
11 Captions

11.1 What are Captions?

A caption is a label placed above or below a figure, table, equation, or other graphic element. It can be simply a number (Figure 4), it can be text (“Comparison between Product A, B and C”), or it can be a number with text (“Table 1: Comparison between Product A, B and C”).

11.2 Why use Captions?

Rather than add and format captions every time, the required formatting should be defined once and stored in a [Style](#). This ensures a consistent formatting throughout the entire document.

But, there are more reasons why Styles for Captions are useful:

- Word can format Caption Styles consistently throughout the document.²⁶
- Word can automatically generate and update a Table of Figures or a List of Tables from these Caption Style headings.
- Word can link text to a Caption, e.g., when making *cross-references*, such as, “See Figure 23” or “In Table 12, a comparison is made between Product X and Product Y”.
 - If Caption Styles are used, the linked number in the text reference will be updated automatically when new tables, figures and equations are added, deleted, or moved; i.e., when individual fields are updated manually (select the Caption field and press [SHIFT + F9]), or through a global update, press <CTRL + A> to select all text, then press SHIFT + F9].
 - If Caption numbers and their references are entered manually, editing frequently messes up the order and numbering, so the writer must change them manually, including all references from elsewhere in the document – a tedious and time consuming task fraught with potential errors.
 - For additional information on *cross-referencing*, see Chapter [12](#) – Cross-references.

²⁶ Caption Styles also can be assigned to the caption text manually after the caption text has already been inserted.

11.3 How to work with Captions

11.3.1 How to assign a Caption to an item

To add a caption to a table, equation, figure, or other item, follow these steps:

- ❶ Select the item to add a caption to.
- ❷ Open **Insert** | **Reference**, and then click **Caption....**
- ❸ In the *Label* list, select the proper caption label; for example, click *Figure*.
- ❹ In the *Position* list, click the location in which to position the caption.
 - Captions added to figures, pictures, and other drawing objects are placed below the figure.
 - Captions added to tables are placed above the table.
- ❺ Click [OK] and the numbered caption appears (default is numbered “1” for the first caption created in the document).

Notes:

- If Word doesn't add a numbered label to a caption, clear the *Exclude label from caption* check box in the **Caption** dialog box.
- If later captions are added, deleted, or moved, the caption numbers can be updated all at once by pressing <CTRL + A> followed by <F9>.

11.3.2 How to let Word automatically assign a Caption Label to a figure or a table

Word comes with an AutoCaption feature that can add captions automatically to inserted tables, figures, equations, etc. Use the following steps to assign Caption Labels automatically.

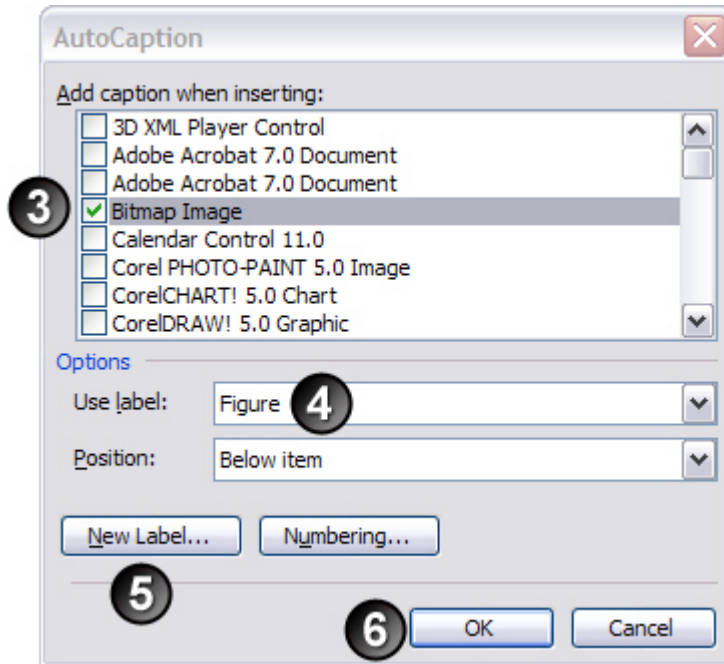


Figure 20: Using the AutoCaption feature

- ❶ Open **Insert** | **Reference**, and then click **Caption....**
- ❷ Click [AutoCaption...].
- ❸ In the *Add caption when inserting* list, select the objects for which Word needs to insert captions.
- ❹ In the *Use label* list, select an existing label.
- ❺ If the list doesn't provide the correct label, click [New Label...], type the new label in the *Label* box, and then click [OK]. Select any other options as needed.²⁷
- ❻ Click [OK].

Word will automatically add the appropriate caption and a sequential number whenever one of the objects selected in Step 3 (above) is inserted. To add more text to the caption, click after the caption and type the desired text.

11.3.3 [How to modify Caption Labels](#)

The caption label and number format can be varied for different types of items; for example, “Table II” and “Equation 1-A”, or “Fig. 4” and “Figure 4”. To define or remove caption label perform the steps in respectively [11.3.3.1](#) – To define a new label and [11.3.3.2](#) – To remove a label.

²⁷ Note, that – rather unfortunately – Word stores user-defined caption categories in the user’s Normal.dot. Consequently, when a document “travels” to another computer, the new caption label will not show in the caption label list. So, before the category is recreated on the new PC, the user cannot create a new instance of the same custom label except by copy/paste of an existing entry – or even on the same PC when logged on as another user.

11.3.3.1 To define a new label

- Open **Insert** | **Reference**, and then click [Caption....]
- Click [New Label...]. Type the text for the caption, e.g., “Photo” or “Fig.”, and then click [Close]. The label is displayed in the Label list.
- Click [OK] to complete the action.

11.3.3.2 To remove a label

- Open **Insert** | **Reference**, and then click [Caption....]
- Select the label to be removed in the Label list, and then click [Delete Label].²⁸
- Click [OK] to complete the action.

11.3.4 How to configure Caption Numbering

- ❶ Open **Insert** | **Reference**, and then click **Caption...**
- ❷ Click [Numbering...].
- ❸ In the Format list, click the desired numbering style. For example, select **i, ii, iii,**
- ❹ Click [OK] twice.

11.3.5 How to include chapter numbers in Captions

Chapter numbers also can be assigned to caption labels.

- ❶ Open **Insert** | **Reference**, and then click **Caption...**
- ❷ Click [Numbering...].
- ❸ Select the *Include chapter number* check box.
- ❹ In the *Chapter starts with style* list, select the heading style that has been applied to the chapter heading.
- ❺ In the *Use separator* list, select a punctuation mark to separate the chapter number from the caption number, e.g., “-”, so a figure in Chapter 5 appears as “Figure 5-2”.

²⁸ Note: the default labels Equation, Figure, and Table cannot be deleted.

- ⑥ Click [OK] twice.

Note: Chapter numbers also can be automatically assigned to captions. On the **Insert** menu, select **Reference**, and then click **Caption...** Click [AutoCaption...], and repeat steps ② – ⑥ above.

11.3.6 Using different styles for Table Captions and Figure Captions

In the Caption style, the caption can be defined to always start the same spacing below the preceding paragraph. Likewise, the spacing added between the caption and the next paragraph/element can be defined.

Table Captions are placed above the table and Figure Captions are positioned below the figure. So, it is best to use a different style (spacing scheme) for Table Captions and Figure Captions.

Define the **Table Caption** (appears above) with a larger *Spacing Before* and a smaller *Spacing After*. Also, check *Keep with next* in **Format | Paragraph...** [*Line and Page breaks*]. This will ensure that Word keeps the Table Caption and the table together.

In a similar way, define the **Figure Caption** (appears below) with a smaller *Spacing Before* and a larger *Spacing after*. Note, however, that Word doesn't have the option *Keep with previous*. The solution is to define a separate style for paragraphs that contain a figure: see paragraph [17.4](#) – Use a separate paragraph style for pictures.