These instructions describe how to optimize your use of MS-Word 2003. If you have an alternate version of Word or use a different word processor, you may still be able to implement many of these suggestions. I strongly recommend these settings and procedures for producing the properly formatted work at the university level. Note that if you are using a lab computer, you may need to follow these procedures every time you work, as the settings are not likely to be saved.

I. Optimizing the Grammar, Spell-Check, and AutoFormat Utilities

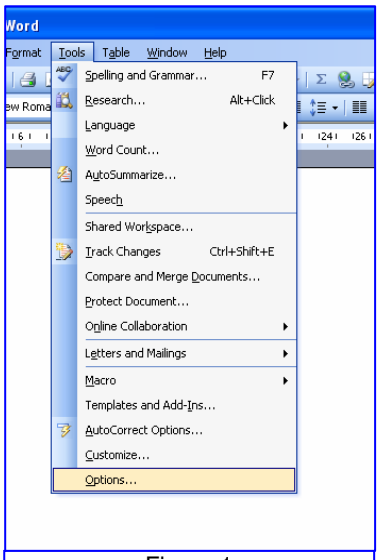


Figure 1

1. Open Microsoft Word 2003.
2. From the menu bar, select **File** / **New** / **Blank document**.
3. Select **Tools** / **Options** (see **Figure 1**)
4. Select the **Spelling & Grammar Tab** (**Figure 2**)
5. Make sure that all the options under Spelling are checked ☑ except "Hide spelling errors in document."
6. Under **Grammar**, make sure "Check grammar as you type" and "Check grammar with spelling" are checked.
7. Make sure that under **Writing Style**, you select **Grammar & Style** from the pull-down menu.
8. Then click on the **Settings** button.
9. In the **Grammar Settings** window, make sure that the first three items (Comma required before last list item, punctuation required with quotes, and spaced required between sentences) are set according to the pull-down menu options as shown in **Figure 3**.

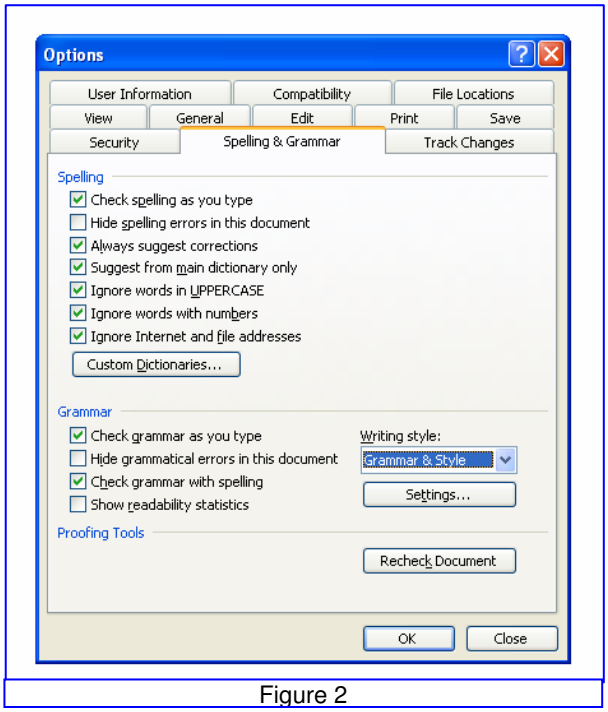


Figure 2

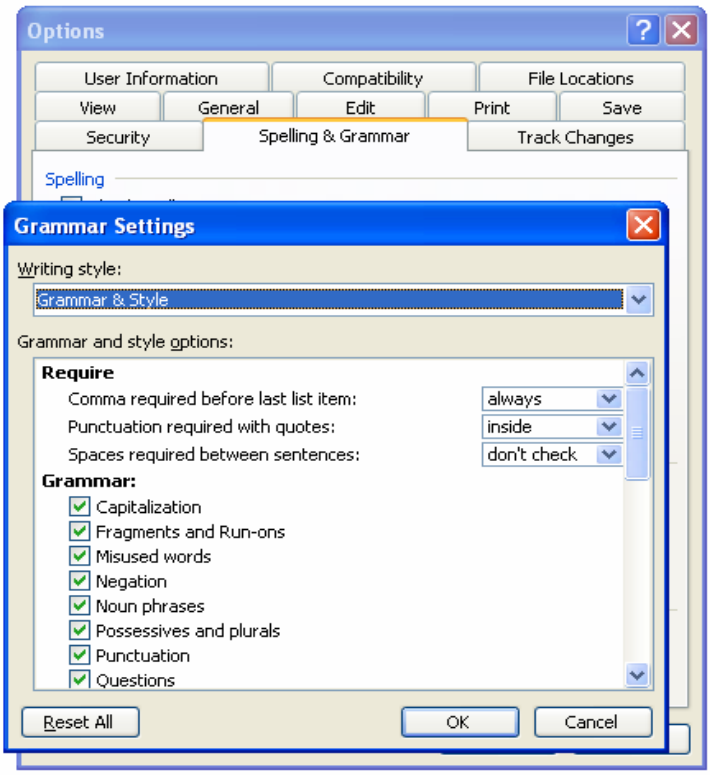


Figure 3

10. Under **Grammar**, check ☑ *all* items. Scroll down.
11. Under **Style**, check all items except contractions and use of first person (note: some professors may prefer you not to use the first person, in which case you would check this option).
12. Click **OK** and then **Close**.

13. From the menu bar, select **Tools**. This time, select **AutoCorrect Options** (third from the bottom in Figure 1).
14. Go through each tab in the AutoCorrect window and set them up according to your preference. The preferences I use are shown in **Figures 4-6**.

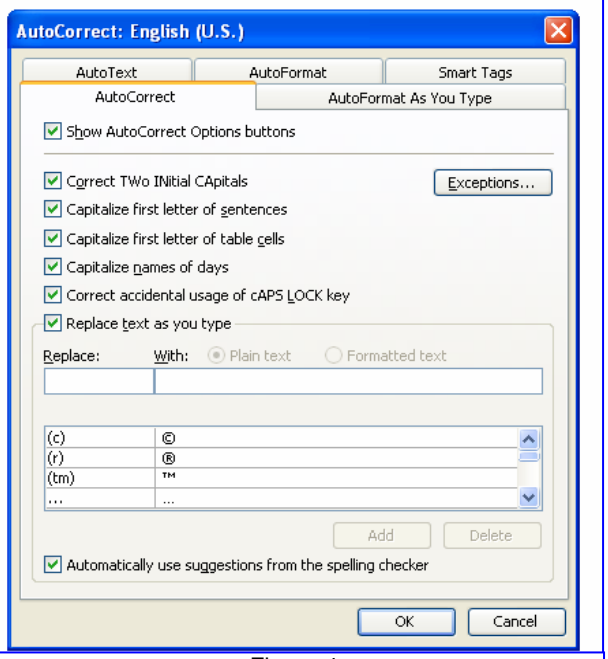


Figure 4

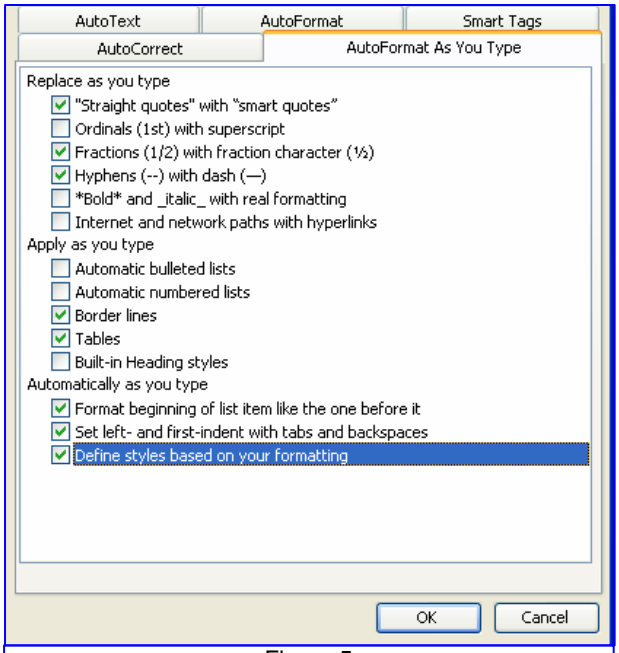


Figure 5

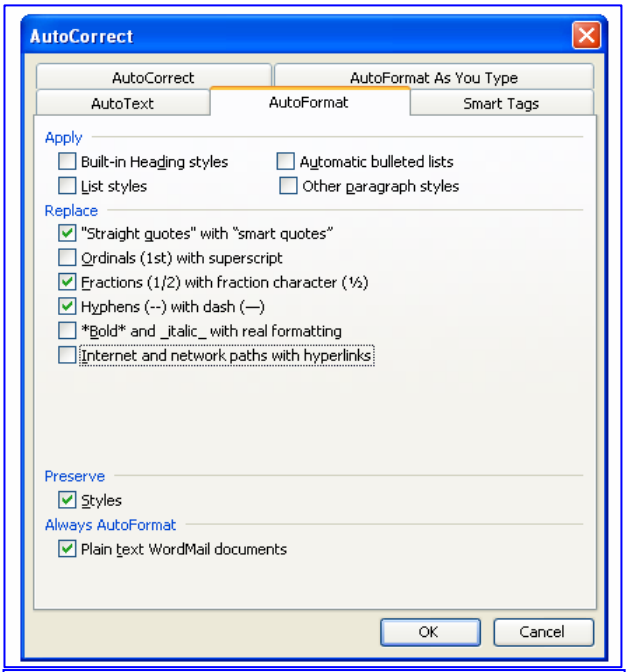


Figure 6

II. Customizing Your Toolbars

First, **get to know your toolbars** and make any changes you may need to. If some of these don't show, click on **View** / **Toolbars** and, for the ruler, **View** / **Ruler**.

See **Figure 7**. Except for the title and menu bar, these components could be in any order, as could the items on them. However, what shows here gives you an idea of what you might encounter.

1 = title bar this gives the title of the document, if it has a title
2 = menu bar this has the drop-down menu items (File, Edit, etc.)
3 = standard this has various shortcuts represented by buttons
4 = formatting this has formatting shortcut buttons
5 = ruler this is where you set various tab stops

If you hover your mouse over a button, its label will appear. You can **add or remove buttons** by clicking on the **Toolbar Options tab**, which is to the left of the ③ in **Figure 7**. Go on to the next page for a discussion of this feature.

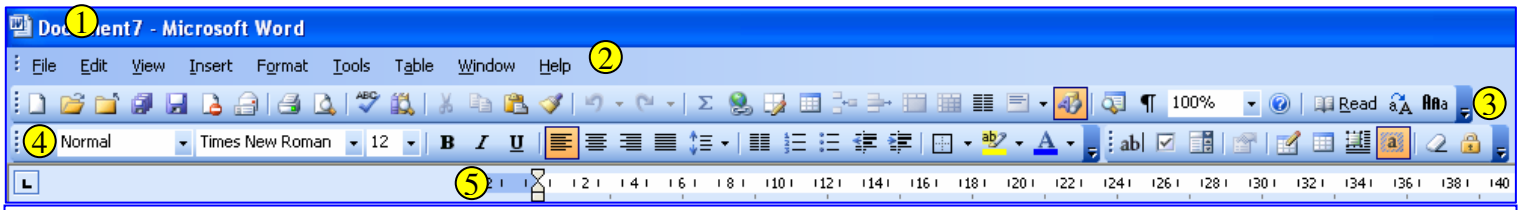


Figure 7

Figure 8 shows that if you click on the **Toolbar Options** tab, select **Add or Remove Buttons**, then **Standard**, you will see a long list of command buttons. I strongly suggest that you make sure the ¶ or **Show/Hide button** is selected so that it shows on your **Standard Toolbar**. Once this is on your toolbar, experiment with turning it on and off by clicking on it. When it is "on," you will see all of the formatting marks in your document. This can help with making sure your spacing, centering, alignment, etc., is accurate.

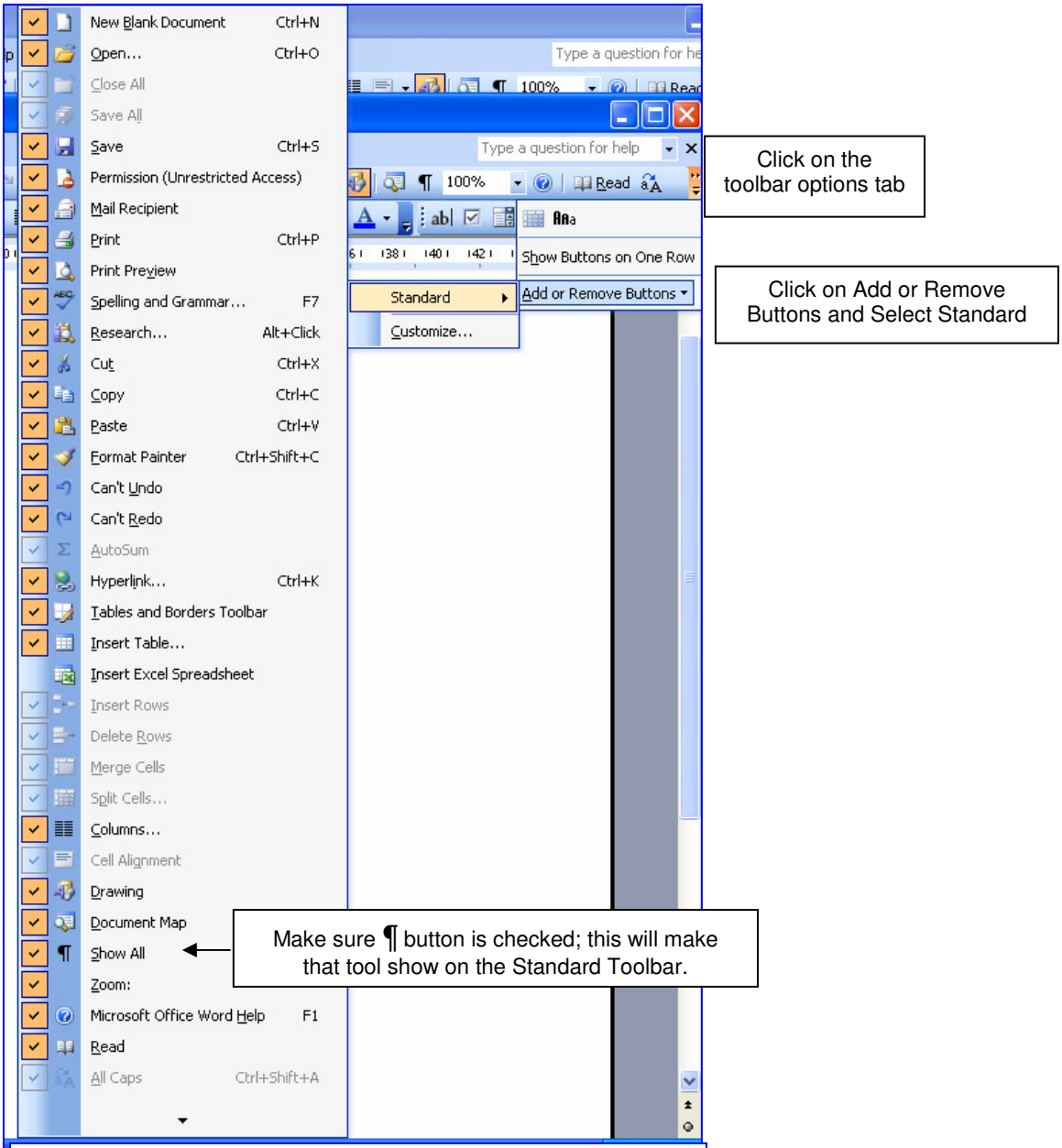


Figure 8

III. Setting Up Your Page

If you do not use the MLA-Template.dot template as explained in the Basic Writing Guidelines, you will need to set up your page to correspond with MLA requirements. Do this buy selecting **File** / **Page Setup** . . . as shown in **Figure 9**. Set the margins to 1" all around, as shown in **Figure 10**.

Set up the formatting of your paper according to MLA standards by selecting **Format** / **Paragraph...** as shown in **Figure 11**. Under the **Indents and Spacing tab** (**Figure 12**), set the line spacing to **double** and "**Special**" to **First line** (the default indentation will be 2 characters. (Note that for the Works Cited page, you will want to set the "**Special**" to **Hanging**, which will indent all but the first line of each Works Cited entry.)

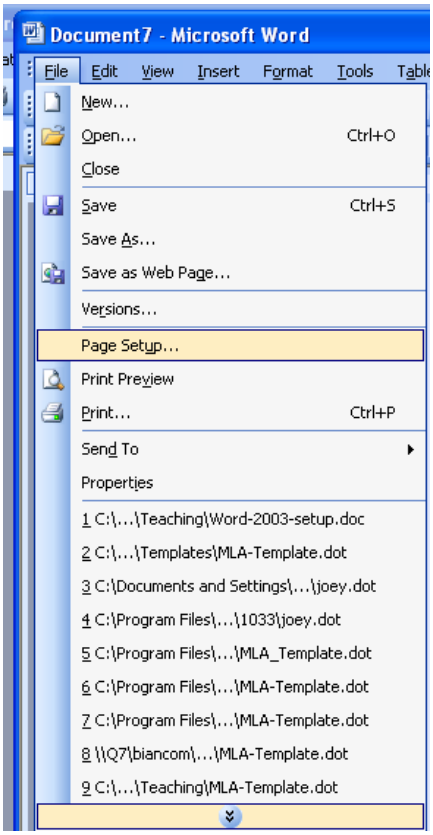


Figure 9

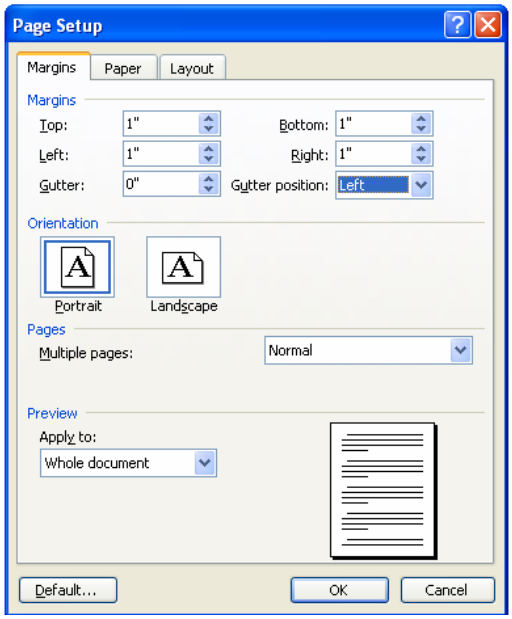


Figure 10

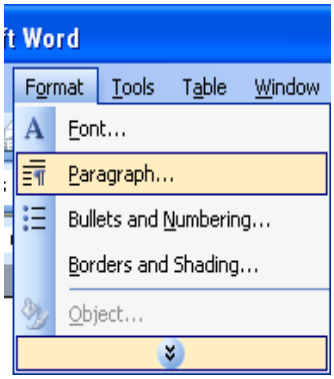


Figure 11

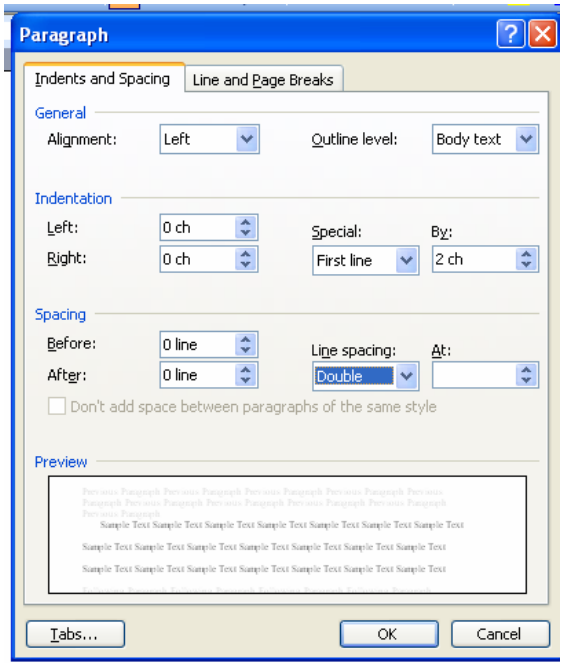
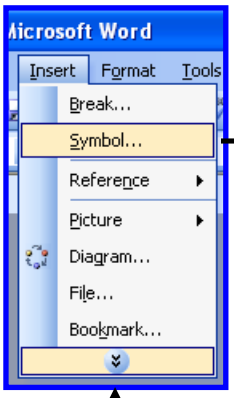
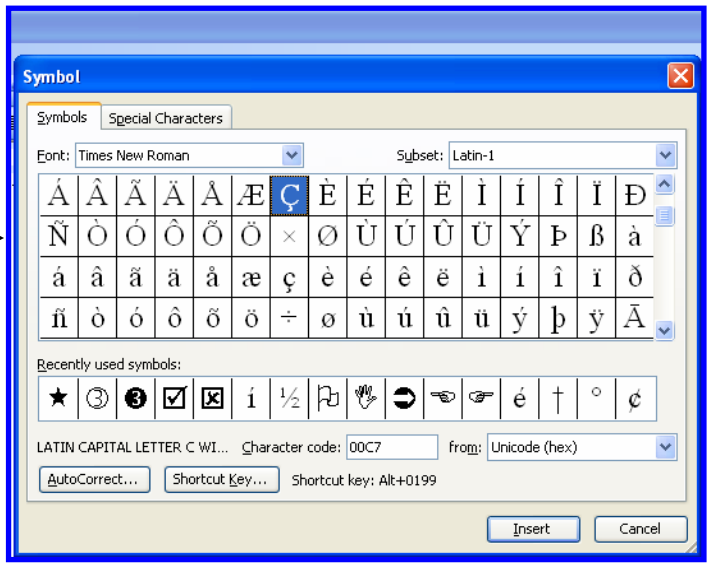


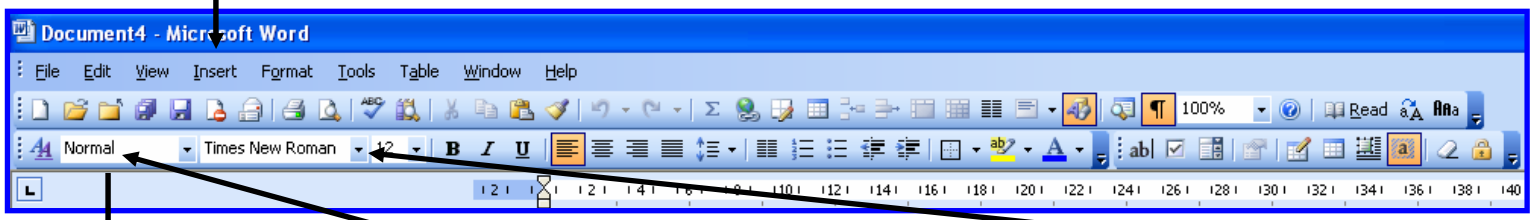
Figure 12

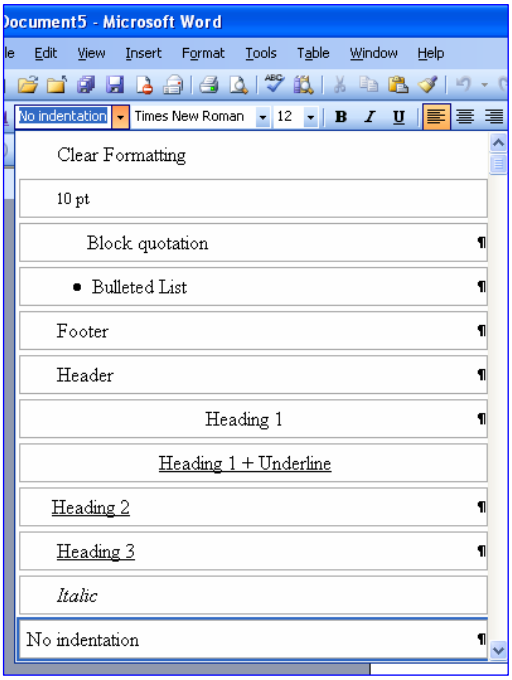
IV. Inserting Symbols and Formatting Text





To insert special characters, like **Ç** and **ü**, as in Çatal Hüyuk, or **é** as in résumé and **ö** as in Tönnies, use the **Insert** / **Symbol** feature from the menu bar. Select symbol and click on **Insert**.

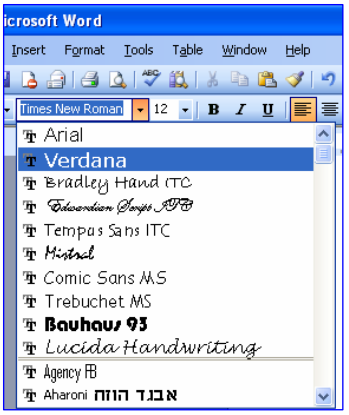




The **style drop-down menu** on the formatting toolbar allows you to choose styles for text within certain templates. The figure to the left shows most of the common styles used in the MLA-Template.dot.

The **font drop-down menu** on the formatting toolbar allows you to select different fonts. You should use a *serif* font such as Times New Roman for class papers. Save *sans serif* fonts, such as Arial, or fancy fonts for other purposes. The **font size drop-down box** allows you to select the size. Choose 12-point font.

The next three buttons shown above after the font size menu allow you to make selected text **bold**, *italicized*, or underlined. Immediately after that are the **Align buttons**. You should always use Align left (highlighted in orange above).



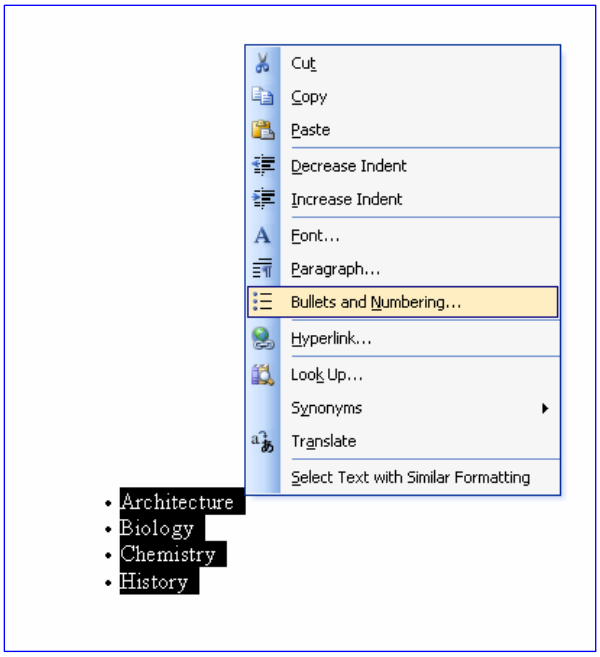
This text is aligned to the left and uses 12-point serif font (Times New Roman), which is what we prefer.

This text is serif, but less than 12 point and also justified (straight on both margins) – neither is acceptable.

This text is centered and uses a sans serif font, neither of which is acceptable.

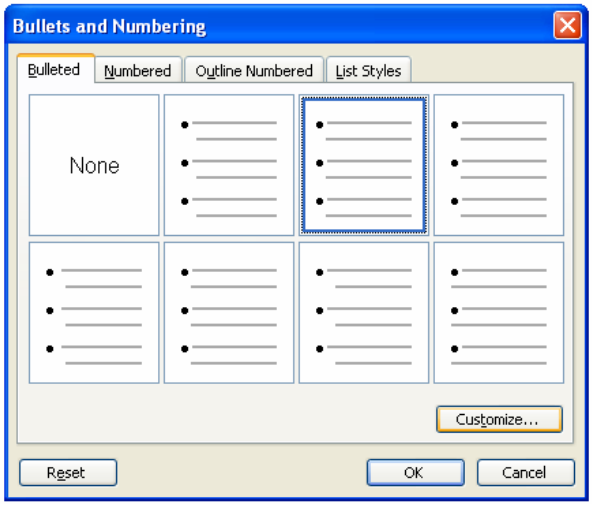
These figures demonstrate how to format a bulleted list.

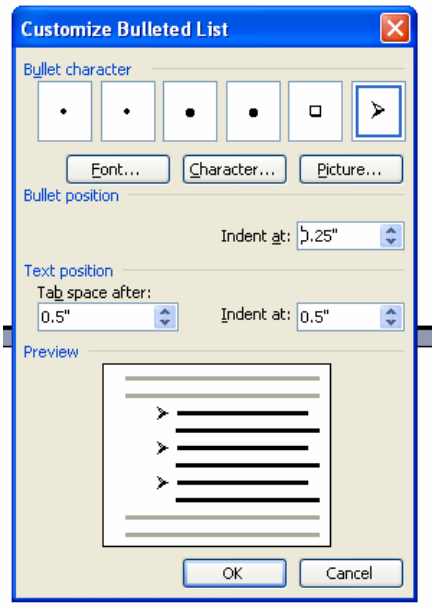
Select the list of items you want bulleted or numbered and then click on the Numbering or Bulleting buttons on the formatting toolbar. Your text will automatically be bulleted or numbered. However, you may want to modify the type of bullet or font, the size, or the space.



To modify the bulleting or numbering, **select** the bulleted/numbered list and **right click**. This will bring up the **formatting window**. Select Bullets and Numbering (highlighted below in pink).

The **Bulleting and Numbering formatting box** will come up, with the type of bullet or number system you are using automatically highlighted. If you want to change this, click on **Customize**.

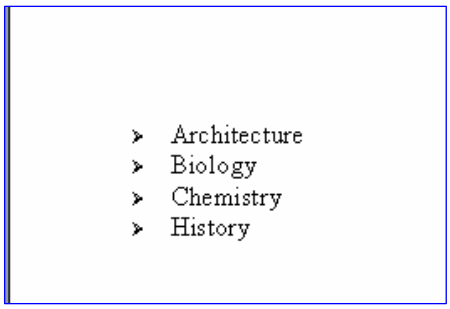




You can then select a different bullet character from what shows or choose a new one by clicking on **Font**, **Character**, or **Picture**.

You can also change the indentation and positioning of your bulleted list by modifying the **Bullet position** and **Text position** options.

The figure to the right shows a modified bulleted list, using a different bullet symbol and different spacing and indentation.

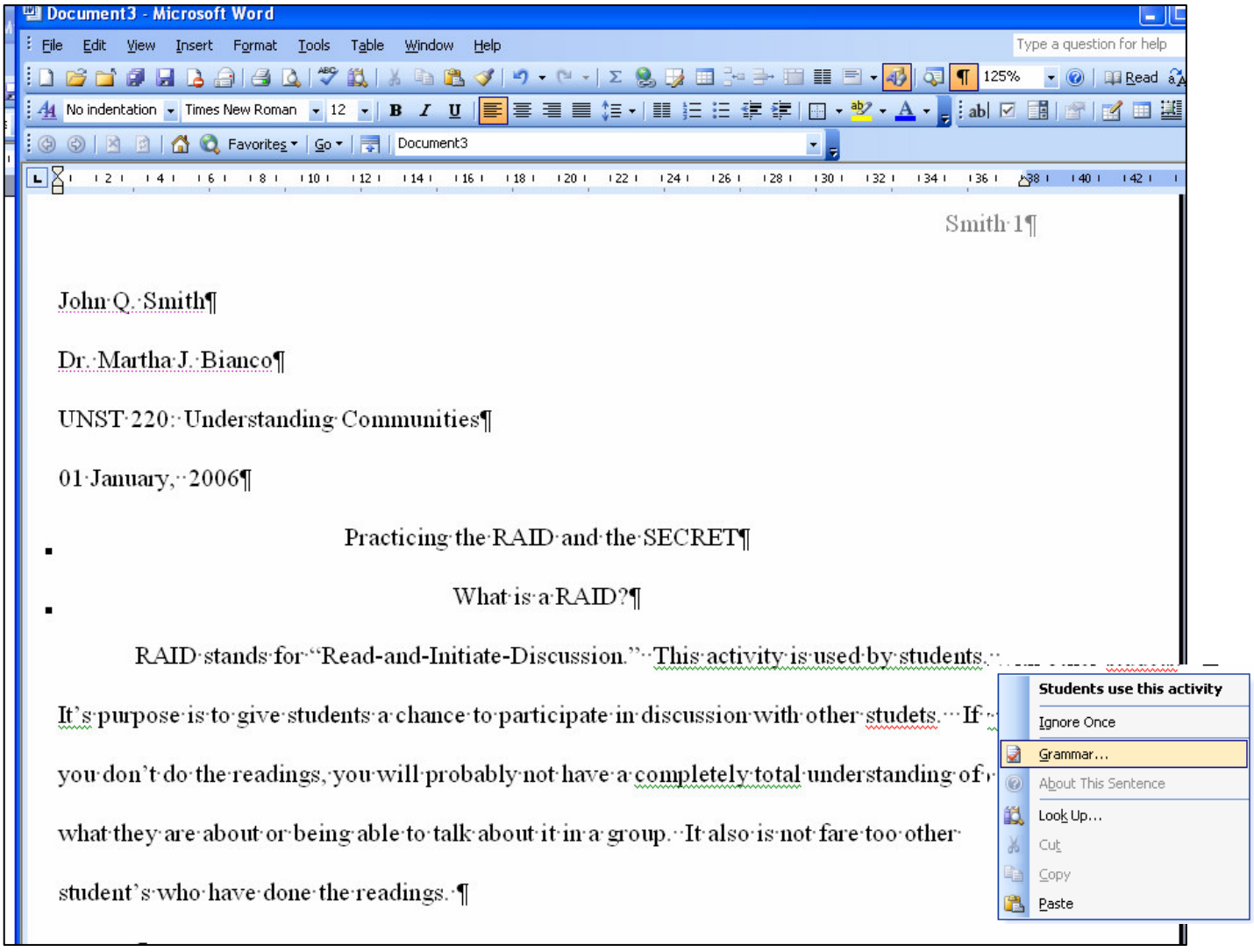


V. Making Sense of What You See

Now that everything is set, let's use the fruits of our labors. Look at the following excerpt from a student paper as it shows on the Word screen.

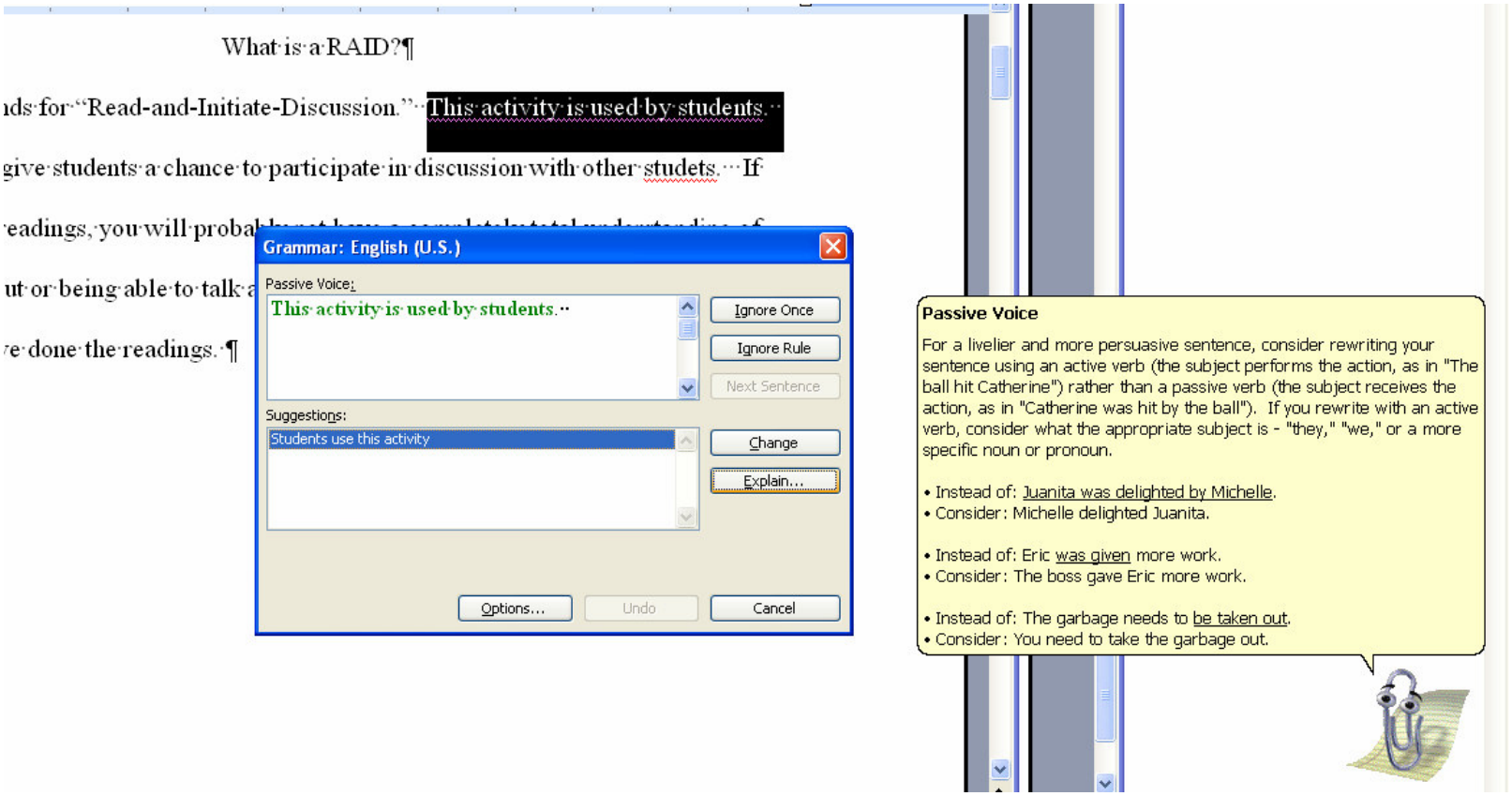
The MLA formatting is correct, as far as spacing and indentation. Word's **grammar check** has identified three potential problems, identified by the words and phrases that are underlined with a **green squiggly line**; and its **spell checker** has identified one potentially misspelled word, which is underlined by a **red squiggly line**.

You can get **more information** about these problems and correct them, if necessary, by **placing your cursor over the squiggly underlined area and right clicking**. In this case, if you place your cursor over the phrase "**This activity is used by students**" and right click, a box comes up suggesting "**Students use this activity**" (in bold). If you do not understand why this suggestion is being made and whether you should accept it, click on **Grammar...**, which is highlighted in pink.



Word attempts to explain its recommendations. In this case, after you click on Grammar, a **Grammar Suggestion box** appears, informing you that the incorrect phrase (in green), "**This activity is used by students**," is in the **passive voice** and suggesting instead, "**Students use this activity**." Before you click on "Change" and accept this suggestion, you should probably click on **Explain...**. This will activate the "Office Assistant" (an animated paper clip), who, despite his annoying attitude, will probably have something useful to say. You can read about the **Passive Voice** in the pink box shown below. Mr. Paper Clip Helper Guy will provide you with grammar help that may actually be useful. Just remember that you need to follow these steps:

1. **Right click on the green underlined phrase.**
2. **Click on Grammar in the box that comes up.**
3. **Click on Explain in the next box that comes up.**
4. **Read about the grammar, diction, or writing rule in question.**
5. **Click on "Change" if you agree with Word's suggestion.**



★WARNING★

Word is wrong a lot of the time! It makes inappropriate suggestions and it misses many errors. The best proofreader is a human being, preferably one who knows how to write and spell.

Go back now to the excerpt from the student paper. Although Word has identified four potential problems (and all of those are in fact mistakes), its grammar and spell check have missed at least eight other errors. **Can you find them?** If you think you can, **print out that page, identify and correct the remaining errors, put your name on the page, and turn it in for up to 10 extra credit points (depending on how many errors you find).**