Correcting Common Errors in the Template Table of Contents

by the Walden Dissertation Editors

View the second video in the Using the Doctoral Capstone Template Video Playlist to see the steps outlined in this SMRTguide.

The Capstone Document Templates include the required formatting elements for dissertations, doctoral studies, and project studies at Walden. The template for each program includes an automated Table of Contents that will update with correct page numbers and headings for the whole document all at once.

Here are the steps for addressing the two most common errors when updating the automated Table of Contents. Keep in mind that certain functions may look different depending on the version of MS Word. Contact WritingSupport@waldenu.edu or schedule a one-on-one appointment with the Academic Skills Center for further assistance.

Pro Tip

Make sure the pilcrow (¶) is selected so that all hidden formatting will show on the screen.

When all formatting elements are showing onscreen, it is easier to avoid errors when copying or typing text into the template.
Error 1: Missing Headings in the Table of Contents

How it looks in the main text:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

- Introduction

- Background

- Problem Statement

- Purpose Statement

In this instance, the headings in the main text all look properly formatted according to APA guidelines.

How it looks in the Table of Contents:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study .......................................................... 1

Introduction .......................................................................................... 1

Problem Statement .............................................................................. 1

Purpose Statement ................................................................................ 1

With this first type of error, the “Background” heading looks properly formatted in the main text but does not appear when the Table of Contents updates.
How to Fix It:

• Select/highlight the heading in the main text that does not appear in the Table of Contents.
• Use the Styles options in the template to add the correct style tag (APA Level 0, APA Level 1, or APA Level 2).
• Try updating the Table of Contents again—now, the heading should appear.

Learn more about style tags from the Academic Skills Center MS Word resources.
Error 2: Unwanted Text in the Table of Contents

How it looks in the main text:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Background

Problem Statement

This is paragraph text that looks correctly formatted but was accidentally tagged with a style that shows up in the TOC.

In this instance, the headings and body paragraph text all look properly formatted according to APA guidelines.

How it looks in the Table of Contents:

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study ................................................................. 1
Introduction ................................................................................................. 1
Background ................................................................................................. 1
Problem Statement ..................................................................................... 1

This is paragraph text that looks correctly formatted but was accidentally tagged with a style that shows up in the TOC.

With this second type of error, text that is not a heading looks properly formatted in the main text but still appears when the Table of Contents updates.
How to Fix It:

• Select/highlight the text that should not appear in the Table of Contents.
• Use the Styles options in the template to see the unwanted heading style tag.
• “Clear all,” “Body Text,” and “Normal” are all style options that will remove the unwanted heading style tag.
• Reformat the text to add back in any other formatting that may have been cleared away (such as double line spacing, indents, italics, etc.).
• Try updating the Table of Contents again—now, the extra text should be gone.

Contact WritingSupport@waldenu.edu or schedule a one-on-one appointment with the Academic Skills Center for further assistance, or contact Microsoft directly for Office support.