



CLEAN AND SORT REFERENCE LISTS WITH MSWORD TOOLS: FIND/REPLACE AND TABLE/SORT

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The sort tool

Part of the “housework” of writing a thesis is to ensure that all the references are in clean, alphabetical order. While reference database software like RefWorks and Endnote can take care of this, if one has entered references manually, the tools available in MSWord can be used to sort references alphabetically.

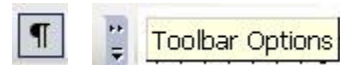
Despite the “Sort tool” in MSWord being buried under the menu item **Table**, it can be used to sort any text outside of tables. When not in a table, the default configurations are to sort by **paragraph** of the type **text**, ☉ Ascending, which means alphabetical.

Caution: Critical features required

Provided your references have two critical features, this can be used to sort references.

Those features are that:

- Each reference be a single paragraph, not broken in any way by "enter marks" except as the one separator between one reference and the next.
 - If a reference has any “internal” enter marks, each line of the reference would be treated as a paragraph and sorted by the first letters of each line, instead of just by the letters of the author’s name.
 - If you cannot see the “enter marks”, which look like this ¶ , or “tab marks” which look like this → , then turn on the “Show/Hide” button on the top menu bar, or if not there look for it under the “Toolbar options” menu button .
- Each reference begins with the author's name, with no ----- line for duplicate names.
 - These would be sorted by the -----, and put together with all the other ----- paragraphs.



Sort action

...then all you do is:

- Highlight all the references.
- Go to Table/Sort, use the default configurations **paragraphs**, **text**, ☉ Ascending, and hit okay.

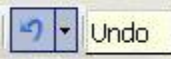
Clean-up: Making references sortable

- If your refs are not in discrete, single paragraphs:
 - i.e. if you have used the manual labour method of inserting enter marks and tabs to get the hanging indent look,
 - Then it is a bit of a job of clean-up first so they can be sorted.
 - This can be very fast, using **Edit** and **Replace...**

Step 1 - Restoring authors' names to the ----- references

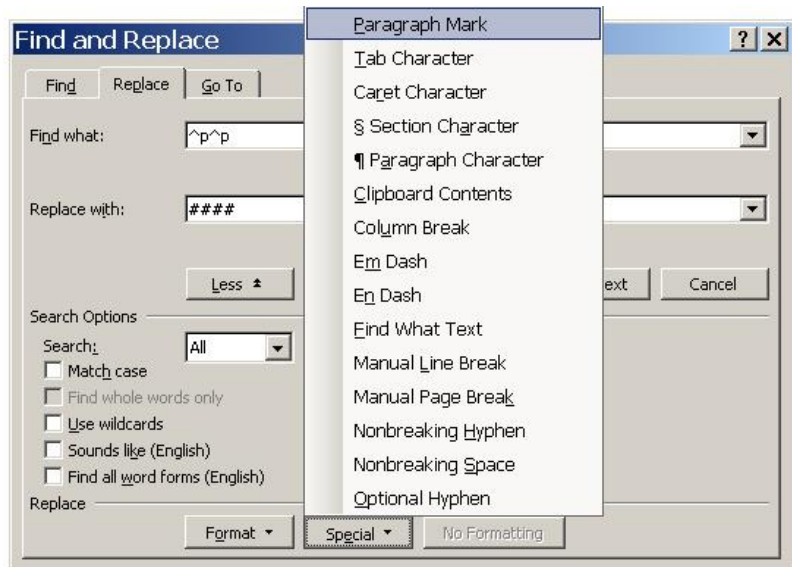
- Change all ----- lines to the correct author(s)'s name, using **copy** and **paste**.
 - When the sort function is no longer needed, i.e. when the final edition is complete, these -----lines can be restored, if desired.

Step 2 - Restoring broken references paragraphs

- Each reference needs to be in one, single, unified paragraph.
 - Sometimes writers try to achieve the “hanging indent look” of references by breaking the first line with an “enter” mark, then either indenting the next lines or putting a tab in.
 - But this also breaks the reference into two or more separate paragraphs. This means that each of these paragraphs would be alphabetized separately, by the first letters of each line, instead of by the author name.
 - Instead, it is better to keep each reference in a single paragraph, and use a specialized style, such as “para_ref” to get the hanging indent and spacing required.
- The following steps are used to eliminate unneeded "enter" marks and other unneeded marks like tabs.
- Highlight all references to ensure that all the refs can be worked on together, but also to limit the text you are working with to ONLY the references.
 - This is because find/replace/replace all can cause massive, unwanted changes if errors are made.
- Keep all the references highlighted through this process.
- First, go to Edit/replace, and hit the **More** button, to get more choices, such as **Format** and **Special**. These provide the toolkit for advanced use of Edit/ Replace.
- Remember, when using Find/Replace, at all times of doubt and error, that the undo button is your friend.** 
- Also remember when asked if you want to search the rest of the document, the answer is **NO** ! Because you are only doing the highlighted section, not the whole documents.

- Set up your precise instructions for Find/Replace

- Click on the **Find what** slot, then go to "Special" and click on the "paragraph mark" to insert the coding for this in the slot.
- Do that a second time, so that you have two of them there (^p^p).



- Click on the **Replace with** slot, and put in some coding you are unlikely to find in a reference. I usually use four number marks: ####.

- What you have here is a command to go find all places where there are two paragraph marks in a row, and (temporarily) replace them with this code.
- This replaces the needed breaks between paragraphs with a coding to mark the spots so you can come back later and put single paragraph marks back in.

- Hit **Replace all** (within the highlighted range of course), to eliminate (temporarily) the divisions between refs, so that the other paragraph marks can then be cleaned out separately.

- Go back to the **Find what** slot, clean it out, and put in only one paragraph mark, using the **Special** list.

- then go to the **Replace with** slot, and clean it out, then put in a space, i.e. one hit of the space bar.
- **Replace all**.

- Go back to the **Find what** slot, clean it out,

- Put in one tab mark, using the **Special** list.
- Then go to the **Replace with** slot, and clean it out, then put in a space, i.e. one hit of the space bar.
- **Replace all**.
- Hit the replace all button again, just in case there are any double tab marks.

- Go back to the "Find what" slot, clean it out,

- put in two space marks, using the space bar,
- Then go to the "replace" slot, and clean it out, then put in one space mark.
- **Replace all**. Hit the **Replace all** button again, just in case there are any triple spaces resulting from previous replacements.

- Go back to the **Find what** slot, clean it out, and put in the coding with which you replaced the "enter" marks (the #####) ,

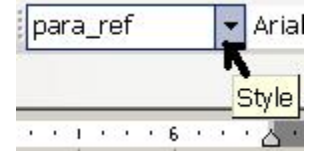
- Then go to the **Replace with** slot, and clean it out, then put in one paragraph mark.
- **Replace all**.

- This stepwise procedure should restore your references to single paragraph status, so you can sort them using the table/sort.

Step 3 - Change all your references to the unified reference.

- Before you un-highlight the references, convert them to the single-spaced, space-between, hanging indent style for a finished thesis. This can be done several different ways.

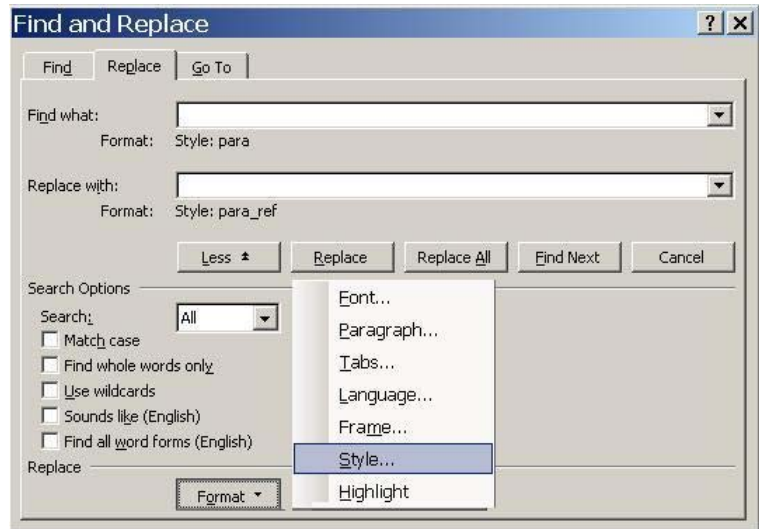
- 1) Apply the **para_ref** style to all refs. This can be done using the Replace function or simply by choosing "para_ref" from the style window's menu



- The one glitch of **para_ref** is that it sometimes wipes out the italicization or underlining, which is a lot of work to lose. So, first apply **para-ref** to all the references, then scrutinize the refs to see if the italicization has remained or been wiped out. If wiped out, then hit the **Undo** button. Then, there are several methods:

- 2) Click at the beginning of each ref only, and select **para-ref**. This gets tedious.

- 3) Highlight all the refs, and use find and replace again, choosing the style they are currently in from the "format" list (then the style list under that) and then for the replace slot, choose **para_ref**. Replace all. Then check to see if the italics got wiped out.



- 4) Just highlight the refs, and go to format/paragraph to select single spacing; special indent/hanging, 0.5 inch; and also space before and space after: 9 pt. This is the easiest, even though it really is "manual labour."

Step 4 - Sort is now usable

- Follow the instructions above, under "Sort Action".