1 INTRODUCTION TO *WRITER*
Writing a Conference Call letter

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Words are crucial tools of a teacher's trade. As a teacher, you owe it to yourself and to your students to use words well. The *LibreOffice* word processor will help you improve your writing skills because it makes revision easy and thus encourages you—and your students— to correct errors in grammar, spelling, and style.

In this tutorial, along with some helpful hints to bear in mind when word processing, you will learn the steps required to produce a word processed document from scratch and carry out basic formatting and editing functions. These include:

- opening and naming a new word processor document
- entering and saving a document
- updating and simple formatting of a document
- checking a document for spelling and grammar errors
- printing a document
- making a backup copy of a document

It is likely that you are not a beginner to word processing, so you may think you don't need to complete this tutorial. That would be a mistake. Most computer users learn no more than the minimum they think they need to know to use a program such as *Writer*, without taking the trouble to learn other useful features of the software. In other words, even if you have used a word processor for a while, there's a good chance that you will still benefit from completing this tutorial.

So, with this in mind, please conscientiously work your way through the tutorial with a view to learning new things. You'll be surprised what you'll discover!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A caveat (warning) before you begin: You'll find it easiest to use this tutorial if you follow the directions carefully. On computers there are always other ways of doing things, but if you wander off on your own be sure you know your way back!

Lesson 1 makes the assumption that you are already familiar with the *Windows* computing environment, though you may not be an expert in its use. If you are using a computer in a lab at school, you'll also know:

- where to find the computer lab on campus;
- how to turn the computer on;
- how to log on to the system (using your login name and password).

You also should be familiar with the **W**indows, **I**cons, **M**enus, and **P**ointers (the so-called **WIMP** interface) with which you interact with the computer. If not, your instructor will make this clear to you before you proceed with these tutorials.

Lesson 1 assumes that you have received a copy of the set of *Work Files for LibreOffice* that accompany these tutorials. If you've already downloaded the various lessons and placed them in a folder of their own (named, for example, LibreOffice Working Docs), the Work Files zip file should be moved to the same folder in which you've placed these tutorials. Unzip (unpack) the zip files within that directory, which will emulate the Flash drive.

You will find the work files stored in three folders named *Base Files*, *Impress Files*, and *Miscellaneous Files*. You also need a fourth folder for the *data files* that you will be creating while working your way through the tutorials. If you do not have these four folders and files ready, prepare them now before proceeding with this tutorial. Here are the steps to take:

> First, **double click** on the zip file **File name** in order to **unzip** the set of **Work Files for LibreOffice** (your instructor will help you with this if you are working with a class) and then **Extract** them to your flash drive or **LibreOffice working docs** folder, then **double click** on the **Work Files for LibreOffice** folder to **open** it

Inside the *Work Files for LibreOffice* folder you need to create a new, *fourth,* folder called *Data Files.* Here's how you do this.

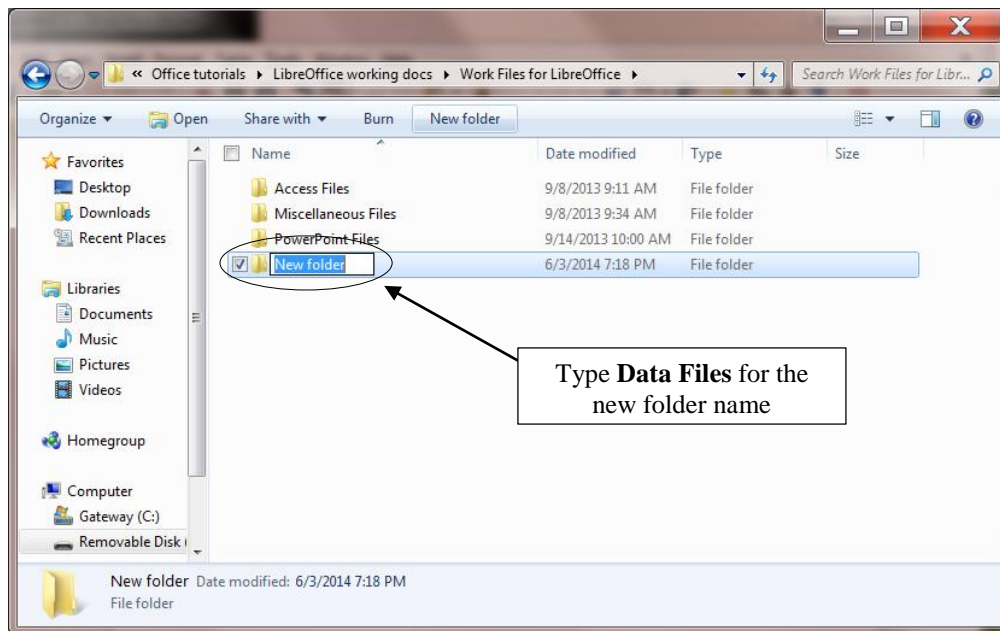> In the **Work Files for LibreOffice folder**, select **New Folder** (Fig. 1.1).

Fig. 1.1 Creating a New Folder

The system will create a new folder for you and then wait for you to give it a name of your choice (Fig. 1.1 above).

> Call the new folder **Data Files**

During the course of these tutorials you will be storing many files in this Data Files folder.

1.1 OPENING, NAMING & SAVING A NEW *WRITER* DOCUMENT

Opening a new *Writer* document

Before you can use *LibreOffice*, you must first open the program. Every system is slightly different in the steps to open a program, so we'll assume that you already have that figured out, or you have someone, such as your instructor or a friend, who can help you get started.

Fig. 1.2 illustrates the screen you will see when you first open a new *Writer* document.
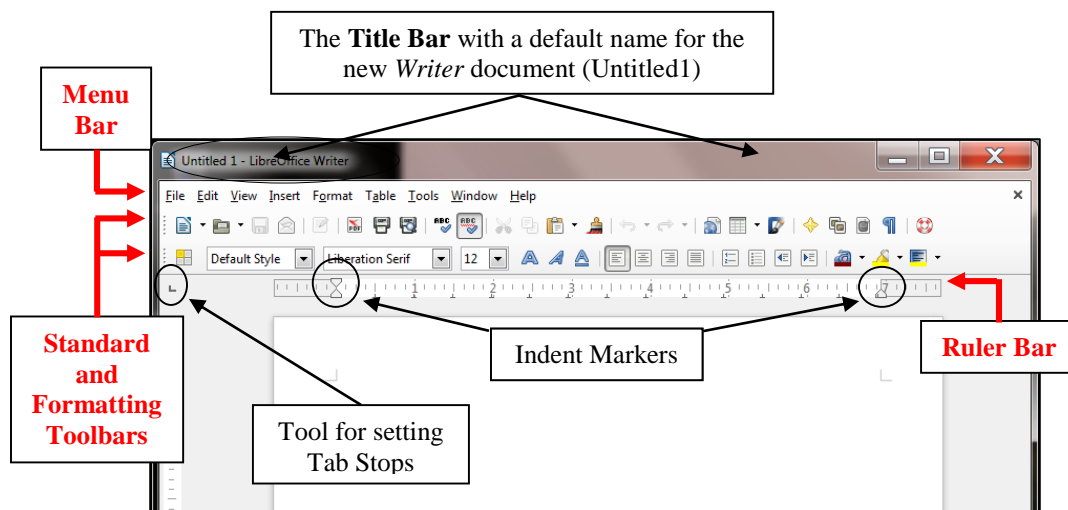

Fig. 1.2 New blank *Writer* document (annotated)

Notice the default title that *Writer* has given the document (Untitled1). You will be changing this shortly when you save the document for the first time.

Fig. 1.2 illustrates the Ruler Bar, along with the tool for setting *tab stops* and the tools for setting *indents*—called *indent markers*. Most users of *Writer* never figure out how to use these tab stops and indent markers; many users do not even know they exist! By the time you are done with these tutorials you will be very familiar with them.

> Check out the tool for setting **Tab stops**; it's on the same line as the Ruler bar, but at the **left edge** of the *Writer* window (see Fig. 1.2 above)—it's so small you could easily miss it (a lot of *Writer* users do!)

You'll be practicing using this Tab Stop tool later in the tutorial, but just make a note of where it is for now.

> Make a mental note of the **Indent Markers** too; they're on the left and right sides of the **Ruler bar** (Fig. 1.2 again)

6

Naming & saving a new *Writer* document

In the exercises that follow, you'll use your own Flash drive to save all the files you'll create and/or use for these tutorials. Every time you create a new document, you will need to navigate to the location where you want to save the file. Here, then, are the steps to save this first *Writer* document on your flash drive.

> Look at the new document's **default name** (it'll be **Untitled1**) at the **top left** of the *Writer* window (see Fig. 1.2 previous page)

The document is given this default name by *LibreOffice* because you haven't yet given it a name of your own. It is ALWAYS a good idea, however, to immediately—and thoughtfully –name a new document before you even enter any data. It is a good idea to save a *backup* copy, too, and you'll have the opportunity to create backups at the end of each lesson of these tutorials.

There are three good reasons for naming your files thoughtfully:

1. You will more easily be able to identify the contents of a document if you give it an appropriately descriptive name (such as **Letter to Mom 3-8-04**). A thoughtful name will also help you find a document you may have misplaced, because you can use the name to have the system search for it.
2. You will more easily find a document at a later date if you are careful to save it in a location of your choice.
3. As you create more and more documents you will want to create subfolders that group related files. Remember, too, that the files are arranged alphabetically, so consider naming files as if you were creating the index to a book.

> Make sure your Flash drive is inserted in your computer, then, from the **File menu**, select **Save As**

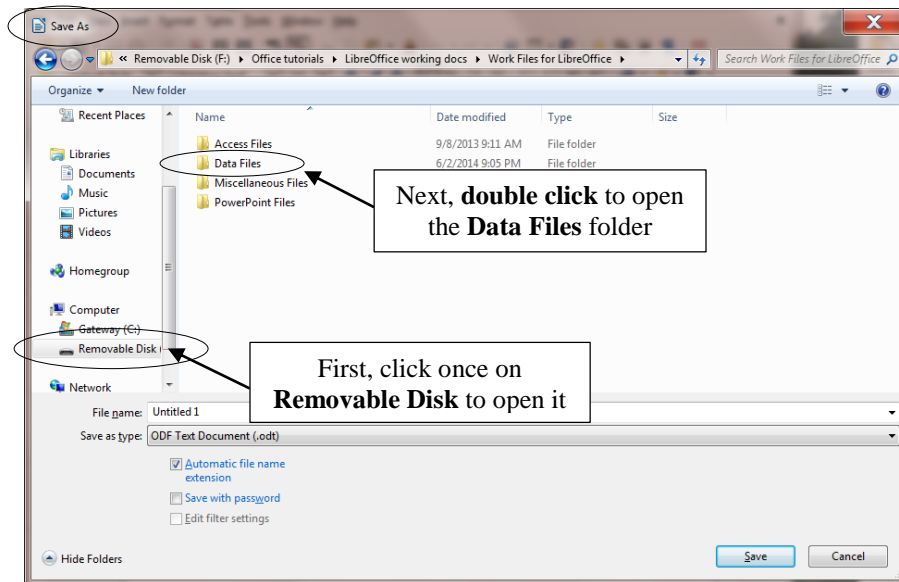*Writer* displays the *Save As* dialog box (Fig. 1.3).

Fig. 1.3 The Save As dialog box

The *Save As* dialog box prompts you, among other things, to

> (1) select the *location* or disk drive where you want to save the new document (in this case your Flash drive or Removable Disk);
> (2) navigate to, and then either create or select, a *folder* on that drive in which to save the new document (in this case, your Data Files folder);
> (3) type a *name* for the document before clicking on the Save button.

The Save As dialog box thus lists the various locations where your files can be saved.

> Make sure your **flash drive** is in one of the available **USB ports** in the computer then, in the left frame of the **Save As dialog box**, click on **Removable Disk** to **open** it (Fig. 1.3 on the previous page)

> Now, in the list of various folders and files that may be on your flash drive, **locate/navigate to** the folder named **Work Files for LibreOffice** (you may need your instructor to help you find it on your computer this first time) and **double click** on it to **open** it

You should now see a list of four folders, including the Data Files folder you created when you prepared it for use with these tutorials.

> **Double click** to open the **Data Files** folder (see Fig. 1.3 on the previous page)

Creating a new folder on a disk

Inside the Data Files folder you need to create a new folder to store all the documents you will create using *Writer*.

> Still in the **Save As** dialog box, click on the **New Folder** icon (Fig. 1.4)
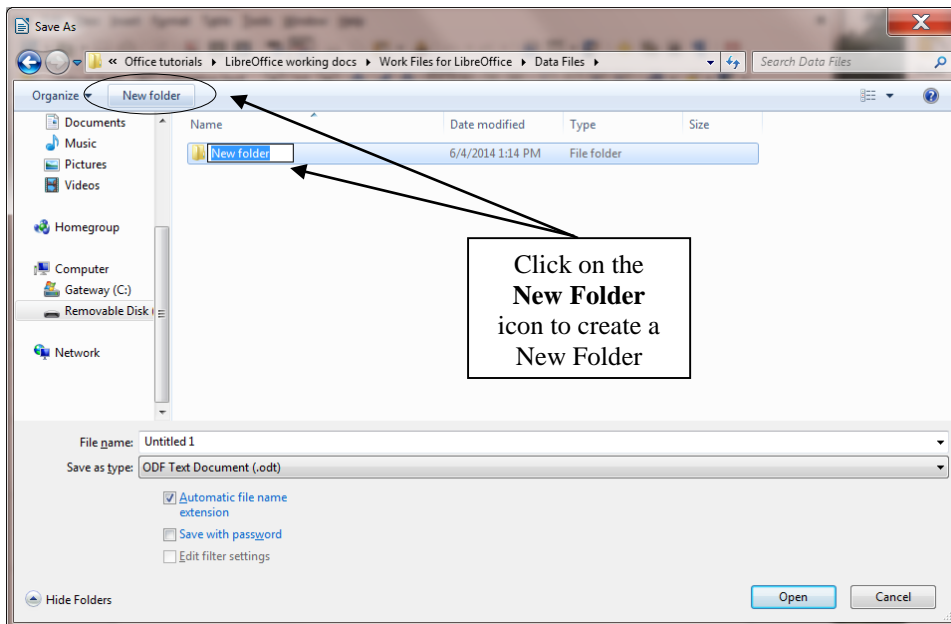

Fig. 1.4 The New Folder icon in the Save As dialog box

8

As you can see, the system immediately creates a New Folder with a default name highlighted in blue, inviting you to type a name of your own for the New Folder.

> Type **Writer Documents** for the new folder's name**,** hit the **Enter** key, then **double click** on the folder to **Open** it

Writer opens the new folder so that you can save the new document inside it (Fig. 1.5).
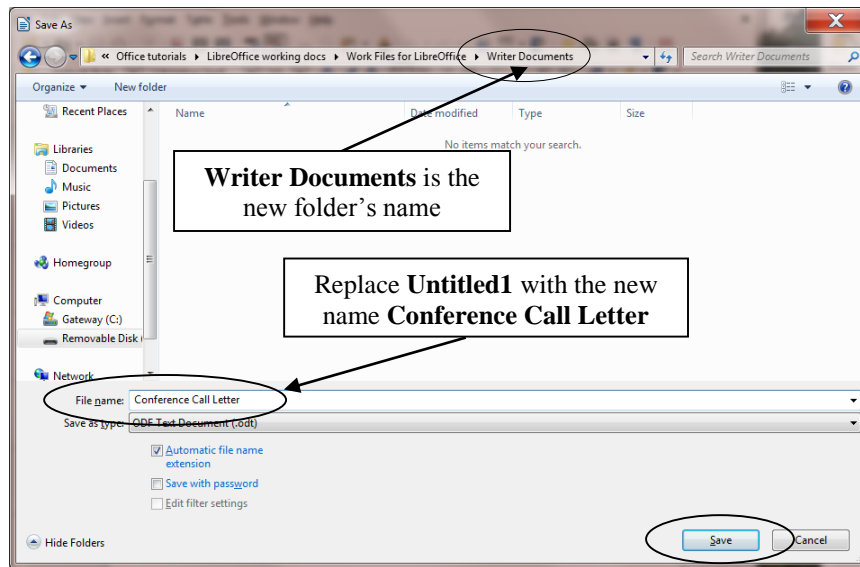

Fig. 1.5 Naming the Conference Call Letter

> In the **File name:** data entry box (Fig. 1.5), type **Conference Call Letter** to replace the default name and press **Enter** (or click on the **Save** button)

The *Save As* option thus allows you to *name* your documents and at the same time determine the *location* (the folder, on a particular disk) on which you want to store them. In effect, by naming the document and specifying the location on which it will be stored, you are reserving a space for the document on the disk.

From now on, you do not need to select *Save As* to save the document *unless* you want to save a backup or save it in some other location. Whenever you simply *Save* this particular file, it will be saved with the name Conference Call Letter in this same folder (Writer Documents) on your flash drive.

1.3 SOME HELPFUL HINTS WHILE USING *WRITER*

You will shortly type the text of the Conference Call Letter. But before you do so, check out the following helpful hints.

Word processing is *not* the same as using a typewriter
Next to no one uses a typewriter anymore. But if you've not yet used a computer, but have used a typewriter, read on.

As you type at the computer keyboard, the characters (letters of the alphabet, numbers, etc.) appear on the screen. When you use a typewriter, however, the letters appear directly on the paper in front of you. Also, when using a typewriter you have to move the carriage that holds the sheet of paper in place back at the end of every line so that you can start typing at the beginning of the next line on the page. This is called a carriage return.

When you use a word processor, however, the system takes care of the end of each line. As you type away in word processing, the program is aware that you are getting to the end of the line, and it will automatically move a word to the beginning of the next line if it doesn't fit completely on the end of a line. The technical term for this is "wrap around." You don't have to worry about hyphenating words that are broken up over two lines—unless you *want* to, of course.

So, when you are using a computer, the only time you need to hit the Enter key is *at the end of a paragraph*, whether the paragraph be an empty line, just one word, one line, or several lines.

> Type the following passage for practice this now—remember, ***don't*** press the **Enter** key until you get to the end of the paragraph[1]

And though he tried to look properly severe for his students, Fletcher Seagull suddenly saw them all as they really were, just for a moment, and he more than liked, he loved what he saw. No limits, Jonathan? he thought, and he smiled. His race to learn had begun.[2]

> Now press **Enter** at the end of the paragraph

Notice how the word processor took care of the end of each line.

Removing unwanted Returns (using the Show ¶ option)

You can have *Writer* show you exactly where, in your document, you hit the Enter key (say, at the end of paragraphs). The easiest way to do this is to click on the Show ¶ icon in the *Standard Toolbar* (Fig. 1.6).
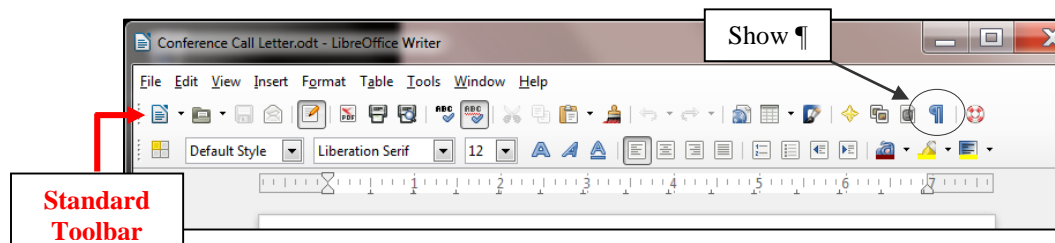

Fig. 1.6 The **Show ¶** icon on the Standard toolbar

> Click on the **Show ¶** tool now

The ¶ symbol is the standard mark used by editors to indicate the need for a paragraph break in running text. In the Conference Call Letter that you'll be typing shortly, the ¶ symbol, if

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[1] The lines on your screen may be longer or shorter.

[2] From the book "Jonathan Livingston Seagull: a story" by Richard Bach. New York, NY: Avon, 1970. And yes, the grammar is correct, so don't worry if it seems odd to you here and there!

you have the option turned on, would appear wherever you hit Enter at the end of each paragraph. Another ¶ symbol would appear on an empty line because, strictly speaking, the empty line is another paragraph break.

The Show ¶ tool also puts a dot to show wherever there is a space in the running text. This is useful for you to see if, for example, you have typed extra spaces here and there that you may want to remove.

> Position the cursor immediately before the sentence that begins "**No limits, Jonathan?…**", then hit the **Enter key** twice

Notice the ¶ symbols that show you where you hit the Enter key—one at the end of the previous line, and the other on the empty line ahead of the cursor.

> Now remove the **Paragraph marks** you just entered by pressing the **Backspace** key **twice**

> Finally, click on the **Show ¶** icon in the **Paragraph Group** of the **Home Ribbon** to turn off the paragraph marks and all the dots between the words

Undoing unintended actions

If you do something you didn't intend, or if you make a mistake, you'll select *Undo* from the *Standard toolbar* which is located immediately below the *Menu Bar* (Fig. 1.7). This is a lifesaver that you will use often!
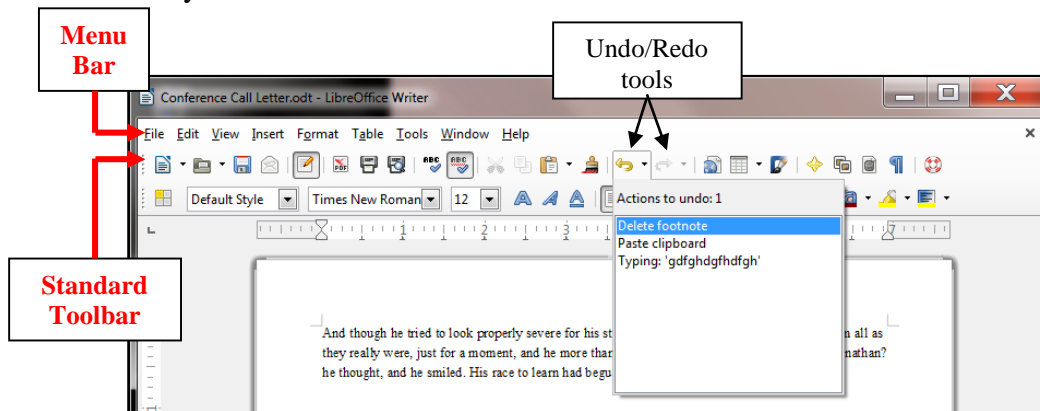

Fig. 1.7 Undo/Redo tools

> Check out this **Undo** option in the **Standard toolbar** now so you can see where to find it

A quicker way to Undo is to use the shortcut **Ctrl+z** on your keyboard. You also can undo any number of specific recent actions by clicking on the arrow next to the Undo tool in the Quick Access toolbar (Fig. 1.7 above), which will drop down a menu (list) of the sequence of actions you have taken since the last Undo. You cannot select a single item from the middle of the list. If you delete any action, all actions after that one are also deleted!

Scrolling through a document

We need to open a longer document so you can practice different ways of scrolling.

> From the **File** menu select **Open**, navigate to **USB drive** > **Work Files for LibreOffice** > **Miscellaneous Files** > **Practice** folder, and **double click** to **open** the document called **Term Paper**

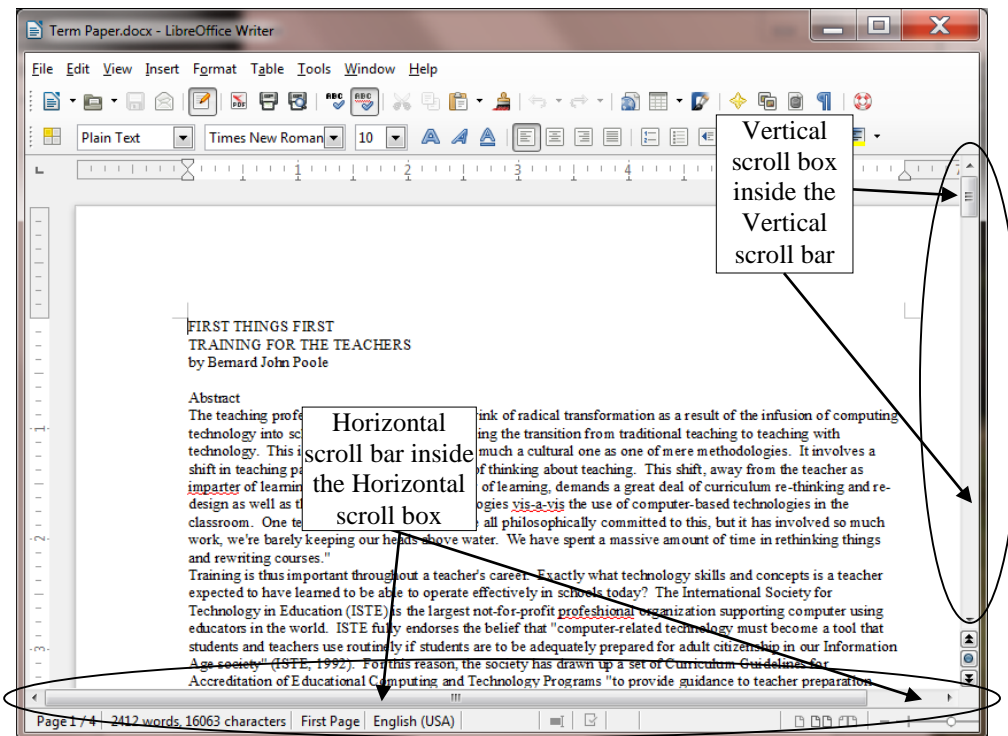Now, with the Term Paper document open on the screen, take a look at the scroll bars (Fig. 1.8).

Fig. 1.8 The scroll boxes

On the right of the screen you have a *vertical* scroll bar and, inside it, the *vertical scroll box*. At the bottom of the screen you have a *horizontal* scroll bar and *horizontal scroll box*.

At either end of the scroll bars are arrows pointing in opposite directions (left and right, or up and down). As you might expect, clicking on these arrows will scroll a document left or right or up and down. Scrolling from left to right or right to left is simpler than scrolling up or down, since you only have the width of the page to deal with. But the process is the same for scrolling up and down, too.

> Try scrolling now from side to side—left to right and back again—by clicking on the **scroll arrows** to move the **scroll box** in the horizontal **scroll bar**

> Try scrolling up and down by clicking on the **scroll arrows** to move the **scroll box** in the vertical **scroll bar**

You can scroll a lot faster by positioning the mouse arrow on the scroll box itself, holding down the left mouse button, and dragging the box left or right, up or down, in the scroll bars.

12

Try this, too

If you click either side of the scroll box *inside* the horizontal or vertical scroll bars, this causes the document to scroll in jumps from side to side or up and down.

Try this as well

You also can scroll and position the cursor very precisely across a line of text, character by character, or up and down from line to line, by using the arrow keys on the lower right of the keyboard.

Try this as well

Finally, yet another vertical scrolling option is available if you have a mouse with a rubberized wheel between the buttons, as illustrated in Fig. 1.9.
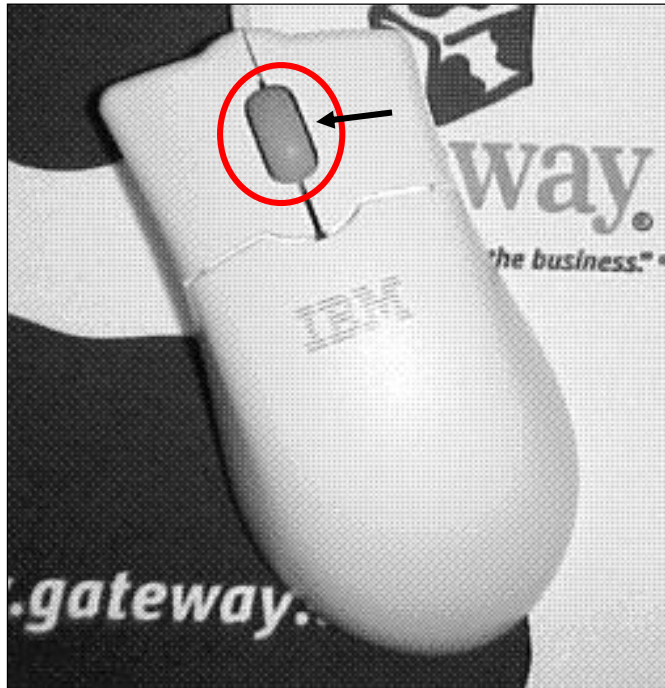
Fig. 1.9 The scrolling wheel on the mouse

Try this, too

When you have finished experimenting with the scroll bars, **close** (**File** > **Close**) the **Term Paper** document

Shortcuts or quick keyboard commands

The quickest way to save your work is to press **Ctrl+s** on the keyboard. The **Ctrl (Control)** key is in the lower left corner of the keyboard. Locate it now. You'll be using it a lot as you become more familiar with the *Office* programs. It is always used in combination with one or two other keys. **Ctrl+s**, for example, is executed by holding down the **Ctrl** key and, while holding the **Ctrl** key down, simultaneously quickly pressing on the "**s**" key.

You'll learn more shortcuts as you work your way through the tutorials. The author has prepared a chart that breaks down the most used *Writer* quick keyboard commands. You will find this chart handy when you are learning to use the software for the first time. The chart is available as a separate download at the end of the list of contents on the download site for these *LibreOffice* tutorials (http://www.pitt.edu/~poole/libreofficeframe.html). For ready reference, you may want to print out the Quick Keyboards Commands sheet which lists the most frequently used *LibreOffice* shortcut keyboard commands.

Renaming a document
You will sometimes want to rename a document that you've already saved on your disk. One way you can do this from the desktop is by *right-clicking* on the icon for the document you want to rename. Then, from the *context menu* that pops up whenever you right-click on an object on the screen, select the option to *Rename…*, which highlights the document's name so that you can type a new name for it.

To rename a document which you already have open in *Writer*, or in any other *LibreOffice* application, you would choose *Save As* from the File menu. This will give you the opportunity to save the document with a new name of your choice. Bear in mind, though, that when you do this, the document with the original name will still be on your disk—a second copy, if you like. If you don't want to keep this copy, you should delete it right away so as to remove unwanted clutter from your disk drives.

1.4 CREATING AND SAVING A DOCUMENT

Practice makes perfect
You still should have open the Conference Call Letter, with the Jonathan Livingstone Seagull quote. You need to clear the Seagull quote from the document, so here are the steps to remove it.

> In the **Edit** menu choose **Select All** then press the **Backspace** key **once** to remove the highlighted text from the document

You can also *Select All* using the Quick Keyboard command **Ctrl**+**a**, or you can use the mouse (or your finger if you have a touch screen) to **drag to highlight** the whole paragraph, or you can **quadruple click** on the paragraph.

Notice that the Backspace key removes all highlighted text. The Del(ete) key, in this case, does the same.

Typing the Conference Call letter
You should now have a blank page with the cursor waiting in the top left corner, ready for you to type in the Conference Call Letter. Fig. 1.10 on the next page has the full text of the Conference Call letter. The Figure also shows where all the Paragraph marks (¶) are. This will help you remember to hit the *Enter* key only where necessary, *not* at the end of every line. There's no need to show Paragraph marks in your version of the document.

As you type, *Writer* will automatically warn you of any spelling or grammar errors it finds (by underlining them in red or blue on your screen). This will occur as you type the contents of Fig. 1.10.

Jane·Doe··(Your·name·here·so·your·instructor·knows·who·you·are)¶
¶
Hodge·Road·Elementary·School¶
123·Mingo·Bluff·Road¶
Cape·Coral,·FL·23456¶
¶
Mr.·and·Mrs.·M·Mayosha¶
856·SW·2ⁿᵈ·Place¶
Cape·Coral,·FL·23456¶
¶
Dear·Mr.·and·Mrs.·Mayosha,¶
¶
I·am·pleased·to·inform·you·that·your·daughter,·Hellen,·has·been·selected·by·the·Fifth·
Grade·teachers·to·represent·Hodge·Road·Elementary·School·at·the·Newfound·Harbor·
Marine·Biology·Institute·in·Key·West,·Florida,·as·a·Junior·Biologist.·Since·Hellen·has·
shown·both·academic·excellence·and·sound·social·skills·this·past·school·year,·she·would·
be·a·great·candidate·for·the·program.·We·very·much·hope·that·you·will·support·Hellen·in·
this·opportunity.¶
¶
The·Institute·has·a·wonderful·reputation·for·both·child·and·adult·programs.·I·have·
attended·the·facility·myself·and·had·a·splendid·time.·Hellen·would·take·part·in·a·two-
week·session·in·June·with·5ᵗʰ·graders·from·all·over·the·state·of·Florida.¶
¶
Please·call·me·(619)·772-3223·or·email·me·(mprendergast@hodgeroad.edu)·to·discuss·
more·details·about·the·program.·I·look·forward·to·hearing·from·you·soon.¶
¶
Sincerely·yours,¶
¶
¶
¶
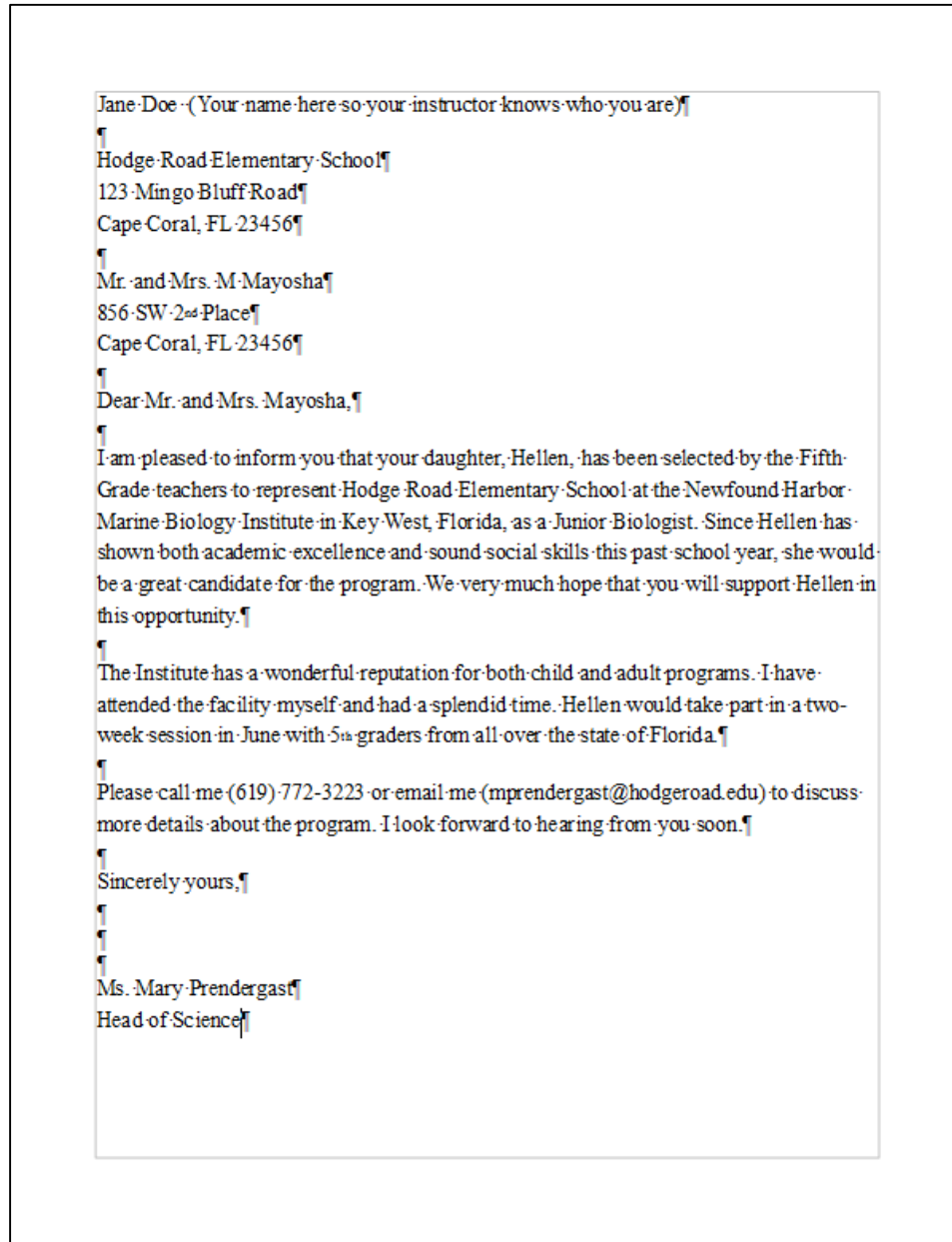Ms.·Mary·Prendergast¶
Head·of·Science¶

Fig. 1.10 First version of the Conference Call Letter

Once you have typed in the whole document and saved it, you should go back and correct any errors you may have made, and then save the document again. Remember: when you save a document with the same name as before, you are *replacing* the earlier version. You *won't* be creating a second copy.

1.5   UPDATING AND SIMPLE FORMATTING OF A DOCUMENT

Now that your letter is saved on disk, you can make any revisions you want.

Word processing allows you to treat text like modeling clay. You can easily mold your words and ideas. You can change margins, put in underlines, italics, boldface, and so forth. You can correct errors, move text around, lay it out on the page—all at the touch of a few buttons. In the next lesson (Lesson Two) you will have an opportunity to become quite sophisticated in this regard. But let's keep it simple for now. Refer back to Fig. 1.10 while you complete the next few sections of the tutorial.

Inserting the date

There is no date in the **Conference Call Letter** in Fig. 1.10. A letter is incomplete without a date, so here are the steps to have *Writer* put today's date in the letter.

> Click to position the **insertion point** cursor right **after the zip code** in the *first* address at the top of the page, then press **Enter**

The cursor should now be waiting at the beginning of the next line.

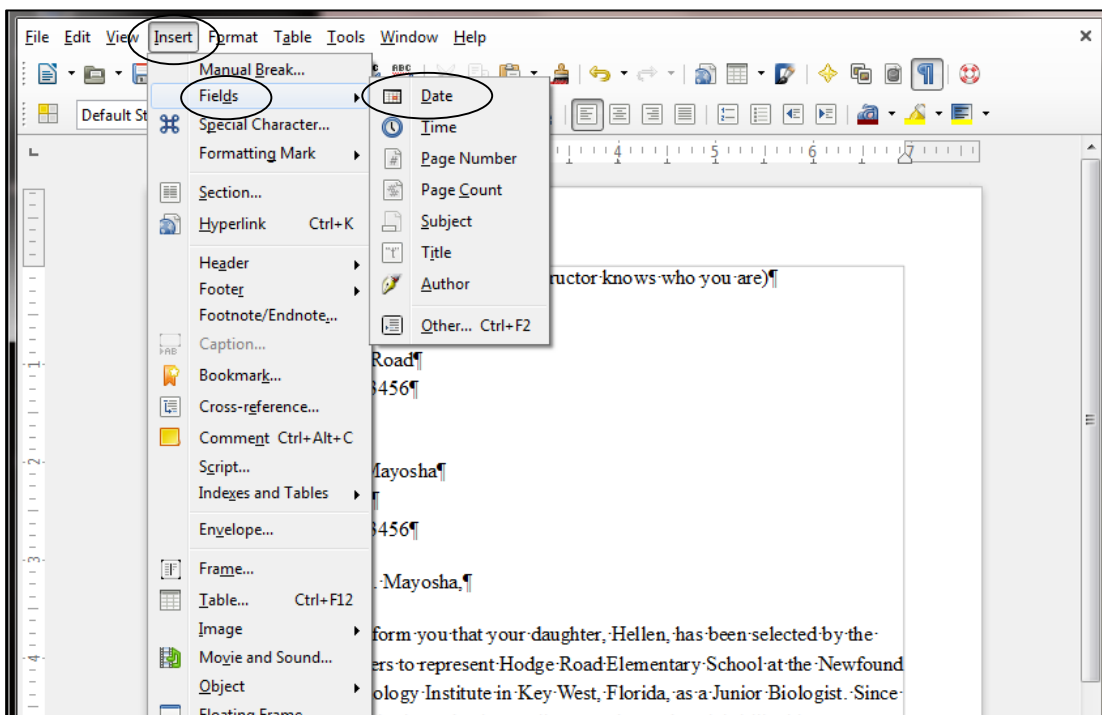> In the **Insert Menu** > **Fields Menu** click on the **Date** tool (Fig. 1.11)

Fig. 1.11 Inserting the Date into a document

As soon as you click on the Date tool, *Writer* immediately inserts today's date at the cursor.

There is, however, one problem with the date's format (all numeric)—it uses the USA style, with the month first and the day second. Elsewhere in the world, the date is shown with the day first and the month second. So, where you have 3/4/2014, is that March 4, 2014, or April 3, 2014. You really can't be sure.

Fortunately, *LibreOffice* has a quick way around that problem by allowing you to select another format for the date which can in no way be confused. Here's what you need to do.

Use the mouse to **right click** on the **date**, and in the **context menu** that pops up, select **Fields…**

The **Edit Fields** dialog box comes up, enabling you to select from a long list of possible date formats (Fig. 1.12)
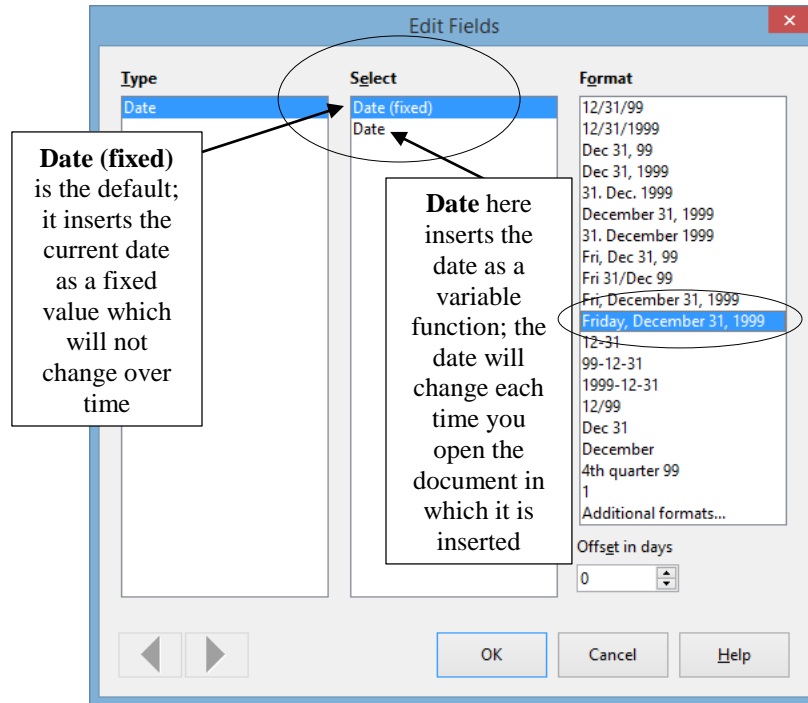

Fig. 1.12 Selecting a commonly-recognized date format

Noticed the two options in the Select column for the Date. You can either choose a Fixed Date, which is the default and inserts the current date as a fixed value which will not change over time. The second option is not fixed; Date (not fixed) inserts the date as a variable function; the date will change each time you open the document in which it is inserted.

The Conference Call Letter is a one-off letter, so the fixed Date option is what you want.

Make sure **Date (Fixed)** is highlighted, then click to select the date format **Friday, December 31, 1999** and click on **OK**

Now check the new format for the date; no question which date you're referring to now.

You will appreciate the advantage of allowing *Writer* to insert the date for you (by updating automatically) when you save the letter as a template. Later, any time you use the template, or print another Conference Call letter, the date will be adjusted automatically to reflect the current date on which you edit or reprint the document.

Adding text to an existing document

You will most always want to add text to an existing document—make revisions and so forth; it is an activity which is fundamental to the whole process of writing. On a typewriter, or if you write a document by hand, making any kind of change is usually messy, and often

difficult to do. When you use the word processor, however, it is a simple task. Let's practice now.

There is no limit to the extra details that could be added to the letter, but for the sake of this exercise you will add just one sentence to the next to last paragraph to help the parents appreciate what Hellen will get out of the experience at the Institute.

> Position the **insertion point** cursor so it is at the **END** of the **paragraph** which begins "**The institute has a wonderful reputation...**"—so after the phrase **"…state of Florida.**", then press the **space bar** and type the sentence:

> **She would thus be able to meet and make friends with others of her own age and academic ability.**

Read over the sentence you just typed to check for errors. Correct any you may have made. Before you go on to the next section you should save what you have done so far.

> Press **Ctrl+s** to save the changes you have made to the letter

Removing text

There are several ways of removing text. In a moment you'll learn how to highlight a block of text in order to move or delete larger sections of text. But if all you want to do is remove a few words, or a short sentence, the quickest way is to use the Backspace key.

You are going to remove the second sentence of the second paragraph. This second sentence begins "I have attended the facility myself...".

> Position the **insertion point** cursor at the beginning of the **third** sentence of the **second** paragraph—the sentence that begins "**Hellen would take part ...**"

> Press the **Backspace** key as many times as is necessary until the second sentence of this paragraph is removed from the letter

You'll find the automatic repeat feature of the keyboard (activated by holding down a key such as the Backspace key) will come in handy for a delete operation like this.

> Press **Ctrl+s** again to save the changes you just made

Changing text

It is often necessary to change a word or words here and there in a document. The Conference Call Letter overuses the word "program," for example. The word appears once in the first paragraph and then is used twice in the final paragraphs. To improve the letter it would be better to rewrite the first sentence of the second paragraph to read: "The Institute has a wonderful reputation for its offerings for both children and adults."

> Place the cursor between the **period (full stop)** and the "**s**" at the end of the **first sentence** in the **second** paragraph (right at the end of the word "**programs**" but before the period (full stop))

Use the **Backspace** key to remove the text "**both children and adult programs**"

Make sure there is still a **space** after the word "**for**", then type the phrase "**its offerings for both children and adults.**"

Another change you need to make is to the telephone number in the first sentence of the last paragraph. A common error with numbers is called transposition, where one accidentally reverses the order of digits. The number is supposed to be 772–32**32**, not 3223.

Position the cursor just at the **end** of the **telephone number**, press the **Backspace** key **2** times, then type the digits "**32**", and press **Ctrl+s**

At this stage your Conference Call Letter should look much the same as Fig. 1.13.

Jane Doe

Hodge Road Elementary School
123 Mingo Bluff Road
Cape Coral, FL 23456
Thursday, June 5, 2014

Mr. and Mrs. M Mayosha
856 SW 2nd Place
Cape Coral, FL 23456

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mayosha,

I am pleased to inform you that your daughter, Hellen, has been selected by the Fifth Grade teachers to represent Hodge Road Elementary School at the Newfound Harbor Marine Biology Institute in Key West, Florida, as a Junior Biologist. Since Hellen has shown both academic excellence and sound social skills this past school year, she would be a great candidate for the program. We very much hope that you will support Hellen in this opportunity.

The Institute has a wonderful reputation for its offerings for both children and adults. Hellen would take part in a two-week session in June with 5th graders from all over the state of Florida. She would thus be able to meet and make friends with others of her own age and academic ability.

Please call me (619) 772-3232 or email me (mprendergast@hodgeroad.edu) to discuss more details about the program. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Ms. Mary Prendergast
Head of Science

Fig. 1.13 Intermediate update to the Conference Call letter

Selecting (highlighting) a block of text

Let's take a few minutes to learn about highlighting text in a *Writer* document. Highlighted text is text that stands out from the rest of the document because, in the case of *LibreOffice*, the background of the highlighted text becomes a block of light blue color (Fig. 1.14).
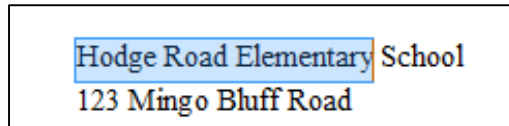

Fig. 1.14 Highlighted text

When you highlight text, you can do things to it (delete it, move it, copy it, change the margins set for it, change the font, the text style or color, and so on) without affecting the rest of your document.

You can highlight a single character...

> Use the mouse to position the cursor so it is immediately before the "**H**" in **"Hodge**" in the address at the top of the letter

> Hold down the left mouse button **and keep it down** as you carefully drag across just the "**H**" at the beginning of the word so that it becomes highlighted

This latter operation is tricky the first few times you try it. If you drag across more than just the "H", keep your finger on the left mouse button and drag back until you have just what you want highlighted. You can select as much or as little of the text as you want. Remember, *you're in control.*[1]

> Let go of the left mouse button when just the "**H**" is highlighted

> Now click anywhere in the text to remove the highlighting (i.e. to deselect the selected text)

> Try this a few times on different letters anywhere in the document

Double clicking to highlight a single word...

> Position the **I–beam cursor** anywhere over the word "**Elementary**" in the **first line of the address** at the **top of the letter** and **double click** the left mouse button

The single word "Elementary" should be highlighted on the screen.

> Click anywhere in the text to remove the highlight

---

[1] If you are new to word processing, the secret here is: *don't panic*! No matter how much you might think to the contrary, when you're working with computers you are in control—as long as you know what you're doing. The computer is just a dumb machine designed to serve your information processing needs. These tutorials will help you make this dumb machine your friend.

Try this on a few more words anywhere in the document till you're comfortable with the action

Triple clicking to quickly highlight a sentence...

Position the **cursor** anywhere in the middle of a paragraph and **triple** click on the left mouse button

Click anywhere in the text to remove the highlight, then try this again on other sentences elsewhere in the document till you're comfortable with the action

Quadruple clicking to quickly highlight an entire paragraph...

Position the **cursor** anywhere in the middle of a paragraph and **quadruple** click on the left mouse button

Click anywhere in the text to remove the highlight, then try this again on another paragraph elsewhere in the document till you're comfortable with the action

You can highlight an extended area (or block) of text...

Place the **cursor** right at the **start** of the first paragraph of the letter (before the sentence that reads: **I am pleased to inform you…**)

Now, while you hold down the **Shift key**, click at the end of the last paragraph (after the sentence that reads: **I look forward to hearing from you soon.** and notice that the whole paragraph is highlighted

Click anywhere in the text to remove the highlighting

You can quickly highlight an entire document...
You should be getting the hang of this highlighting by now. You can drag the mouse to highlight several paragraphs or even an entire document of several pages. However, dragging through a 50 page document would quickly become tedious. So *Writer* provides a short cut to select an entire document—you may recall using this feature earlier in the tutorial.

Press **Ctrl+a** (or in the **Edit menu** choose **Select All**)

Simple; now click anywhere in the text to remove the highlighting

Using the *Writer* Indent Markers
The letter is nearly ready to be printed. There are just a couple more changes you need to make.
   For example, one style for letter–writing is to indent the first line of every paragraph ½". Another is to position the first address (the address of the sender) so it appears at the

top *right* of the first page, instead of on the left. In this case, the closing signature could also be aligned on the right side of the page at the end of the letter.

Put your thinking cap on now, because what follows can be tricky for some. Fig. 1.15 illustrates these final changes you are going to make to the Conference Call Letter.

Jane Doe

Hodge Road Elementary School

123 Mingo Bluff Road

Cape Coral, FL 23456

Thursday, June 5, 2014

Mr. and Mrs. M Mayosha

856 SW 2nd Place

Cape Coral, FL 23456

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The Institute has a wonderful reputation for its offerings for both children and adults. Hellen would take part in a two-week session in June with 5th graders from all over the state of Florida. She would thus be able to meet and make friends with others of her own age and academic ability.

Please call me (619) 772-3232 or email me (mprendergast@hodgeroad.edu) to discuss more details about the program. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Ms. Mary Prendergast

Head of Science

Fig. 1.15 The final version of the Conference Call Letter

Using the Indent Markers

Indent Markers are used to adjust the first line, and the left and right margins, of paragraphs—not individual lines, unless a paragraph only has one line.

The *tip* of the mouse pointer is the *hot spot* (Fig. 1.16). Moving small indent markers is a delicate operation; be sure to position the *very tip* of the mouse pointer on an indent marker.
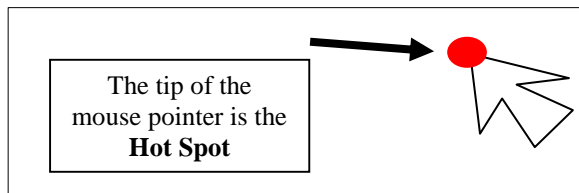

Fig. 1.16 The tip of the mouse pointer is the Hot Spot

On the left side of the ruler, at the 0" hash mark, you can see the two indent markers that are used to set the *First Line Indent* and the *Left Indent* for paragraphs. On the right side of the ruler you can see the *Right Indent* marker (Fig. 1.17).
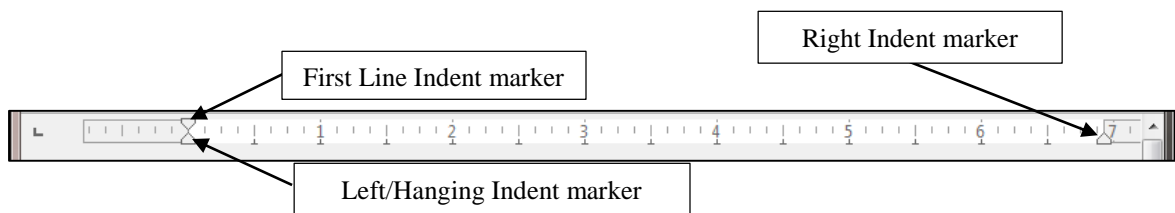

Fig. 1.17 The Indent Markers

In this exercise you will practice using just the First Line Indent marker and the Left Indent marker. In Lesson 2 you will have plenty of opportunity to learn about the Hanging Indent and the Right Indent markers.

Let's learn how to use the First Line Indent marker now.

Click to put the cursor anywhere within the **first paragraph** of the letter (this tells *Writer* which paragraph of text to reformat)

In the Ruler bar, place the **tip** of the mouse pointer on the **First Line Indent marker** (see Fig. 1.17)

Now use the mouse to drag the **First Line Indent marker** across **½"** to the **right** (to the **½" hash mark** on the ruler)

Notice that the First Line Indent marker (the upper triangular marker) and the Left/Hanging Indent marker (the lower triangular marker) moved *independently* and that only the first line of the paragraph has moved to the right half an inch (½").

Next you are going to set the First Line Indent marker for the second and third paragraphs in the body of the letter.

First, make sure you can see the whole letter in the window (maximize the window if necessary), then click to position the cursor before the **first word of the second paragraph** (before "**The Institute…**")

> Now, while holding down the **Shift** key, click at the end of the third (last) paragraph (after the words "…**from you soon.**")

Both the second and third paragraphs of the letter should be highlighted.

> Now position the **tip** of the mouse arrow on the **First Line Indent marker** and slide it to the **right** to the **½" hash mark** on the ruler

Notice that the first line margin of each paragraph is now set at ½" and the rest of each paragraph is set at 0".

Practice makes perfect

If this is the first time you've used these markers you may still feel uncomfortable working with them, if only because they're rather small and may be difficult for you to grab with the mouse pointer. More practice will cure that.

Next you are going to use the Left Indent marker to adjust the left margin for the First Address and the Date at the top of the letter, and then do the same to the left margin for the sign off at the end of the letter. Follow these steps carefully.

> Drag to select (highlight) the **First Address** and **Date** lines at the top of the letter (the first four lines)

> Point at the **Left Indent marker** (the small marker at the bottom of the indent markers on the left of the Ruler bar), hold down the **left** mouse button and **drag** both the indent markers together over to the **4"** hash mark on the ruler

> Let go of the mouse button, then click anywhere in the text to de-select the highlighted text

The address and date should now be lined up on the new **4"** margin. If you weren't successful the first time, just go through the steps again until you get the hang of it.

> Next scroll down to the **end of the letter** if it doesn't show on the screen

> Select the lines that begin: "**Sincerely yours,**" and that conclude with "**Ms. Mary Prendergast**" and "**Head of Science**" (including all three of the blank lines in between)

> With these lines highlighted, again point at the **Left Indent marker**, hold down the **left** mouse button and **drag** both the indent markers together over to the **4"** hash mark on the ruler

> Press **Ctrl+s** to save this (almost final) version of the document

1.6   CHECKING THE DOCUMENT FOR SPELLING ERRORS

LibreOffice comes with a spelling checker. No matter how good you might think your spelling is you would do well to take advantage of this fast, effective tool for catching spelling errors or typos.

Encourage your students to use a spelling checker when they are proofing their word processed work. The system will highlight any words that it cannot find in its dictionary and may make suggestions for words or spellings the student intended. It can thus help your students become better spellers, and broaden their vocabulary if they are curious enough to check out the meanings of the words they may never have come across before.

However, it *cannot* spell for them—yet! Nor can it correct errors such as the misuse of "to", "too", and "two"! A spelling checker is not an alternative to proofreading. Tell your students they should always proofread their work on the printed page (in hard copy form) *after* they have run it through the spelling checker. It also would be a good idea to have another student proofread papers for them. Assessing a classmate's work is a valuable collaborative learning experience.

Accessing the spelling checker

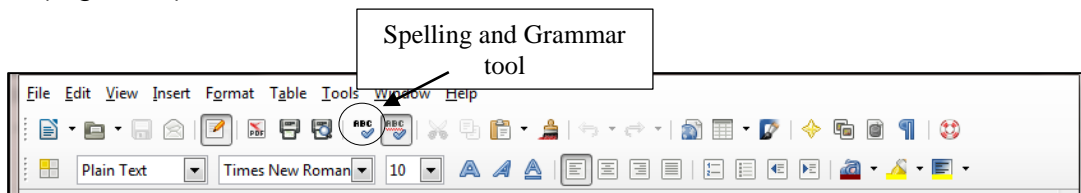In the **Standard Toolbar** click on the icon for **Spelling and Grammar** (Fig. 1.18)

Fig. 1.18 The Spelling and Grammar tool in the Standard toolbar

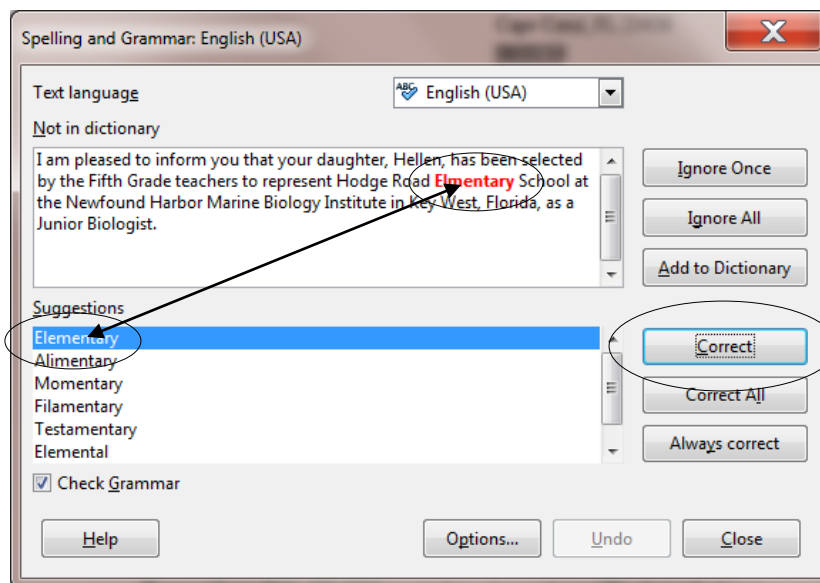This will bring up the dialog box shown in Fig. 1.19.

Fig. 1.19 Spelling and Grammar dialog box

25

The *Writer* spelling and grammar checker is probably already working for you if those functions are in automatic mode, if you see strange looking red or blue underlines under some of the words you typed.

If *Writer* highlights a word or phrase, this does not necessarily mean there is anything wrong with it. You still have to be able to tell if you have made an error and also know how to correct it.

Remember, the computer is just a dumb machine—it is a tool to assist your intelligence, not replace it!

If you tell the Spelling Checker to check your document, and it has "No suggestions" for a word highlighted, the dialog box gives you the option to have the Spelling Checker *Ignore* it (because the word is correct as is); or *Ignore All* occurrences of the same word in your document (because you don't want the Checker to stop for them again); or *Add* the word *to* the custom dictionary (so it won't be flagged in future documents you work on). This is generally useful for proper names.

In the example in Fig. 1.19 on the previous page, the word "Elementary" has been mistyped and, as you can see, the misspelling was picked up by the spelling checker and drawn to your attention. To fix the problem, you just click on the *Correct* button, and *Writer* will fix it on the spot.

At one time or another you will find all these features useful, so you should take the time to check them out. For the most part the Spelling Checker is intuitive, and one of the best things you can do at this time is take a few minutes to browse through the various selections until you get a feel for what the Spelling Checker can do.

> Using the **Spelling and Grammar...** option in the **Standard Toolbar**, work your way through the Conference Call Letter

> **Correct** any spelling or typing errors you may have made, then **Save** your work

In Lesson 2 you will make more extensive use of the *Writer* Spelling Checker.

1.7   PRINTING A FIRST DRAFT OF THE DOCUMENT

Print Preview–ing your work

It is always useful to preview your work on screen before sending it to the printer. In *LibreOffice*, you will be able to preview your work in the Print dialog box before you send it to the printer. Let's see how this works.

> From the **File** menu select **Print** (or press **Ctrl+p**)

Writer will present you with the Print dialog box which will be similar to that shown in Fig. 1.20 on the next page (though every computer has minor variations when it comes to printing).
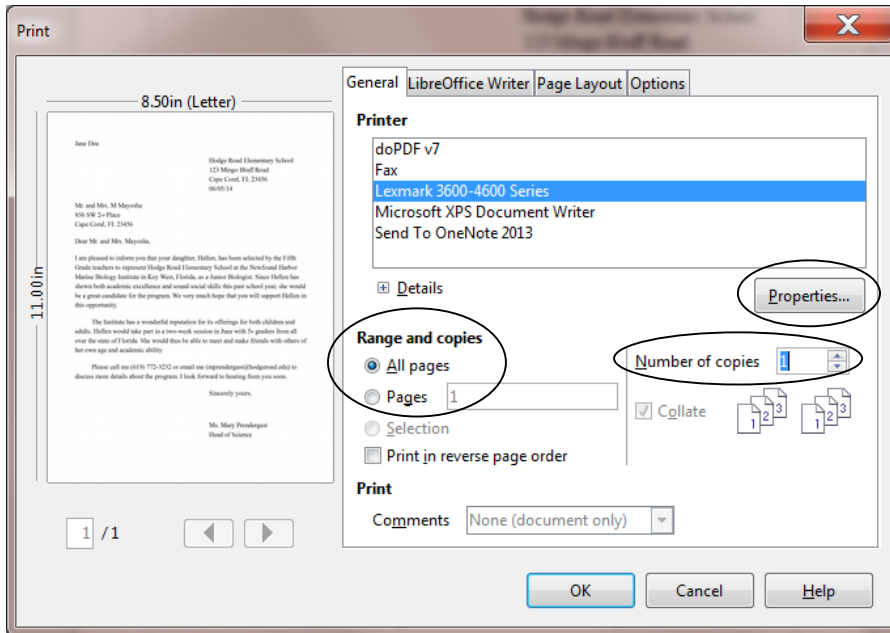
Fig. 1.20 Typical *Writer* Print dialog box

What kind of printer are you using?
If you have a laser printer, the quality is always "Best." But if you have an inkjet printer, for example, you can choose the quality of output you require. You select the print quality by clicking on the Properties button in the Print dialog box.

Printing a range of pages
With regard to Page Range, the *Print All Pages* option is selected by default. The Conference Call Letter is only one page long, so you will by default want to print the entire document. Should you want to print a subset of the pages of a long document, say from page 3 to page 6, you would click the radio button next to *Pages* (see Fig. 1.20 above) and enter the numbers of the range of pages in the data entry box (ex. 1,3,5-12).

Setting the number of copies
Writer also asks you how many copies you want to print. As you can see (Fig. 1.20), the number 1 is already selected by default, and for a draft copy that is certainly as many as you would normally want.
    You are now ready to print the document.

    Click on **OK** in the **Print** dialog box

If all is well with your printer connections and so forth, your printer will now go ahead and produce a hard copy of your document.

Removing your document from the printer
If you are using a laser printer or an ink jet printer, removing the paper from the printer is simply a matter of picking it out of the paper tray.

Save the environment

A useful environmental tip, for your draft copies, is to reuse paper that has one side blank. Keep a box near the printer where others who use the printer can deposit used paper that is clean on one side. Only use new paper for a final copy of a document.

Always proofread your writing

Now you should take the time once again to carefully read over what you have typed.

If you used the Spell Checker, remember that it will not necessarily pick up all errors. If you type "me" when you meant to type "he," the checker won't mind in the least, since both words are in the dictionary. As we noted earlier, the golden rule here is: A Spelling Checker is only as good as you are! You should never rely blindly on the feedback from the Spelling Checker. So always proofread your writing—and tell your students to do the same. You might also have your students proofread each other's papers. Let them be teachers, too; it's a great way to learn!

You should also check the overall page layout to see that the document looks good on the page. If there are problems, now is the time to fix them. Make all necessary changes on the computer and save the document again on your disk drive.

If all is well, you are ready to go ahead and print the final version, the one that you will send in the mail to the parents. Later, in Lesson 6, you will have the opportunity to learn how to use Mail Merge to send individualized copies of a letter to a large number of addresses.

1.8   RUNNING OFF A FINAL COPY

Follow the steps you learned above to run off a final copy of your document.

Most printers today will accept single sheets of paper. So if you wanted to use your school's letterhead, this would be no problem. You would, of course, need to remove the sender's address from the top of your Conference Call Letter since this address would already be included on the letterhead paper.

1.9   MAKING A BACKUP COPY OF THE DOCUMENT

Your last task before completing this session at the computer should be to make a backup of your document. For the sake of convenience, you'll make the backup in the same folder (the Data Files folder) as the rest of the data files you will create using these tutorials.

The Conference Call Letter is still open in *Writer*. It is also saved in your *Work Files for LibreOffice* folder, since that is where you have been saving it all along.

From the **File** menu select **Save As** and in the **Save As dialog box** make sure the **Data Files** folder is open, then change the file name to **Conference Call Letter Backup** and click on the **Save** button

Wait while the file is being saved, then close *Writer* (**File** > **Close**)

LOOKING BACK

In this tutorial you have learned the basics of the *LibreOffice Writer* word processor. You now know how to enter text, save it, revise it, set margins, check it for spelling, and print it on paper in draft, standard, or letter quality. You also learned one way to make a backup copy of your documents.

Many computer users learn no more than has been covered in this lesson. Under–utilization is a common fact of life for most computer users; they never discover the wide range of useful things the computer can help them do. Ideally, however, this tutorial should have made you keen to learn more about *Writer*. Remember what you learned in Lesson 1. You may need to refer back to some of the details spelled out here when you are using the word processor on your own.

Above all, keep an open mind. It is almost impossible to know everything about the computer, so there is always a lot to learn, even when you think you know it all!

LOOKING FORWARD

This has been a good introduction to the *LibreOffice* word processor. Lesson 2 will give you an opportunity to further advance your skills.

Many of the word processing skills that you have learned will transfer across to other word processors. The more you use the computer as a tool for writing, the more natural it will become and the more you will improve your writing ability. The ease with which you can make changes will have a significant impact on your willingness to generate quality written communication. Needless to say, word processing will have the same effect on your students, so the sooner you can get them using the computer for all their writing assignments the better.

SKILL CONSOLIDATION

Complete these exercises to reinforce what you have learned in Lesson 1. This will help you appreciate the usefulness of the word processor for all your writing tasks.

1. Use *Writer* to write a letter to someone in your family or to a friend using the same layout as the Conference Call letter. There must be at least four paragraphs in the body of the letter. Print out a draft copy of the story, proof read it, correct any errors, then print out a final copy of the story. Hand in both copies to your instructor.

2. Write a letter to a school district superintendent explaining the details of a field trip that you are planning for your class. Print out a draft copy of the story, proof read it, correct any errors, then print out a final copy of the story. Hand in both copies to your instructor.

3. Write a short story of at least four paragraphs using *Writer*. Set the right and left margins at 1.5 inches. Print out a draft copy of the story, proof read it, correct any errors, then print out a final copy of the story. Hand in both copies to your instructor.

4. Use *Writer* to type up a paper of your choice. Print out a draft copy of the paper, proof read it, correct any errors, and then print out a final copy of the paper. Hand in both copies to your instructor.

5. Using *Writer*, type a paper of at least four paragraphs explaining what you have learned so far in tutorial 1. Print out a draft copy of the paper, proof read it, correct any errors, and then print out a final copy of the paper. Hand in both copies to your instructor.

6. Open *Writer* to create a new document. Name the document "A Day at the Beach" and type at least four paragraphs on this topic. Practice adding and deleting words, phrases, and whole sentences. Print out a draft copy of the paper, proof read it, correct any errors, and then print out a final copy of the paper. Hand in both copies to your instructor.

7. Open the document "Conference Call Letter." Change the date so that it is the current date, save the updated document. Remove all the first line indents from the paragraphs. Add a paragraph explaining that if Hellen cannot attend the Institute this year, the offer will be open again next year. Save the updated document. Print out a draft copy of the letter, proof read it, correct any errors, then print out a final copy of the letter. Hand in both copies to your instructor.