Macro Tips

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Having macro issues? Trust us – you're not the only one.

While macros can save you a lot of time when carrying out repetitive formatting functions, getting them to work just right can be a pain in the butt. This tutorial provides a number of troubleshooting tips for macros and serves as a follow-up to our "Macros in Microsoft Word" tutorial.

Tip #1: Save as a Macro-Enabled Document/Template

Before recording the macro, be sure to save your document as a macro-enabled template (.dotm file) or macro-enabled document (.docm).

1. Go to File.

2. Select Save As.

3. In the "Save as type" dropdown menu, select "Word Macro-Enabled Template" or "Word Macro-Enabled Document."
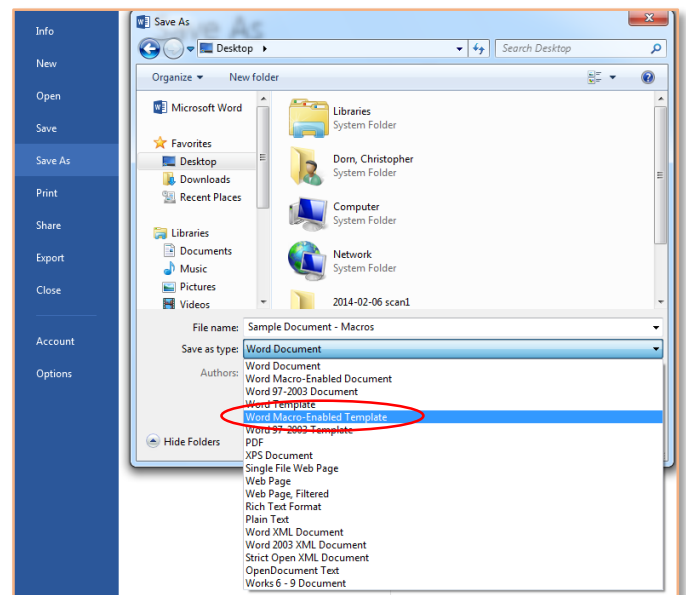

Tip#2: Start with a Clean Slate

Your best chance of successfully recording a macro is to start by clearing all of the settings beforehand. Get rid of tab stops, special line spacing, or custom margins before beginning the recording.

In addition, delete all faulty macros from your template before trying to re-record them.
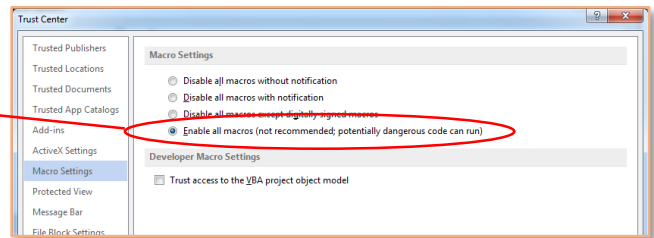
Tip#3: Enable Macros

To ensure that your macros record and run properly, you may have to modify the default macro security options.

1. Go to File.

2. Select Options

3. Select Trust Center and then click on "Trust Center Settings."
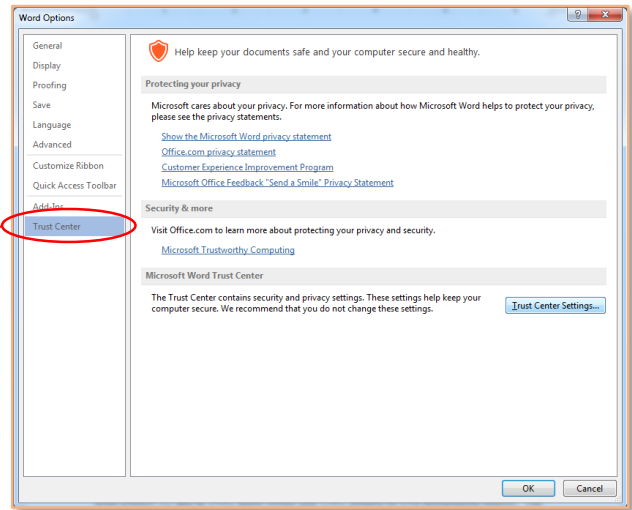
4. Check the fourth option, "Enable all macros" and click OK.

Tip#4: Select Text with the Keyboard

You will quickly learn that you cannot highlight text with your mouse when recording a macro. So how are you supposed to record macros that require highlighting certain parts of a document? The answer lies in your keyboard:

| Desired function	Keyboard command
Select one character at a time	Shift + left/right arrow key
Select one word at a time	Ctrl + Shift + left/right arrow
Select one line at a time	Shift + up/down arrow key
Select one paragraph at a time	Ctrl + Shift + up/down arrow
Select all text from current position	Ctrl + Shift + Home/End
Select all text in document	Ctrl + A

Tip #5: Choose the Appropriate Starting Position

If the macro needs to start in a certain position, be sure to start recording your macro and then, as your first action, move the insertion point to where it needs to be. Use the following table as a reference.

| Desired insertion point placement	Keyboard command
Next word	Ctrl + right arrow
Previous word	Ctrl + left arrow
Beginning of line	Home
End of line	End
Beginning of paragraph	Ctrl + up arrow
Next paragraph	Ctrl + down arrow
Beginning of document	Ctrl + Home
End of document	Ctrl + End

Tip#6: Don't Click the Icons

For some reason, Word often fails to record any actions that are performed via the icons. Instead of using icons, use key commands or dialog boxes. For a full list of keyboard shortcuts in Word, click here.
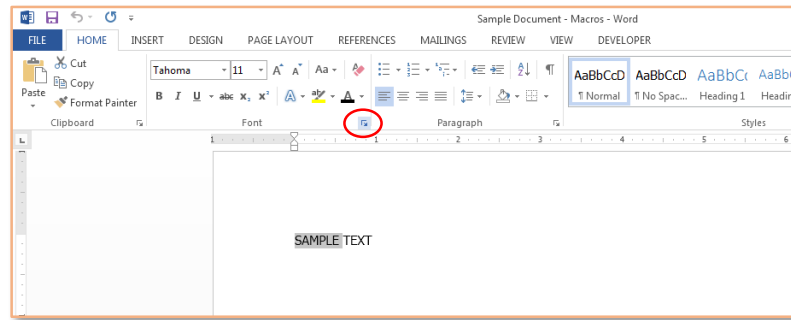
EXAMPLE

Suppose you want your macro to select a word and change the font color to red. If you change the color by clicking on the font color icon (), the macro will not record the action.
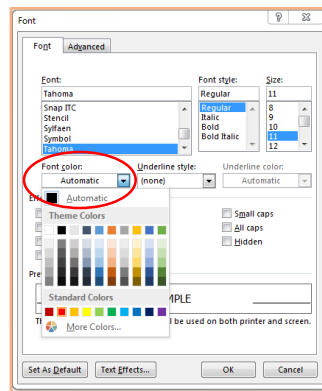
Instead, you would follow these steps:

1. Start recording macro.
2. Highlight a word with the keyboard command, Ctrl + Shift + right arrow.
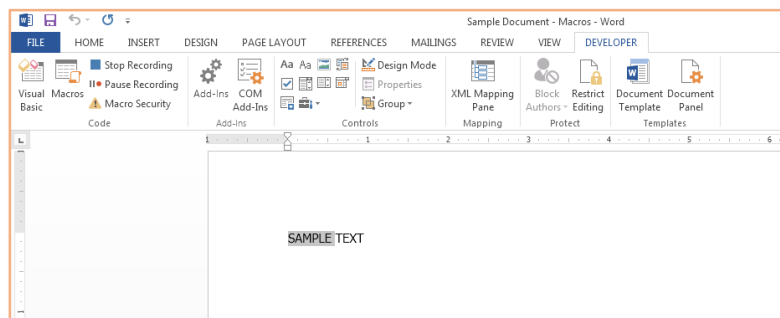
3. Open the Font dialog box.

4. Change the font color in the dropdown menu and click OK.

5. Stop the macro recording.

Tip#7: Always Test Your Macro

Every time that you record a macro, be sure to test it right away to confirm that it's working like you want it to. Doing a quick trial after you record each macro can save you lots of hassle in the long run, since it allows you to identify any problems right away.