Text Alignment / Justification in Word

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# Overview

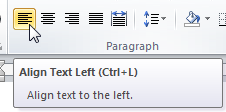
This is a companion document to my [web page](http://www.addbalance.com/usersguide/justification.htm) on alignment/justification. It is intended as a download to show what the various alignments look like. I expect it will be updated from time to time. This is version 14.3.

# Horizontal Alignment – Mostly Paragraph Formatting

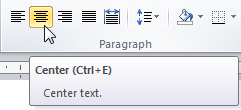
Horizontal alignment or justification of text is handled directly by the icons on the Formatting Toolbar (Word 97-2003) or in the Paragraph Group of the Home Tab (Word 2007-2013). The icons are the same. There are keyboard shortcuts for each of these as well. Long term, such formatting is best done by changing the paragraph formatting in the paragraph Style to be used.

Note the icons shown include one on the far right that only shows if support for an East Asian Language has been activated – [Distributed](#_Distributed_Text_(Ctrl+Shift+J)). An inordinate amount of space is devoted to Distributed Paragraph alignment only because it is not well-documented elsewhere.

## Left-Aligned (Ctrl+L)

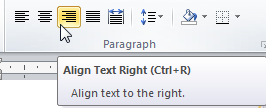


You can have Left-Aligned text **(Ctrl+L)**. All lines in the paragraph are aligned to the left indent for the paragraph. No extra spaces are added to the line. The traditional typesetting terminology for this is “ragged right.”



## Center-Aligned (Ctrl+E)

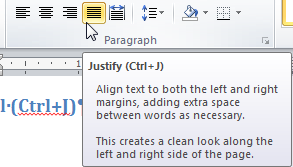
You can have Center-Aligned text **(Ctrl+E)**. All lines in the paragraph are centered between the left and right indents for the paragraph. No extra spaces are added to the line.



## Right-Aligned (Ctrl+R)

You can have Right-Aligned text **(Ctrl+R)**. All lines in the paragraph are aligned to the right Indent for the paragraph. No extra spaces are added to the line. The traditional typesetting terminology for this is “ragged left.”

## Full (Ctrl+J)

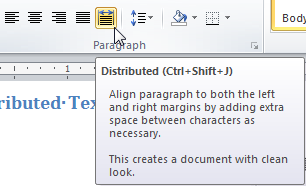


You can Justify your text, aligning it to both sides of your paragraph **(Ctrl+J)**. Text is aligned along both the left and right paragraph Indents. Space is added between words and in some cases characters to make up the difference. This can be harder to read than left-alignment. It can be improved by setting the compatibility option to “Do full justification the way Word Perfect for Windows 6.0 does it.” This has been called “squishy” justification because space can be subtracted as well as added. . This is a paragraph of fully justified text. It ends with the standard paragraph mark.

This is what happens with a line-break instead.

Note that the *last line* in a Justified paragraph is not justified or stretched.

## Distributed Text (Ctrl+Shift+J)



Or, if support for an East Asian Language is not installed, you will see:



You can also use an *undocumented* command to apply Distributed Alignment to your text (**Ctrl+Shift+J)**. Space is added between characters to stretch across between the Left and Right Indents. *Note that no icon is selected;* this can only be applied using the keyboard shortcut(Ctrl+Shift+J).

This is what happens with a distributed alignment.

**SAMPLE TITLE**

This is seldom useful for a real paragraph but is sometimes used for a title.

I mentioned that there is no icon for Distributed Text unless there is language support for an East-Asian language. There can be, though. This Word command shows up in the modification dialogs as “Distributed” and adds icons to the QAT / Ribbon if added. They are shown below.



In Word 2010-2013, it is not possible to easily add it to the Paragraph Group on the Home Tab: I know of no way to add it as a customization to a menu or toolbar in Word 2003 other than through a macro. The command does not appear in the All Commands list for customization there unless the icon is already on the toolbar because language support for an East Asian language has been enabled. The keyboard shortcut, though, is available in Word 2003-2013.

Again, I would never use Distributed text for any ordinary typing but only for a single line with a special purpose. The tooltip saying it creates a document with clean look, is wrong!

# Using Tabs to Align Text

The following paragraphs are set with left, center, and right tabs as shown in the Ruler.

Left Tab (this is an example of Flush Right or Left-and-Right) Right Tab

Left Text Right Text

Left Text to dot leader Right Text

Left Tab Center Tab Right Tab

Right Tab Center Tab Left Tab

Last First

Smith Roger

Vanderpul Marshall

# Vertical Alignment – a Section Property

Vertical alignment is a Section property. Any change made will either start a new section or apply to the current section or perhaps the entire document. All of the preceding pages have had the vertical alignment set at Top (the default). For demonstration purposes, this document starts new sections from this point forward.

## Vertical Alignment - Center

When you look at the document on the screen, you may not notice the center alignment unless you look at the vertical Ruler. It does look like it has a very large header area unless there is a lot of text on the page.

This alignment adds no extra space between paragraphs but all of the text on the page will be vertically centered.

When you view in Print Preview (not Print View) or actually print the page, you will see something different!

## Vertical Alignment - Bottom

This page (section) is bottom justified. It scrolls from the bottom to the top but, as with Top-Alignment, no extra space is added between paragraphs.

This is a second paragraph.

## Vertical Alignment – Full

The text on this page is vertically justified for Full so text will expand to fill the page. It adds spaces between paragraphs.

It will fill the page from top to bottom, with large spaces between paragraphs if needed.

You can easily change the formatting of selected text in the document text by choosing a look for the selected text from the Quick Styles gallery on the Home tab. You can also format text directly by using the other controls on the Home tab. Most controls offer a choice of using the look from the current theme or using a format that you specify directly.