Module 7, Video 2: Mechanics: Building Tables in Microsoft Word™ and Excel™

In Guideline 9, Galvan invites you to master table-building in your word-processing program—for us, that’s Word. He gave a good description of how it works on some versions, but one fact we have to face is that, depending on your operating system – Mac or Windows – and the version of the software, then it may not be exactly the same for you. It would seem that Galvan’s working on the Windows side of things. I will briefly demonstrate how it works on a Mac.

Before I start that, let me point out that I've got my version of Word set up so that I can see invisible characters. I set that by selecting the paragraph-mark thingy, known as a pilcrow. See, if I toggle it, then the paragraph mark appears and disappears. Okay, on to tables on a Mac.

The major difference on the Mac side is that you start at the pull-down menu, Table. And from there it’s pretty much the same. Insert > Table, then specify the size. I’ll do 3 rows by 4 columns.

Note how it changes when I toggle showing invisible characters. That shows you the table-cell delimiters.

If you find that a table is too short on rows, adding them is simple. Put the insertion-point cursor to the right of the right-most column in the last row. Tap enter/return, and ta da. That’s it.

Galvan also explains how to merge cells. Select them. Right click. Select Merge Cells. He suggests that you do so for the top row, and then put your table number and title in the result. I am not so sure that’s a good idea. I think it’s better to type it above the table, but that’s just personal preference. Also, if you’re not really experienced with tables, you may find that merged cells just give you grief. They can. Trust me.

Finally, I'll point out that in APA-style tables, you do not put borders around each cell. Now that I’ve pointed that out, you probably notice it in the examples, and in the tables you find in articles that you've been reading (and will read).

**Excel: Table-building tool**

To get you going with Excel, I’m going to have you mess around with the Excel-format grading rubric you’ll use later in this process. After you’ve done this, however, I still want you to upload it for your UTF to review. This is meant to prepare you for using this tool later in the process. Let me show you some of the rubric’s features.

When you open it, notice that there are little tabs at the bottom. Those are the name of the workbook’s different sheets, here, Author, Reviewer, Compare, General Grading Rubric, and ExampleStudent1. Let me go through some of these and explain
how they work. Note also, though, that the version you end up using may be slightly different.

The first page is Author. As you scroll down you’ll notice that every possible element of an APA-format paper is represented. In gory detail. As such, it also serves as a pre-submission checklist. This is meant to give you a way to keep track of all the picky details. Even if your instructor in another course doesn’t use this rubric—or one at this level of detail—then this may still be a helpful tool for pre-submission checking.

At the far right, in bold, are the different elements, for example, Title Page. Then each faucet of that element is listed. Note also the contents of Column F, Wgt, short for weight. If you scroll down the page, you’ll notice a couple of things. First, not every element is given equal weight. Which hopefully makes sense, as these weightings are intended to reflect the relative effort (and importance) of each item.

So while it’s important, yes, that your abstract is 120 words or less, it’s far more important that it summarizes the body of the paper.

The weights all sum to 100 (even though you can’t see that). And in this example, the assignment is worth 30 points. So it does the math in the background. But how do you evaluate your work on each of these individual aspects? That’s in column E, Score. It is pre-populated with 100—more or less equal to 100 percent. As you go through your draft, then if you feel like you just don’t meet that level of performance, then you would adjust the score accordingly.

Let’s say that you don’t think that the depth of your research was exemplary. You give yourself 85%. Note how the point value then changes.

So you’ll go through your paper, adjusting as you see fit and adding notes, if you like, in Column I, Comments. Then you save and upload to Zotero or otherwise submit to the person reviewing your work. They will click on the tab, Reviewer, and go through the same process. Then they will click the tab on the page, Compare. And this is where things can get interesting.

What I’ve done is gone in and changed a few values on each page to make things happen on this one. In my own experience, and in the work of many teaching assistants, when there is disagreement, then that’s often interesting, and can lead to some interesting discussion. This is especially important in drafts leading up to the final draft, as this will generate a to-do list for authors to then complete as they seek to make their work as good as it can be.

**Excel as a tool**

Now that you’ve started to see how this can be useful for something where you make calculations between pages, I’d invite you to also step back and think of ways that you could have a single Excel workbook with multiple pages, but each of them containing a table that you may or may not choose to put in your literature-review
assignment. This may be more convenient than trying to do that in the body of your document. I’m going to show you how to do this now, but I’m not going to get into how you then make sure that the table is consistent with APA format; I’ll leave that for later when we’re working on the actual document.

At any rate, select the cells you want to copy. Copy (I’ll do it here with the context-menu command—right click). Go to your Word document. Again, context menu via right click. Select Formatted Text or “rtf.” VERY important that you don’t paste in HTML, as that’s just going to make a big mess—trust me on this one!