

# Word Shortcuts for Legal Drafting (Windows & Mac)

Last reviewed: 2026-10-13. Law students and lawyers.

Free complete guide — no email required.

<https://keyshortcuts.net/legal-drafting-word-shortcuts>

Legal drafting depends on consistent structure as much as fast typing. A pleading with real heading styles, correctly placed footnotes, and clear revision history is easier to review than a document assembled with manual spacing and repeated formatting. This guide is for law students and lawyers using desktop Microsoft Word on Windows or Mac. It brings review, navigation, and citation-related commands together so you can practise them in the same document.

Use a working copy rather than the only version of a client document. The Windows and Mac columns describe equivalent actions, but they are not always the same key combination. A menu route is shown when Microsoft documents the operation without a dependable default Mac shortcut. Word for the web has a different keyboard environment; its browser commands can intercept keys that work in desktop Word. Function keys on a laptop may require Fn.

Start with a short sample containing three heading levels, a footnote, a citation, and one tracked revision. Apply the styles, insert the reference, review the change, and then update the document's fields. The goal is an accurate repeatable workflow, not accepting changes faster than you can read them. The one-page print summary covers essentials; the ungated PDF includes the full tables, explanations, and frequently asked questions.

## Word legal drafting and review

Microsoft 365 desktop Word, not Word in a browser. A menu path is provided when there is no reliably documented cross-platform shortcut.

Mac symbol shortcuts use the U.S. input source. Check Option and Shift in Keyboard Viewer for other layouts.

| Action                         | Windows                                   | Mac                                            |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Toggle Track Changes           | Ctrl+Shift+E                              | Review > Track Changes (documented menu route) |
| Accept change and move to next | Review > Accept > Accept and Move to Next | Review > Accept > Accept and Move to Next      |
| Reject change and move to next | Review > Reject > Reject and Move to Next | Review > Reject > Reject and Move to Next      |

| Action                                    | Windows                                             | Mac                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Insert a comment                          | Ctrl+Alt+M                                          | Cmd+Option+A                                                             |
| Next comment                              | Review > Comments > Next                            | Review > Comments > Next                                                 |
| Previous comment                          | Review > Comments > Previous                        | Review > Comments > Previous                                             |
| Insert a footnote                         | Ctrl+Alt+F                                          | Cmd+Option+F                                                             |
| Insert an endnote                         | Ctrl+Alt+D                                          | Cmd+Option+E                                                             |
| Apply Heading 1                           | Ctrl+Alt+1                                          | Cmd+Option+1                                                             |
| Apply Heading 2                           | Ctrl+Alt+2                                          | Cmd+Option+2                                                             |
| Apply Heading 3                           | Ctrl+Alt+3                                          | Cmd+Option+3                                                             |
| Apply Normal style                        | Ctrl+Shift+N                                        | Cmd+Shift+N                                                              |
| Open Styles pane                          | Ctrl+Alt+Shift+S                                    | Home > Styles Pane                                                       |
| Insert non-breaking space                 | Ctrl+Shift+Space                                    | Option+Space                                                             |
| Insert non-breaking hyphen                | Shift+Alt+Minus (-)                                 | Shift+Option+Minus (-)                                                   |
| Insert section sign § (U.S. Mac layout)   | Alt+0167 (numeric keypad)                           | Option+6; otherwise Character Viewer                                     |
| Insert paragraph sign ¶ (U.S. Mac layout) | Alt+0182 (numeric keypad)                           | Option+7; otherwise Character Viewer                                     |
| Insert em dash —                          | Ctrl+Alt+numeric keypad Minus                       | Character Viewer: search em dash (Word may intercept Shift+Option+Minus) |
| Insert en dash - (U.S. Mac layout)        | Ctrl+numeric keypad Minus                           | Option+Minus (-)                                                         |
| Small caps                                | Ctrl+Shift+K                                        | Cmd+Shift+K                                                              |
| Single line spacing                       | Ctrl+1                                              | Cmd+1                                                                    |
| Double line spacing                       | Ctrl+2                                              | Cmd+2                                                                    |
| 1.5 line spacing                          | Ctrl+5                                              | Cmd+5                                                                    |
| Set paragraph space before / after        | Home > Paragraph dialog > Spacing                   | Format > Paragraph > Spacing                                             |
| Select sentence or paragraph              | F8 repeatedly: word, sentence, paragraph; Esc exits | F8 repeatedly: word, sentence, paragraph; Fn may be needed               |

| Action                                            | Windows      | Mac                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Open Navigation pane                              | Ctrl+F       | View > Navigation Pane                                      |
| Go To page / bookmark                             | Ctrl+G       | Cmd+Option+G                                                |
| Find and Replace                                  | Ctrl+H       | Ctrl+H                                                      |
| Insert page break                                 | Ctrl+Enter   | Cmd+Return                                                  |
| Show / hide formatting marks                      | Ctrl+Shift+8 | Cmd+8                                                       |
| Update selected fields (TOC; TOA on Windows only) | F9           | F9 (Fn+F9 on media-key keyboards); TOC only                 |
| Mark citation for Table of Authorities            | Alt+Shift+I  | Not supported in Word for Mac; use desktop Word for Windows |

## Why non-breaking spaces matter in citations

An ordinary space allows Word to wrap a citation across lines. A non-breaking space keeps adjoining elements together, which is useful between the section sign and a section number, as in § 1983. You can also keep parts of 42 U.S.C. together when appropriate. Insert the non-breaking space deliberately at the boundary you want to protect rather than replacing every space in the document. Excessive non-breaking text can create awkward line lengths. Check the finished page against the citation style and formatting rules that apply to your assignment or filing.

## Review changes before accepting them

Turning Track Changes off does not remove existing tracked revisions. Hiding markup is not the same as accepting it either. Read each revision in context, then use Accept and Move to Next or Reject and Move to Next. Comments are separate from tracked changes, so resolving a comment does not accept the nearby text revision. Before sharing a final copy, inspect the review settings and any remaining comments instead of assuming a clean-looking page contains no markup.

## Use styles and update fields deliberately

Heading styles describe the document's structure; bold text alone does not. Use Heading 1 through Heading 3 consistently, then inspect the Navigation pane. A table of contents is a field that may need updating after edits. Select the relevant field and press F9, using Fn if your keyboard controls media by default. When Word asks, update the entire table if entries have changed. Microsoft states that tables of authorities are not supported in Word for Mac or Word for the web: use desktop Word for Windows to mark citations with Alt+Shift+I and build that table. Citation marking does not validate the legal accuracy of the citation.

## Frequently asked questions

Are these shortcuts for Word in a browser?

No. These tables target desktop Word. Word for the web uses different access keys, and browser shortcuts may intercept document commands.

Does turning off Track Changes remove existing revisions?

No. It stops tracking future edits. Existing revisions remain until you accept or reject them; hiding markup also leaves revisions in the file.

What if the Mac column shows a menu path?

Use that supported menu operation instead of assuming that replacing Ctrl with Cmd creates a valid Mac shortcut. You may assign a custom shortcut in Word for Mac.

Why did F9 change volume instead of updating my table?

Your function row may use hardware controls. Try Fn+F9 or change the keyboard's function-key setting, with the relevant Word field selected.

## Related guides

Complete Word shortcuts

<https://keyshortcuts.net/word-shortcuts>

Legal symbols and Alt codes

<https://keyshortcuts.net/legal-symbols-word-shortcuts>

Research-paper formatting

<https://keyshortcuts.net/research-paper-shortcuts>

Law-student technology practice

<https://keyshortcuts.net/law-student-shortcuts>

## Official sources

Microsoft: Word keyboard shortcuts

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/keyboard-shortcuts-in-word-95ef89dd-7142-4b50-afb2-f762f663ceb2>

Microsoft: Track Changes and accepting/rejecting revisions

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/track-changes-in-word-197ba630-0f5f-4a8e-9a77-3712475e806a>

Microsoft: Word comments

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/insert-or-delete-a-comment-8d3f868a-867e-4df2-8c68-bf96671641e2>

Microsoft: Using styles in Word

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/customize-or-create-new-styles-d38d6e47-f6fc-48eb-a607-1eb120dec563>

Apple: Keyboard Viewer

<https://support.apple.com/guide/mac-help/use-the-keyboard-viewer-on-mac-mchlp1015/mac>

Microsoft: Line and paragraph spacing

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/word/change-the-line-spacing-in-word>

Microsoft: The Word Navigation pane

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/word/use-the-navigation-pane-in-word>

Microsoft: Show and hide formatting marks

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/show-or-hide-tab-marks-in-word-84a53213-5d02-404a-b022-09cae1a3958b>

Microsoft: Create a table of authorities

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-table-of-authorities-ddd126ae-52bc-4299-9558-06dd0e4fe8c0>

Apple: Mac keyboard shortcuts

<https://support.apple.com/en-us/102650>

Microsoft: ASCII and Unicode character codes in Word

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/word/insert-ascii-or-unicode-character-codes-in-word>

Microsoft: Insert a symbol in Word

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/insert-a-symbol-in-word-2a061ae9-5a6c-4407-b618-8dc3c9fd4f44>

Microsoft: Custom Word for Mac shortcuts

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-custom-keyboard-shortcut-for-word-for-mac-3e865725-831c-4b45-9187-eeaf896fa110>

Microsoft: Add or remove AutoCorrect entries

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/add-or-remove-autocorrect-entries-in-word-e7433b94-f3de-4532-9dc8-b29063a96e1f>