Creating Tab/Dot Leaders in a Word Document

Kathy Swedlow (swedlowk@mimaacs.org)

These instructions explain how to create a tab or dot leader in a Word document, using any version of Microsoft Word on a PC or a Mac.

I. Tab and dot leaders

A *tab leader* connects text and page numbers in an index of authorities or table of contents. A *dot leader* is the most common form of tab leader, and has dots ("....."):

> *A v B,*
>   123 Mich App 456; 789 NW 2d 123 (1999)..........................5, 7
> *X v Y,*
>   321 Mich App 654; 987 NW 2d 321 (2015)...................9, 12, 18

II. Basic instructions

A. Place the cursor at the beginning of the area where you want use dot leaders, *e.g.*, at the end of the first citation in the Index of Authorities.

B. If you are using Word on a PC, open the tab settings pop-up box:

1. Go to *Home* on the ribbon at the top of the screen;
2. Click on the arrow in the lower right hand corner in the *Paragraph* section of the Ribbon; and
3. A pop-up box will appear; click on *Tabs* in the lower left hand corner of the box.

Skip to step I.D, and continue to follow the instructions.

C. If you are using Word on a Mac, open the tab settings pop-up box:

1. Go to *Format* on the Menu Bar at the top of the screen;
2. Click on *Paragraph*; and
3. A pop-up box will appear; click on *Tabs* in the lower left hand corner of the box.

Continue to follow the instructions.

D. Change the settings:

1. Set the *tab stop position* to 6.5 inches, and the *Alignment* to right. Assuming you are using 1 inch margins in your brief (Word's default), this will put page numbers on the far right hand side of the page, at the margin.

   If you are using different margin settings in your document, adjust the tab stop setting accordingly. For example, if you are using 1.25 inch margins, set the *tab stop position* to 6 inches.

2. Click on the type of leader you want to use. Most likely, you want *2*, which will produce dots. Click on *Set* to set the tab stop, and then on *Okay* to close the pop-up box.

E. The cursor should already be at the beginning of the area where you want use dot leaders, *e.g.*, at the end of the first citation in the Index of Authorities (see I.A, above).

Hit the tab key. A row of evenly-spaced dots will appear across the page, ending at where you set the tab stop position (6.5 inches, in our example). You can now add whatever page numbers you want at the end of the dot leader.

F. When you are done with the dot leaders, return the tab stops to their default settings by opening the tab stop pop-up box (see § I.B or C) and then clicking on *Clear All*, followed by *Okay*.

III. Need more help?

If you need additional help, please contact Kathy Swedlow at MAACS (swedlowk@mimaacs.org or (517) 334-1207).