ Opens a dialog and checks the LibreOffice website for updates to your version of the software.
- **About LibreOffice** Opens a dialog and displays information about the version of LibreOffice and the operating system you are using. This information will often be requested if you ask the community for help or assistance with the software. (On macOS, this option is found under **LibreOffice** on the Menu bar.)

Other free online support

The LibreOffice community not only develops software, but provides free, volunteer-based support. See Table 1 and this web page: https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/.

For comprehensive online support from the community, look at mailing lists and the Ask LibreOffice website, https://ask.libreoffice.org/en/questions/. Other websites run by users also offer free tips and tutorials.

Table 1: Free support for LibreOffice users

Free LibreOffice support	
FAQs	Answers to frequently asked questions https://wiki.documentfoundation.org/Faq
Mailing lists	Free community support is provided by a network of experienced users https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/mailing-lists/
Questions & Answers and Knowledge Base	Free community assistance is provided in a question & answer format. Search similar topics or ask a new question in https://ask.libreoffice.org/en/questions The service is available in several other languages; just replace /en/ with de, es, fr, ja, ko, nl, pt, tr, and many others in the web address above.
Native language support	The LibreOffice website in various languages https://www.libreoffice.org/community/nlc/ Mailing lists for native languages https://wiki.documentfoundation.org/Local_Mailing_Lists Information about social networking https://wiki.documentfoundation.org/Website/Web_Sites_services
Accessibility options	Information about available accessibility options. https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/accessibility/
OpenOffice Forum	A forum that provides support for LibreOffice, among other open source office suites. https://forum.openoffice.org/en/forum/

Paid support and training

You can also pay for support through service contracts from a vendor or consulting firm specializing in LibreOffice. For information about certified professional support, see The Document Foundation's website: https://www.documentfoundation.org/gethelp/support/.

What you see may be different

Illustrations

LibreOffice runs on Windows, Linux, and macOS operating systems, each of which has several versions and can be customized by users (fonts, colors, themes, window managers). The illustrations in this guide were taken from a variety of computers and operating systems. Therefore, some illustrations will not look exactly like what you see on your computer display.

Also, some of the dialogs may be different because of the settings selected in LibreOffice. You can either use dialogs from your computer's operating system or from LibreOffice. The differences affect mainly Open, Save, and Print dialogs. To change which dialogs are used, go to **Tools > Options > LibreOffice > General** and select or deselect the option **Use LibreOffice dialogs**.

Icons

The LibreOffice community has created icons for several icon sets, including Breeze, Colibre, Elementary, Karasa Jaga, Sifr, and Sukapura; some are also available in a dark version. As a user, you can can select your preferred set. The icons in this guide have been taken from a variety of LibreOffice installations that use different sets of icons, so the icons you see may differ from the ones used in this guide.

To change the icon set used, go to **Tools > Options > LibreOffice > View**. In the *Icon Style* section, choose from the drop-down lists under Icon style.

Using LibreOffice on macOS

Some keystrokes and menu items are different on macOS from those used in Windows and Linux. The table below gives some common substitutions for the instructions in this chapter. For a more detailed list, see the application Help.

Windows or Linux	*macOS equivalent*	*Effect*
Tools > Options menu selection	**LibreOffice > Preferences**	Access setup options
Right-click	Control+click and/or right-click depending on computer setup	Opens a context menu
Ctrl (Control)	⌘ (Command)	Used with other keys
F11	⌘+T	Open the sidebar Styles deck

Frequently asked questions

How is LibreOffice licensed?

LibreOffice is distributed under the Open Source Initiative (OSI) approved Mozilla Public License (MPL). See https://www.libreoffice.org/about-us/licenses/

It is based on code from Apache OpenOffice made available under the Apache License 2.0 but also includes software that differs from version to version under a variety of other Open Source licenses. New code is available under LGPL 3.0 and MPL 2.0.

May I distribute LibreOffice to anyone? May I sell it? May I use it in my business?
  Yes.

How many computers may I install it on?
  As many as you like.

Why do I need Java to run LibreOffice? Is it written in Java?
  LibreOffice is not written in Java; it is written in the C++ language. Java is one of several languages that can be used to extend the software. The Java JDK/JRE is only required for some features. The most notable one is the HSQLDB relational database engine.

  Java is available at no cost. More information and download links to the appropriate edition for your operating system can be found at: https://java.com/en/download/manual.jsp

> 📌 **Note**
>
> If you want to use LibreOffice features that require Java, it is important that the correct 32-bit or 64-bit edition matches the installed version of LibreOffice. See the Advanced Options in Chapter 2 of this guide. If you do not want to use Java, you can still use nearly all of the LibreOffice features.

How can I contribute to LibreOffice?
  You can help with the development and user support of LibreOffice in many ways, and you do not need to be a programmer. To start, check out this web page: https://www.libreoffice.org/community/get-involved/.

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