

RECOMMENDED PASTE SETTINGS

How to prevent cut-and-paste disasters when you're moving text between documents

We've all done it: there's a paragraph or form or whatever in an old document that you want to recycle into a new document you're working on. So you open up the old document, select the text you want to recycle, go over to your new document, paste it in, and ... disaster!

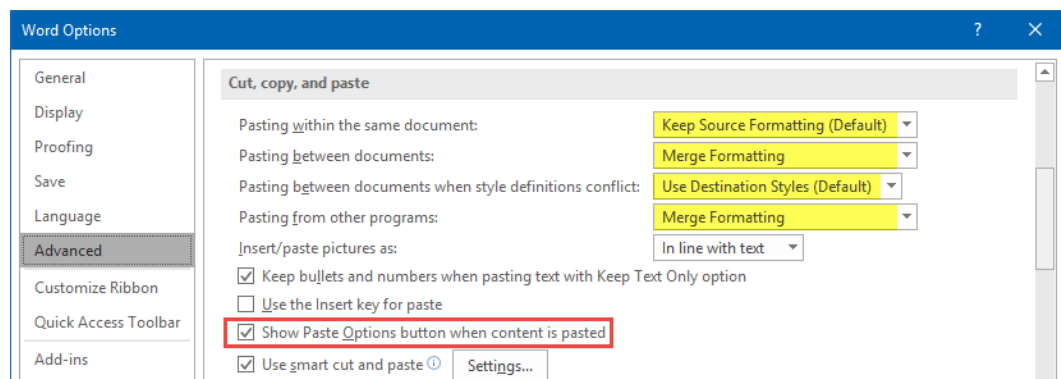
By far, the #1 cause of seemingly irreparable document formatting problems is pulling text in from other documents. Pasted text can bring all sorts of little nasties with it. But what do you do?

Here are some strategies for minimizing the damage:

PREVENTING CUT AND PASTE DISASTERS

I'm sure you've heard the saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." If you do a lot of cutting and pasting of text, you can prevent most cut-and-paste formatting disasters by changing some Word default settings.

Go to the File tab (or, if you're in Word 2007, click the Office Button) and click on Options.



The options I've highlighted in yellow above are the ones I recommend. When pasting between two Word documents or from WordPerfect, the Merge Formatting option serves as a "middle way" between pasting the text with all its formatting and pasting plain text. When pulling in text from other programs, however, you may find that Merge Formatting creates too many problems. In that case, change that option to Keep Text Only so you can have full formatting control.

The Show Paste Options button (a small button that hovers on the edge of recently-pasted text) annoys a lot of users. If you're one of them, uncheck that box I've rimmed in red above.

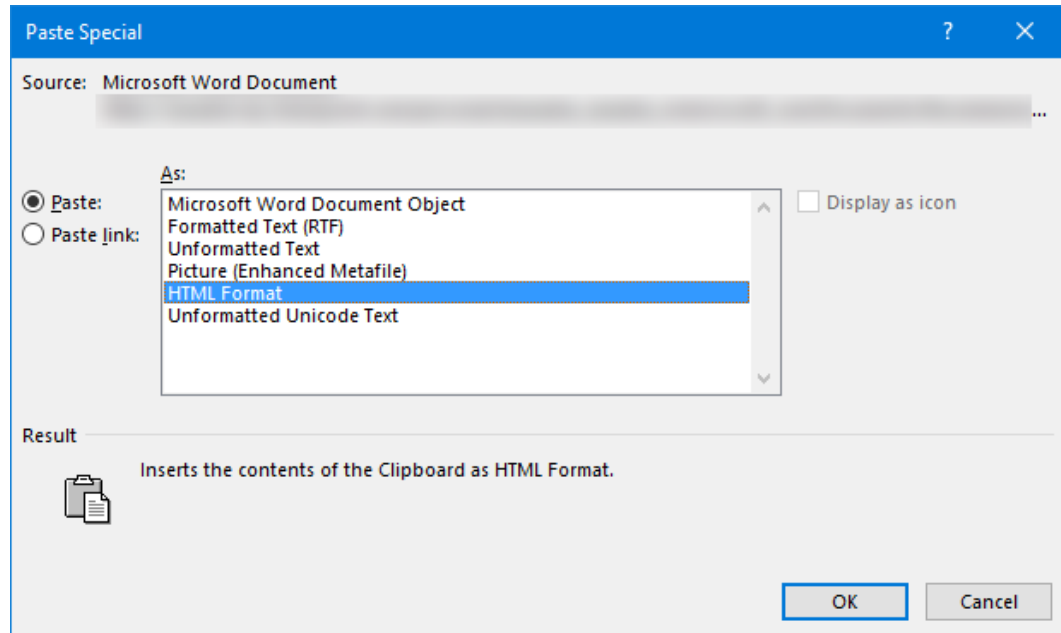
PREVENTING CUT-AND-PASTE DISASTERS ON-THE-FLY

Most people paste text using either **CTRL-V** on their keyboard or just clicking on the **Paste** button on the **Home** tab. But there are more sophisticated ways to paste text, ways that can help you anticipate and even prevent formatting problems.

I mean, how cool would it be to be able to see the results of your Paste action *before* you messed up your document? Word allows you to choose among various paste types (regardless of the settings shown above) so you can control how much formatting is imported into your new document.

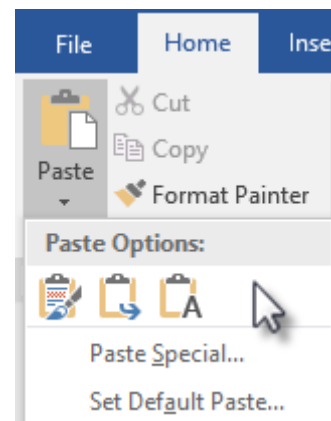
Prefer the keyboard to the mouse? Instead of using **CTRL-V**, use **ALT-CTRL-V**. Why? ALT-CTRL-V is the

shortcut key for Paste Special, which will bring up a dialog box that looks something like this:



That list under **As:** will vary depending on the formatting of the text you've copied, but as you can see, you've got several choices as to how much formatting you want to retain after you click **OK**.

Are you more prone to reach for your mouse? Instead of clicking on the **Paste** button, click the small arrow underneath it, then hover your mouse over the various options while keeping an eye on your text. You'll notice you're able to preview the result of your Paste action using each of these Paste Options.



1: Hover your mouse over each option to preview Paste result

FIXING IT AFTER THE FACT

Once you've pasted in some text that doesn't match your current document formatting-wise, there are several ways to get back on track. Let's cut to the chase with some quick emergency fixes.

"PAINTING" FORMATTING FROM ONE TEXT TO ANOTHER

Cutting and pasting text from one document to another is probably the most common source of formatting disasters. Often, when you've pulled text from one document and dropped it into your current document, that text will bring over some undesirable formatting:

- (1) On the Insert tab, the galleries include items that are designed to coordinate with the overall look of your document. You can use these galleries to insert tables, headers, footers, lists, cover pages, and other document building blocks. When you create pictures, charts, or diagrams, they also coordinate with your current document look.
- (2) 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. To change the overall look of your document, choose new Theme elements on the Page Layout tab. To change the looks available in the Quick Style gallery, use the Change Current Quick Style Set command.

If, for example, you pasted in paragraph (2) from another document, and you want the formatting of it to match paragraph (1), including font and paragraph settings, do this:

- (1) Triple-click the first paragraph. (When I say "triple click", I literally mean pointing your mouse cursor somewhere on the first paragraph and clicking the left mouse button three times rapidly.) This will select the entire paragraph.

- (2) Go to the Home tab and click the Format Painter button on the left side. The Format Painter button has a paintbrush icon. When you click it, the entire button will turn orange, which means Format Painter is turned on.
- (3) Select the entire second paragraph with your mouse. The easiest way to do this¹ is to hover your mouse cursor in the left margin next to the first line of the paragraph so that the mouse cursor is pointing to the right:



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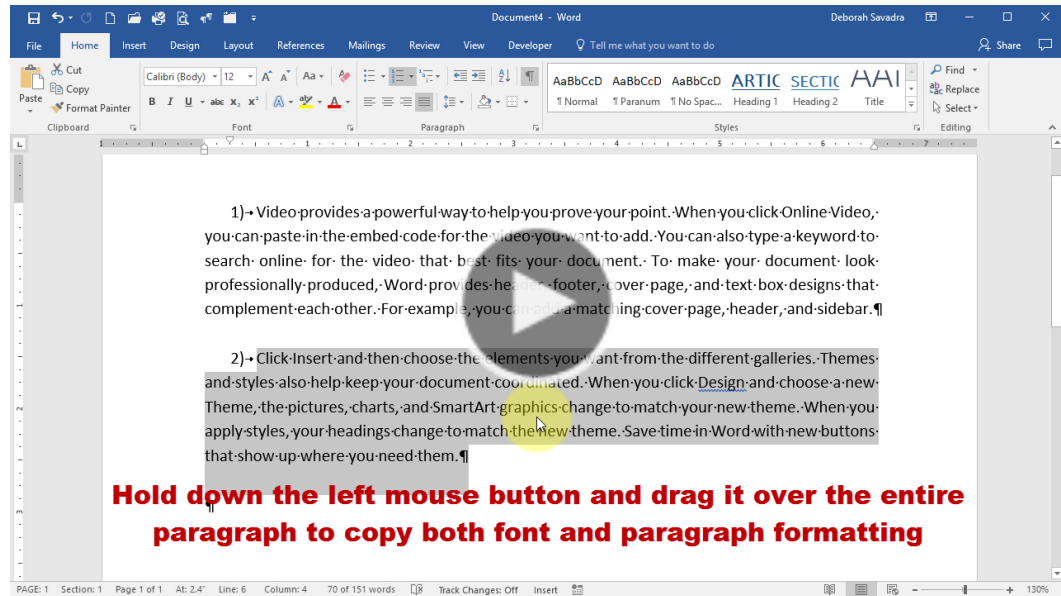
Press down on the left mouse button and drag all the way down to the end of the paragraph so the entire paragraph is selected.²

¹ Wondering why I didn't tell you to triple-click again? In the middle of a Format Painter operation, the first click of your mouse will turn off Format Painter. Instead, you'll have to select text in a way to allows you to hold down the mouse button until you've selected the entire paragraph.

² If you only want to copy paragraph formatting but leave the font in the "target" paragraph intact, you can just single-click anywhere in the "target" paragraph—no need to select the entire text.

- (4) When you let go of the mouse button, the second paragraph will look just like the first paragraph.

Here's a 42-second video that'll show you how easy this is:



Video 1: Using Format Painter to Copy Paragraph or Font & Paragraph Formatting (<https://goo.gl/4IsP8a>)

(Note: the video above demonstrates both methods of copying formatting; you don't have to do it twice!)

To break it down even further, here's how to use Format Painter in any situation:

- (1) Select the text that has the formatting you like.
- (2) Click Format Painter.

- (3) Select the text that needs its formatting changed.

Could it get any easier?

BONUS TIP: RAPID REPEAT REFORMATTING

If you want to fix several pieces of text without having to repeat this entire sequence, you can make Format Painter "persistent" so it will paint the desired formatting onto multiple pieces of text in a document. In step 2 above, instead of single-clicking on the Format Painter, double-click on it. Then every piece of text you click on or select from that point will have the new formatting. When you're finished reformatting, turn Format Painter off by single-clicking on it again. You'll know it's off when the icon is no longer orange.

NOT JUST FOR PARAGRAPHS

Format Painter isn't just for paragraphs. You can select individual words, sentences, etc., pick up their formatting and "paint" it onto however much text you wish. I've demonstrated Format Painter with paragraphs above because it's the most common problem I see with cut-and-pasted text.

GET MORE WORD FORMATTING AND OTHER TIPS

Thanks for downloading my Recommended Paste Settings guide! Be sure to check your email inbox every week for the next several weeks for more of my popular Microsoft Office tips and tricks.

If you like to pass these tips along to a colleague, you're free to do so, as long as you pass along the document in its entirety.

If you'd like to get more tips and tricks from Legal Office Guru, here's where I hang out on social media:

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahsavadra>

<https://plus.google.com/+DeborahSavadra>

<http://www.twitter.com/legalofficeguru>

Thanks for reading,

Deborah @ Legal Office Guru