

2018

Designing a Winning DECA Paper!



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DECA Written Events Design Guide

Creating Winning Content Through Collaboration

Using Google Docs to create the content of the paper is vital to the success of the project. The ability to collaborate with group mates and advisors via Google Docs is an invaluable tool. Write your paper, whether it be 10 or 20 pages, in Google Docs. Refrain from adding charts, smart art, photos, formatting in the form of fonts and colors, Cover Page, or page numbers. All of this formatting will be added once you are satisfied with the group's draft of the paper and you move it into Microsoft Word.

Download to Microsoft Word, But Caution ... The Game Has Changed

In Google Docs you will use the toolbar and execute the following: FILE > DOWNLOAD > AS MICROSOFT WORD. The file will be saved in a folder on the C DRIVE of the computer on which you have downloaded the file; typically, this folder is the DOWNLOADS folder. It is important that you save the file somewhere you will be able to access easily. This may be in MY DOCUMENTS, on a network drive, or on a USB thumb drive. It is important to note that this file you have downloaded is not shared with anyone else. Thus, you must email the file or share via USB thumb drive in order to allow others to make changes to the file. Remember, only one person can make changes at a time while in Microsoft Word! One way to make sure you are always working on the most recent file is to rename the file each time it is changed with a version number ... DECAPaper1.doc, DECAPaper2.doc, DECAPaper3.doc. Also, remember that you must actively save your work in Microsoft Word – it will not auto save the way Google Docs does!

Margins – Be Precise!

Start with the basics. Make sure your margins are set as 1 inch (top, bottom, left, right). Keep your content within 1-inch margins (top and bottom). LAYOUT > MARGINS > NORMAL.

Fonts, Sizing and Spacing

Use CTRL A to select all text. Make the entire document one font, 12 pt., spacing can be 1.0, 1.15, 1.5, 2.0, or a mixture throughout the document. Now, make sure you've selected your 12 pt. Then right click on NORMAL under STYLES. Now, if you copy and paste anything into your document, you can simply select it and click NORMAL and it will automatically be formatted correctly.

Next, select your executive summary text and make that text single spaced. On the Style Menu, click the drop down and choose CREATE NEW STYLE; name it Executive Summary. This assures your Executive Summary is formatted properly.

Finally, select text of one of your headings, for example "I. Executive Summary". Format it as you wish. Perhaps it has color, is bold, is larger font, and/or a different font. Once happy with your

formatting, on the Style Menu, click the drop down and choose CREATE NEW STYLE and name it Heading. Now, select all other headings and simply click HEADING from the Style Menu and the formatting will automatically be applied. You can also consider a different format for subheadings. *Hint - you want to use a serif font such as Times New Roman for the NORMAL style and a sans serif font such as Arial for the headings. Do not use more than two fonts.

A Note on Color

Color makes your paper pop. But make sure there is a style so that your text and graphics match the brand on which you are focusing your paper. Go to the DESIGN tab and take a look at COLORS. You can customize a color scheme. This scheme will influence the colors you are able to choose in terms of font and graphics. For instance, your charts and graphs will be populated with the colors from the palette you create. Again, this should all match or compliment your brand.

Say Cheese! Inserting Photos

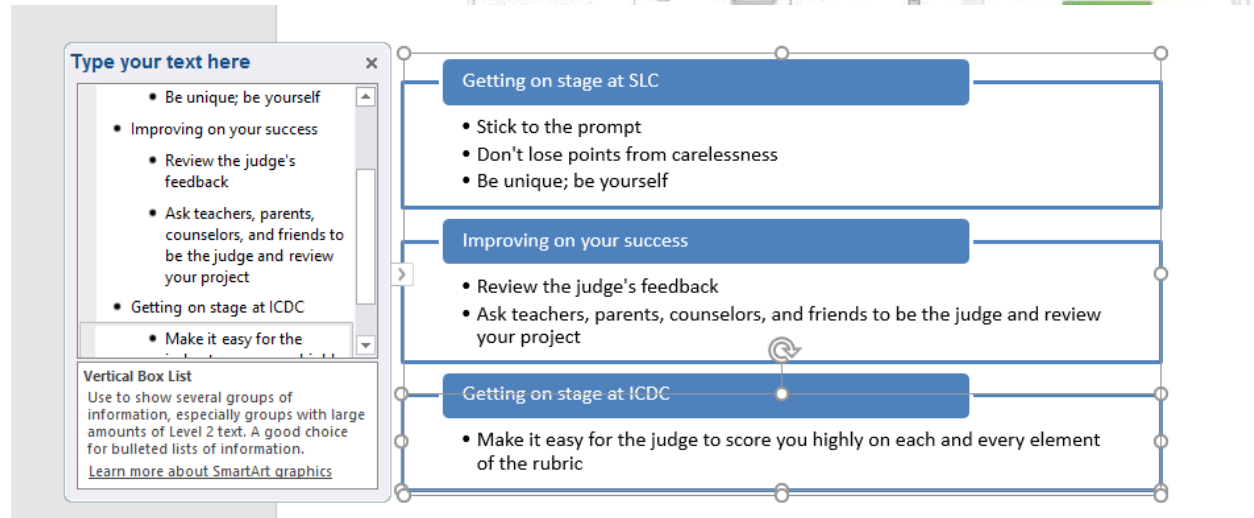
Now it's time to have fun! You have photos ... maybe your brand's logo or a photo of you meeting with the CEO or hosting a focus group. To insert photos, first you must save those photos on the computer you are working on (either in the downloads folder, on a USB flash drive, or on My Pictures). Now INSERT > PHOTO > (select the photo you want to insert). Once the photo is placed in Microsoft Word, you need to do the following: PICTURE TOOLS > FORMAT > WRAP TEXT > TIGHT. By choosing TIGHT, you have the ability to now move the photo on the page and the text will naturally wrap tightly around the photo. This is typically what you will want; however, you can play around with different options. You can also crop photos and even frame and caption them.

You're Smart ... So, You're Using Smart Art

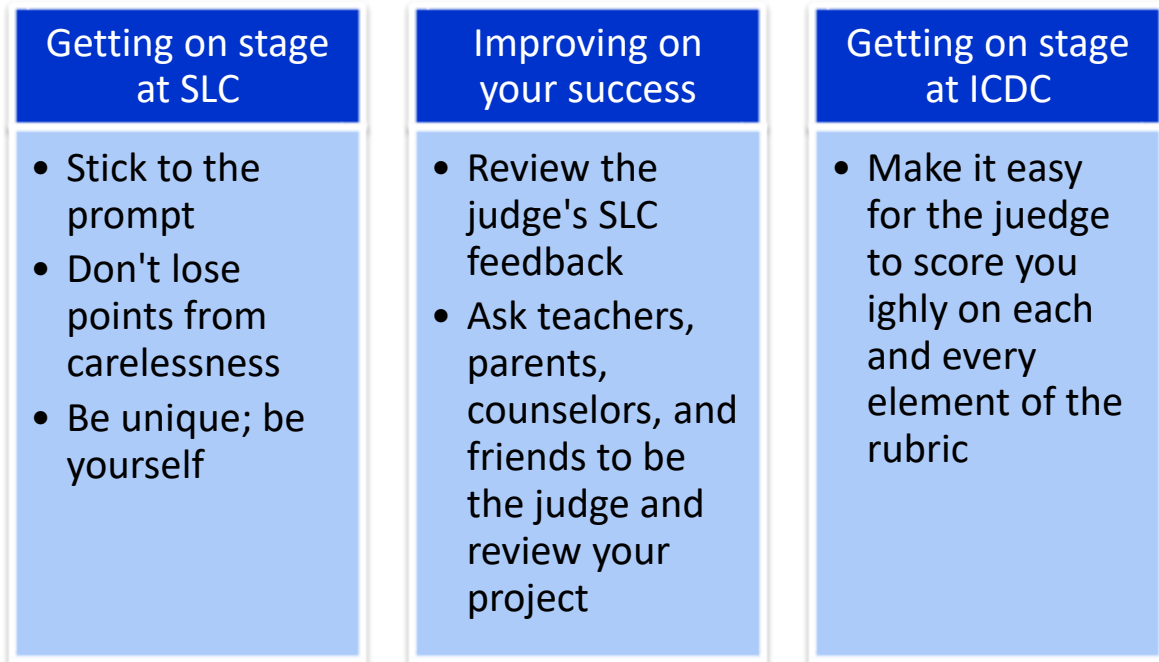
The most amazing thing Microsoft Word can do, is Smart Art. Do you have a process you want to highlight? A hierarchy to describe? Well, Smart Art is simply amazing. You need to play around with it. It's a great way to break up long sections of text or to explain a complicated series of information using Smart Art. Here's an example:

Make sure you use the TEXT BOX. It will help you plug in the right data.

This is an example of what Smart Art looks like:



Change the format and color of the Smart Art until you find the perfect format. Note: With Smart Art you will likely want to wrap it as “Top and Bottom” as opposed to “Tight”.



Graph it Out ...

Whether you are an Ops or Entrepreneurship category, you'll want to take advantage of the relationship between Excel (which is like a magical calculator) and Microsoft Word. You simply INSERT > CHART and plug in the data. You can also insert existing Microsoft Excel data and charts (google it). And you can convert data gained from Google Forms and Survey Monkey surveys to Excel! Here's an example of a graph.

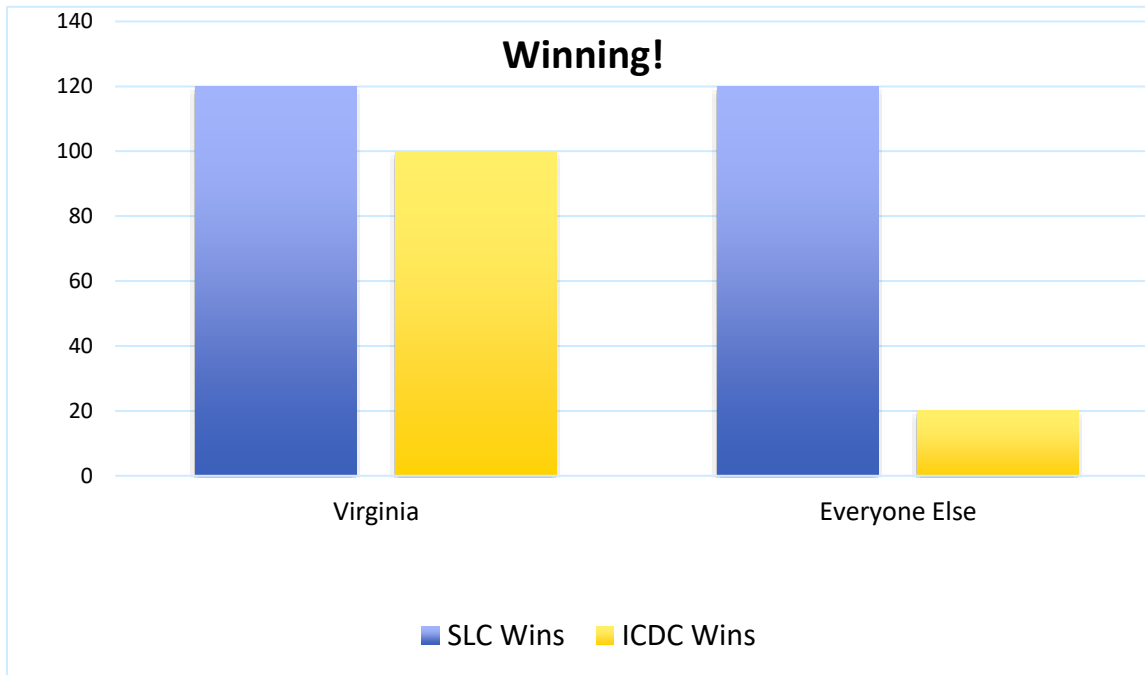


Table Those Contents Please

Make things easier on yourself and place your cursor at the very beginning of the document and do the following: REFERENCE > TABLE OF CONTENTS > MANUAL. Then you can fill in the Table of Contents and it will be properly formatted. Make sure to finish this task by doing the following: INSERT > PAGE BREAK following the end of the Table of Contents. *Hint - if you have used the HEADING 1, HEADING 2, and/or HEADING 3 in the STYLES, you can use one of the AUTO Table of Contents and MS Word will populate your Table of Contents with the correct page numbers based on where your headings are in the document.

Cover It UP

Your Cover Page sets the tone for your paper. Consider altering one of Microsoft Words many templates. Place your cursor at the very beginning of the document (your Table of Contents). INSERT > COVER PAGE.

1, 2, 3, Numbering Pages

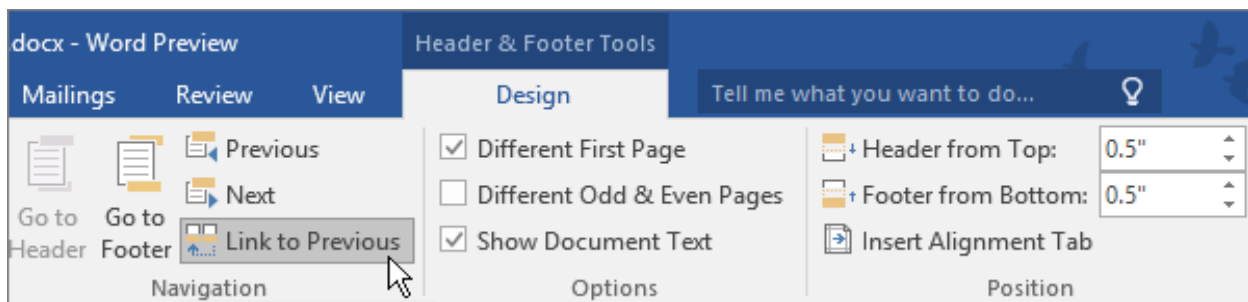
So, this is tricky and takes a bit of finesse, but the result is worth it. Your page numbering starts with page 1 being the first page after the Table of Contents. So, in Microsoft Word, page 1 is really the third page. This requires a section break so that Microsoft Word understands that the Cover Page and the Table of Contents do not have a page number. This is one of the last things you should do!

To start page numbering after the Table of Contents, you will need to first divide the document into sections, then unlink the sections, and then insert page numbers. It goes like this:

Click the page in the document where you want page numbering to begin. This is where you'll insert a section break. This is going to be the first page of your executive summary.

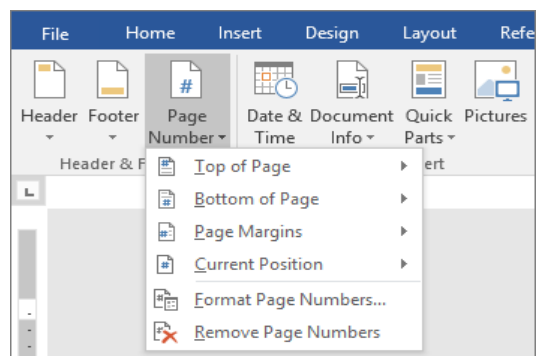
Click LAYOUT > BREAKS > NEXT PAGE.

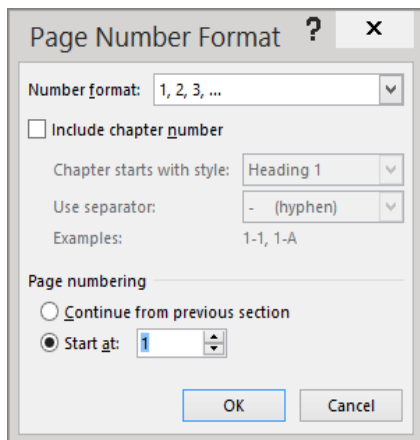
Double-click in the footer area on the first page where you want to display page numbers. This will open the DESIGN TAB under HEADER & FOOTER TOOLS. Click LINK TO PREVIOUS to turn it off and unlink the header or footer from the previous section (which is your Table of Contents and Cover Page).



Click PAGE NUMBER and then pick a location and a style. For example, click BOTTOM OF PAGE and then choose the design you like.

Click PAGE NUMBER > FORMAT PAGE NUMBERS to open the PAGE NUMBER FORMAT dialog box. To start numbering with 1, click START AT, and type 1 (otherwise, Word will automatically apply the actual page number).





Click OK. To remove page numbers from the previous section, select any page number in that section to highlight it and press DELETE, or RIGHT-CLICK and choose CUT. All page numbers in that section will be deleted. When you're done, click CLOSE HEADER AND FOOTER or double-click anywhere outside the header or footer area.

Details Matter

Don't ignore these details and make sure you leave time to include these important design elements into your papers!

- Remember to spell check and carefully proofread Smart Art and Charts and Graphs as spell check sometimes does not work in those elements of the paper.
- If using an automatic Table of Contents, make sure to UPDATE TABLE before you are finished.
- Remember to save your work frequently when working in Microsoft Word.
- Be careful when you collaborate in Microsoft Word; only one person can make changes at a time. Save the file with a version number so you know for sure you are working on the most recent version. Consider sharing the file with a USB thumb drive because that will reinforce that the person with the thumb drive is the only one who should be working on the paper at that time.
- To create a PDF file (once you are completely finished), FILE > EXPORT > PDF.

Best of luck to you Virginia DECA!