

7 MAIL MERGE AND RELATED OPERATIONS

Form letters and mailing labels

LEARNING OUTCOMES

LibreOffice is an integrated suite of programs. This means that the different components of the *Office* software—*Writer*, *Base*, *Calc*, and *Impress*, for example—are all part of the same system. As a result, you can easily switch from one component to another, cut and paste data between documents and, above all, use a common set of tools with each of the applications. The steps required to edit, copy, arrange, print, format, cut and paste, and so forth, are more or less the same, whether you are in the word processor, drawing, database, spreadsheet or presentation components of *LibreOffice*.

In Lesson 6 you were introduced to the *LibreOffice Base* database. In Lesson 7 you are going to apply what you have learned about databases to the task of creating form letters and mailing labels. The process is called Mail Merge and it is an important word processing skill with which every teacher should be familiar.

You can merge data from a database into different types of *LibreOffice* documents to produce any number of versions of a standard document tailored to address individual recipients.

This is especially useful when creating form letters, which are another type of template or stationery document. But you can also merge data into a spreadsheet (such as an invoice or other accounting document) or into a drawing document. You can create mailing labels, or any document that requires fill-in-the-blanks data.

In this tutorial you will practice these skills by writing a form letter to your students' home contact (parents or guardians). A form letter is a letter which is to be circulated to a group of people such as parents, and into which you place data specific to each individual in the group. In other words, a form letter is a personalized circular letter that is customized for each individual who receives it.

The first of the two letters you are going to develop will inform parents of an upcoming field trip. The second will report on each student's progress after five weeks of a class session. The *Writer* mail merge feature greatly simplifies the process of creating form letters of this kind.

First, you are going to create a *Calc* spreadsheet, which will contain all the data you need to create the form letter.

The next step you will complete will involve converting the *Calc* spreadsheet data source document into a *Base* database, and then you will merge the data that is in the database into a *Writer* form letter. This form letter will be used by *Writer* to control the creation and printing or sending (in email) of a set of customized letters to parents that will be the final product of the first part of this tutorial.

You will also learn how to create mailing labels.

The last part of the tutorial will step you through the process of creating a form letter using an already existing *LibreOffice Base* database. In this final exercise you will also use the *Calc* spreadsheet to create a chart that will be incorporated into the form letter.

In this tutorial, then, you will complete the following tasks¹:

- prepare a data source document (a *LibreOffice Base* database) for a form letter;
- create the form letter;
- prepare a set of field trip notices;
- prepare mailing labels;
- prepare a new form letter using a macro and an existing data source document (a *LibreOffice Base* database).

A caveat before you begin: You'll find it easiest to use the tutorial if you follow the directions carefully. On computers there are always other ways of doing things, so if you decide to wander off on your own, be sure you know your way back!

Another word of advice...

This tutorial will cover a lot of ground. You have perhaps worked through the previous six tutorials up to this point, so you should have considerable background using *LibreOffice*. For this reason, the directions will not be as detailed as in previous tutorials. There will be less hand-holding, so to speak. You will need to *think, remember* and, in so doing, *consolidate* all that you have learned.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Setting up for the tutorial

If you completed Lesson 1 of these tutorials, you may recall that it assumed that you received a copy of the set of *Work Files for LibreOffice* that accompany these tutorials, and it also helped you create a new folder called Data Files. If you did not complete Lesson 1, then you must do this now, before proceeding with Lesson 7. If you did complete Lesson 1, then you can skip the rest of this section and proceed directly to the next section (7.1 PREPARING AN ADDRESS LIST IN CALC, on page 213).

The set of *Work Files for LibreOffice* ideally should be stored on a Flash drive (USB drive) in three folders named *Base Files, Impress Files, and Miscellaneous Files*. You need to create a fourth folder for the *data files* that you will be creating while working your way through the tutorials. This fourth folder will be called *Data Files*.

If you do not have these four folders and files ready, prepare them now before proceeding with this tutorial. Here are the steps to take:

First, **Unzip** the set of **Work Files for LibreOffice** by double clicking on the File name on your computer (your instructor will help you with this if you are working with a class) and **Extract** them onto your flash drive

Double click on the **Work Files for LibreOffice** folder to **open** it

Now, inside the *Work Files for LibreOffice* folder you need to create a new, *fourth*, folder called *Data Files*. Here's how you do this.

¹ I am indebted to Tony Palaez for his video on Mail Merge at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prZJ4w-q9AA>

In the **Work Files for LibreOffice** folder, select **New Folder** (Fig. 7.1).

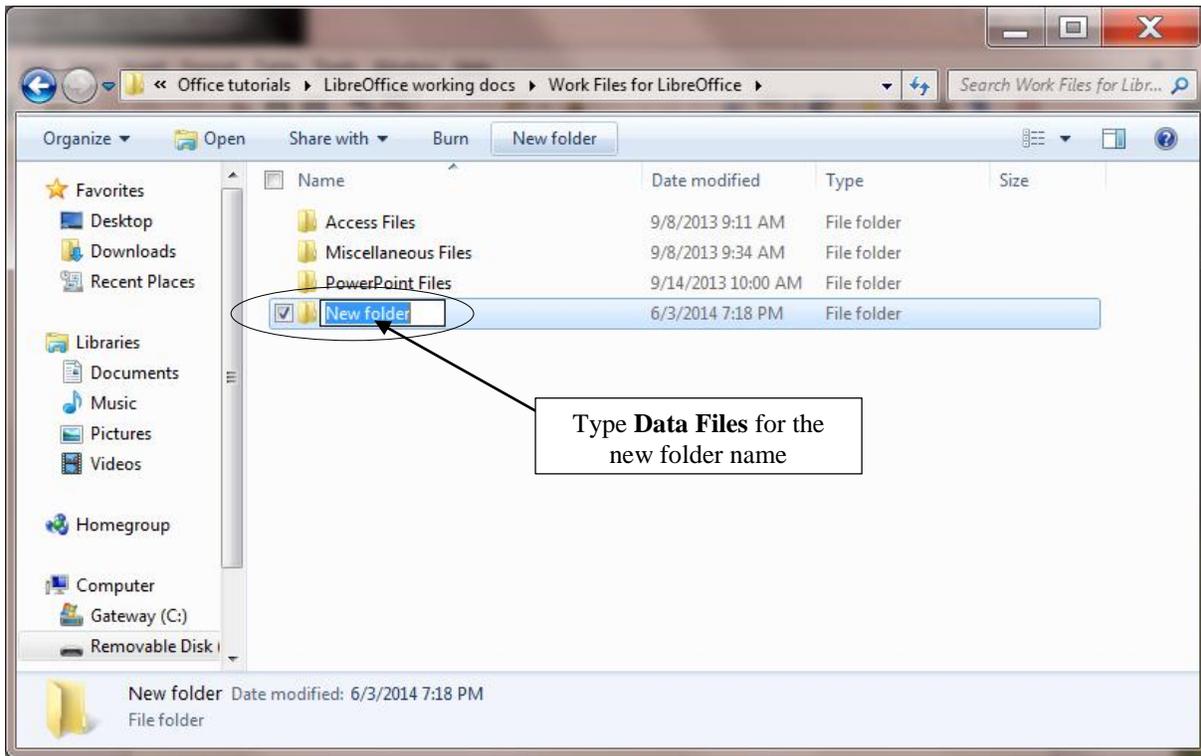


Fig. 7.1 Creating a New Folder

The system will create a new folder for you and then wait for you to give it a name of your choice (Fig. 7.1 above).

Call the new folder **Data Files**

During the course of these tutorials you will be storing many files in this Data Files folder.

7.1 PREPARING AN ADDRESS LIST IN CALC

This exercise will show you how you can create an address list data source document using the *Calc* spreadsheet, which can then be converted into a *Base* database for the purpose of merging the data with a form letter.

Entering the data for the Address List spreadsheet

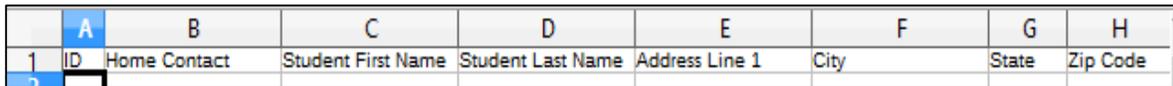
You are going to enter the address data for just 10 records. With a real class, you would enter as many sets of address data as you have students in your class. So feel free, if you are a practicing teacher, to add as many records as you need for your class. You will shortly be merging this data with a form letter. Later you'll be using an already existing database to create form letters for a larger class of students.

Start by **opening** a new *LibreOffice Calc* spreadsheet and immediately go to **File > Save As...**, navigate to your **USB drive > LibreOffice Work Files > Data Files > Spreadsheet Documents** and **Save** the spreadsheet with the name **Address List**

Across the **first row (row 1)** of the new spreadsheet enter the following **eight (8) column headers**:

Header for Column A	ID
Header for Column B	Home Contact
Header for Column C	Student First Name
Header for Column D	Student Last Name
Header for Column E	Address Line 1
Header for Column F	City
Header for Column G	State
Header for Column H	Zip Code

When you are done, the column headers in your spreadsheet should look like Figure 7.2.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	ID	Home Contact	Student First Name	Student Last Name	Address Line 1	City	State	Zip Code

Fig. 7.2 Naming the column headers for the data source document

In lessons 4 and 5 you learned how to widen columns, so, if your columns are too narrow for the column headers here and there, go ahead and make them wider, as in Fig. 7.2. The ID field (column A) will start with the value *1* (one) and increase by 1 for each record (this will be the *Primary Key* when you convert the spreadsheet into a *Base* database).

Type in the data for the **first record**—starting with the value **1** for the **ID**; then make up data for each of the other fields in the appropriate column of the spreadsheet, starting in **column B** with the **Home Contact** (the name of the student’s parents or other guardian—Mr. and Mrs. Brown, for example)

After the first (Home Contact) entry, hit **Tab**, then type a **Student First Name**, and so on across the spreadsheet row

After you type in the **Zip Code**, the last entry for the **first record**, click in the **ID** field for **record #2**, enter the ID value **2**, and carry on entering appropriate data till you have entered the data for **all 10 records** (or for as many students as you have in your class if you are a practicing teacher)

After you have entered the data for at least **ten** records, **Save** the spreadsheet

7.2 CONVERTING THE CALC SPREADSHEET TO A BASE DATABASE

The next step in our mail merge process involves converting the Address List spreadsheet, which you just created, into a *Base* database data source object—which is necessary if you want to merge the data source with a *Writer* form letter. Here are the steps to do this.

In the **File** menu select **New** and, in the menu of *LibreOffice* applications, select **Database** (Fig. 7.3)

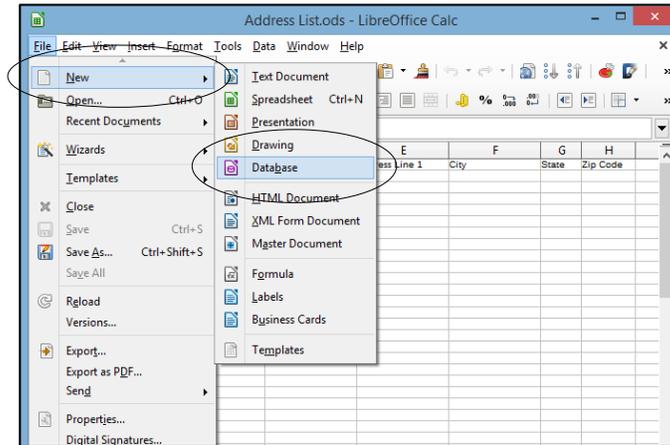


Fig. 7.3 Opening a new database

This will bring up the Database Wizard (Fig. 7.4).

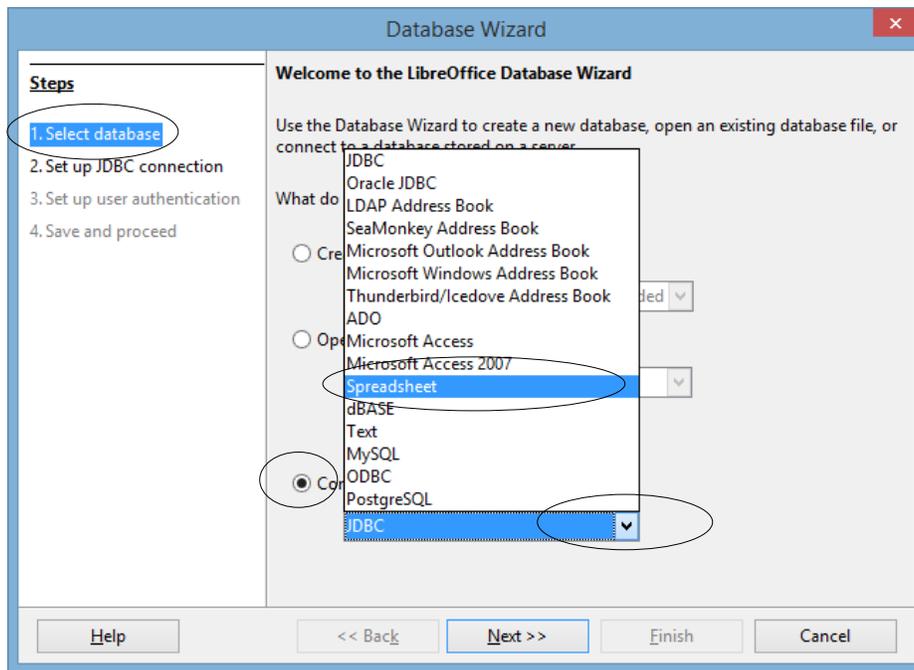


Fig. 7.4 The *LibreOffice* Database Wizard

In **Step 1** of the Wizard, click to select the **radio button** next to **Connect to an existing database** (Fig. 7.4 above), then click on the **down arrow** in the accompanying data box and, from the list of **different application types**, select **Spreadsheet** (Fig. 7.4 above)

Why is a spreadsheet considered a database? Well, a spreadsheet is a data source document (it contains data that you want to use, so in that sense a *Calc* spreadsheet *is* a database and can be converted to a *Base* database. So you are *importing* the Address List spreadsheet into a *Table* in the database.

Click on **Next>>**, then in **Step 2**, click on **Browse** and, in the **Open** dialog box, in your **Data Files > Spreadsheet Documents** folder, **double click** on **Address List** to put it in the **Location and file name** data box (Fig. 7.5)

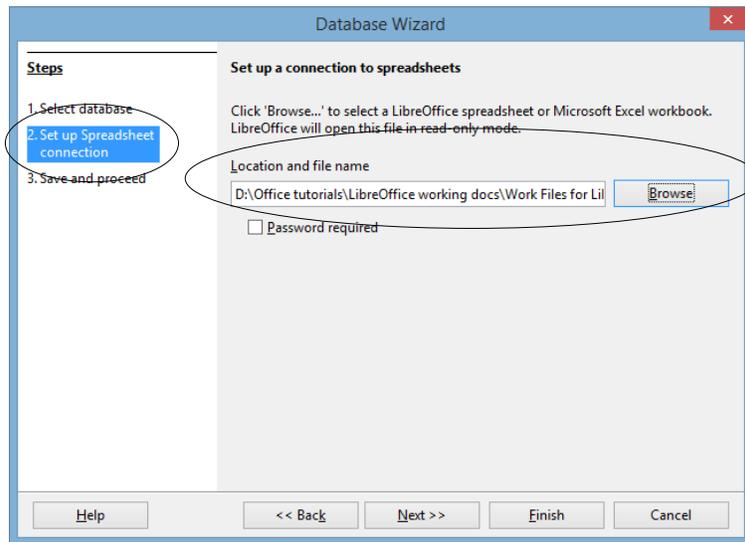


Fig. 7.5 Setting up a Spreadsheet connection

Click on **Next >>**, then in **Step 3** of the Wizard, leave the selections as they are (Fig. 7.6)

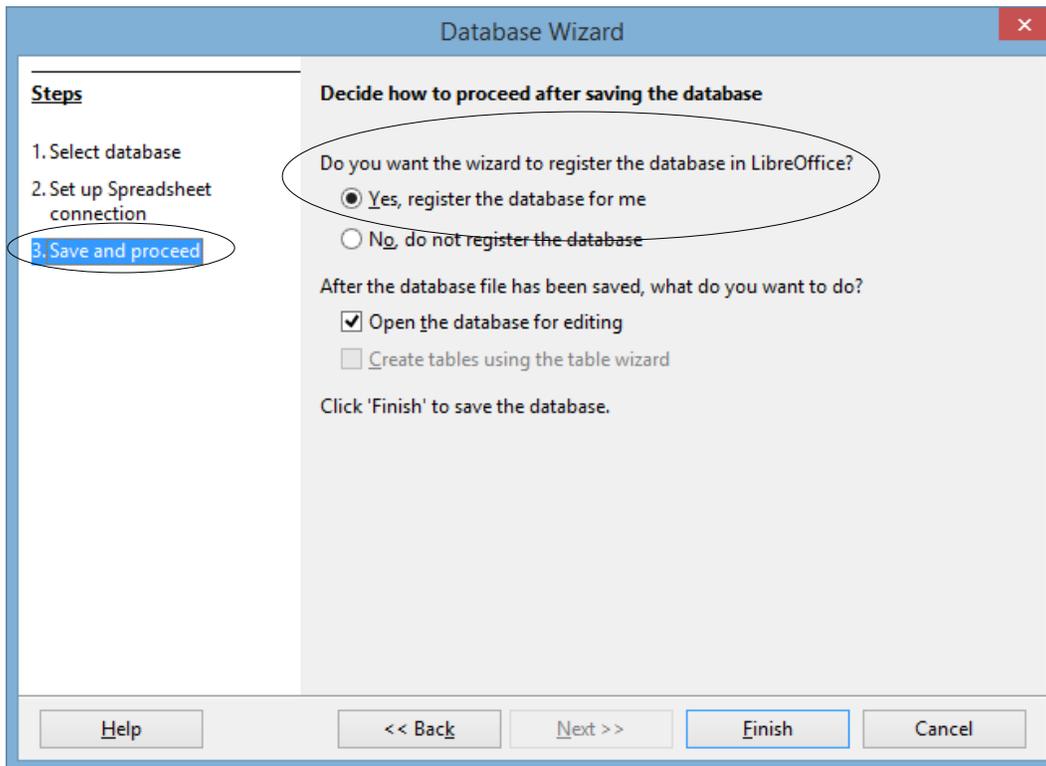


Fig. 7.6 Final step in converting the Address List data source to a *Base* database

If you do not register the database it will not be visible in any other *LibreOffice* documents such as the *Letters Writer* document you are going to use for the form letter.

So leave the **radio button** next to **Yes, register the database for me** checked, and also leave checked the box next to **Open the database for editing**, then click on **Finish**

The Wizard will ask you to **Save** the new database, so click on **Save**, navigate to your **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Data Files > Database Documents folder**, name the database **Address List**, and click on **Save** again

The new *Base* database will open on your screen (Fig. 7.7).

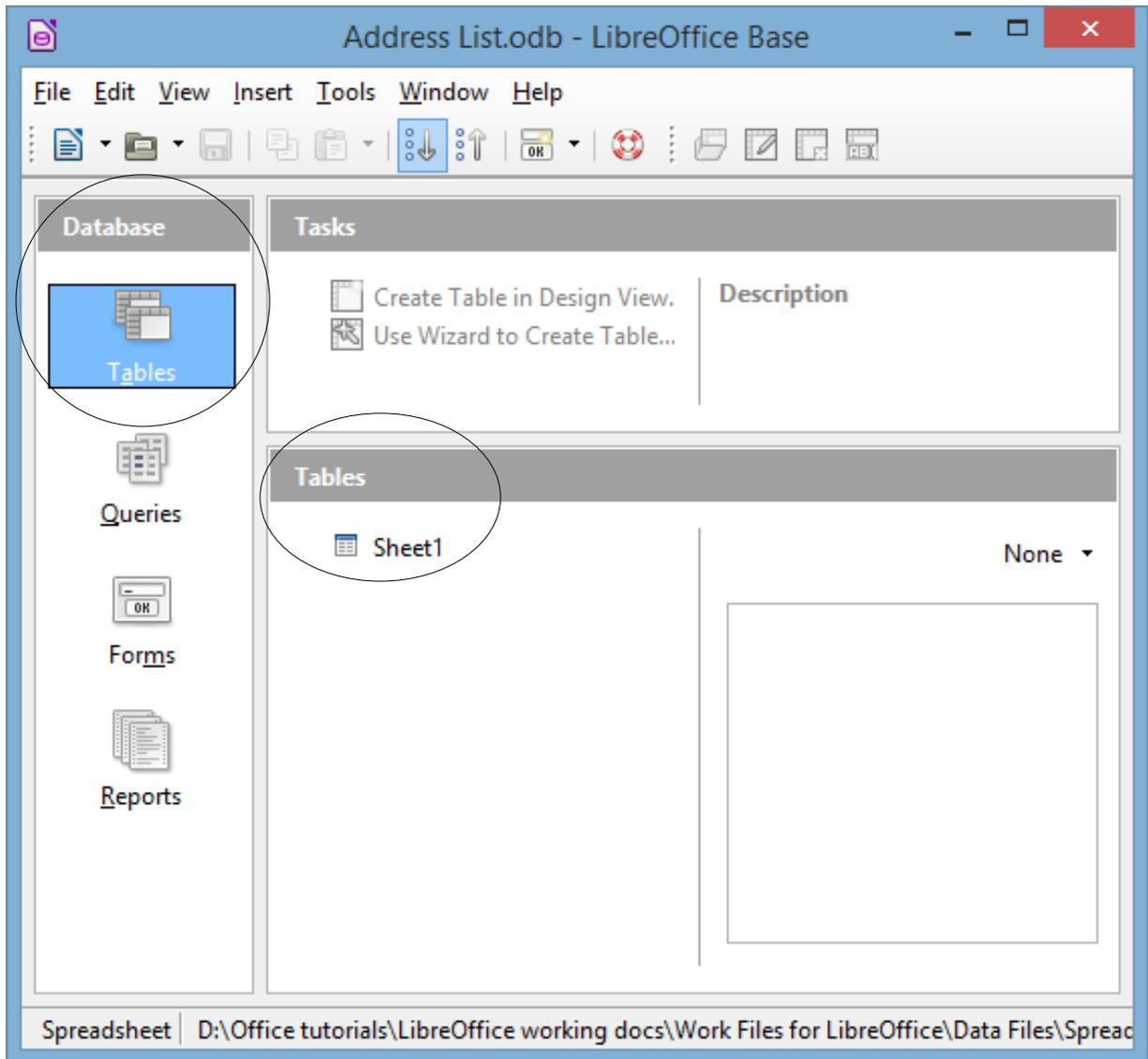
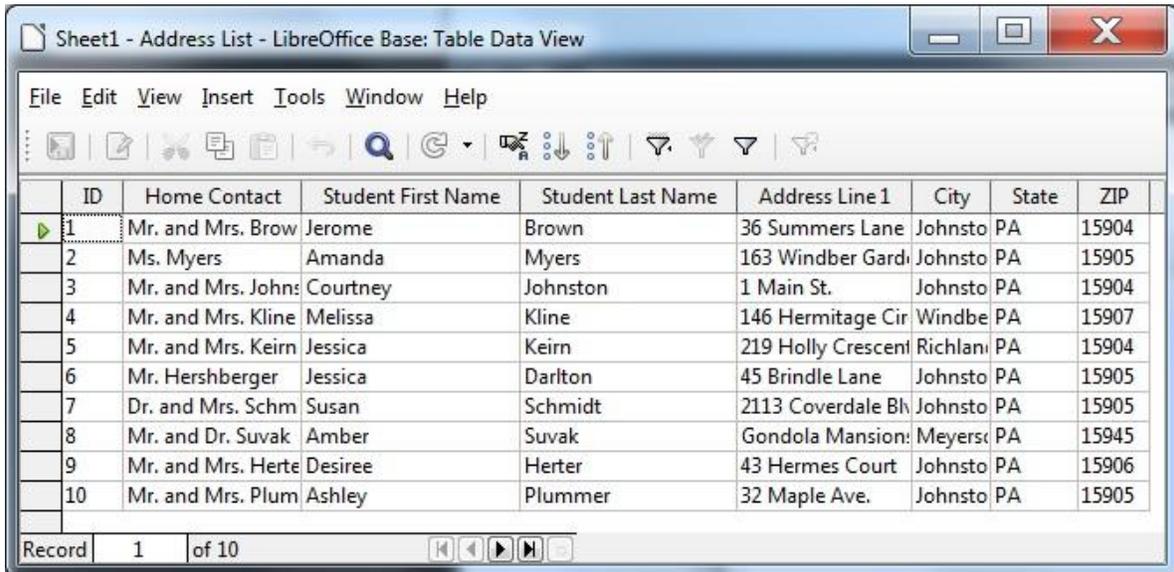


Fig. 7.7 The new *Base* database data source

Make sure **Tables** is selected in the **Database frame** (see Fig. 7.7 above), then **double click** on **Sheet1** to open the **Table** so that you can check that

the **Address List data** has been correctly **imported** from the **spreadsheet** you created at the beginning of this exercise (Fig. 7.8)



The screenshot shows a window titled "Sheet1 - Address List - LibreOffice Base: Table Data View". The window contains a table with the following data:

ID	Home Contact	Student First Name	Student Last Name	Address Line 1	City	State	ZIP
1	Mr. and Mrs. Brow	Jerome	Brown	36 Summers Lane	Johnsto	PA	15904
2	Ms. Myers	Amanda	Myers	163 Windber Gard	Johnsto	PA	15905
3	Mr. and Mrs. Johns	Courtney	Johnston	1 Main St.	Johnsto	PA	15904
4	Mr. and Mrs. Kline	Melissa	Kline	146 Hermitage Cir	Windbe	PA	15907
5	Mr. and Mrs. Keirn	Jessica	Keirn	219 Holly Crescent	Richlan	PA	15904
6	Mr. Hershberger	Jessica	Darnton	45 Brindle Lane	Johnsto	PA	15905
7	Dr. and Mrs. Schm	Susan	Schmidt	2113 Coverdale Bl	Johnsto	PA	15905
8	Mr. and Dr. Suvak	Amber	Suvak	Gondola Mansion	Meyers	PA	15945
9	Mr. and Mrs. Herte	Desiree	Herter	43 Hermes Court	Johnsto	PA	15906
10	Mr. and Mrs. Plum	Ashley	Plummer	32 Maple Ave.	Johnsto	PA	15905

At the bottom of the window, there is a status bar showing "Record 1 of 10" and navigation icons.

Fig. 7.8 The Address List imported to the *Base* database

Assuming everything looks good, you are ready to proceed with the next step in the mail merge process, which involves the creation of the Form Letter.

7.3 CREATING THE FORM LETTER (THE FIELD TRIP NOTICE)

You are going to create a letter to the parents of your students announcing an upcoming field trip, which you will call Field Trip Notice, into which will be merged the records that you have prepared in the Address List database.

Fig. 7.9 on the next page shows the complete contents of this Field Trip Notice letter. **Don't start typing it just yet**—follow the directions that follow and on the ensuing pages in order to avoid making mistakes.

You're going to begin by opening, and renaming, a *Writer* template document called *Letters*, which is already stored in the *Work Files for LibreOffice* folder on your USB drive.

In the **File** menu select **Open**, then navigate to your **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Miscellaneous Files > Merge Documents**, and **double click** on the **Letters** document to open it

Now, in the **File** menu select **Save As...**, navigate to the **Work Files for LibreOffice > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder, type **Field Trip Notice** for the new document name, then click on **Save**

You are now ready to use *Writer's* mail merge tools to produce a customized, that is to say *individualized*, letter to send to the parents or guardians of each student in your class.

In Fig. 7.9, the placeholders (where the field names are enclosed by the < ... > symbols) indicate the place in the form letter where data from the Address List database, which you created in the previous exercise, will be merged with each of the letters in order to personalize them.

DO NOT START TYPING YET!

The exercises that follow Fig. 7.9 explain how to proceed. Follow the steps carefully.

Hodge Road Elementary School
123 Mingo Bluff Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15905
Tuesday, March 10, 2015

<Home Contact>
<Address Line 1>
<City>, <State> <ZIP>

Dear <Home Contact>,

This is to let you know that on June 3rd we plan to take <Student First Name> <Student Last Name>'s class on a day long field trip. We call this trip The Southwest Pennsylvania Disaster Tour. The bus leaves the school at 9:00 am sharp.

The tour starts with a visit to the Johnstown Flood Museum near South Fork, followed by a visit to the 9-11 Flight 93 Memorial site at Shanksville. The tour will conclude with a visit to the Quecreek Mining Disaster memorial at Quecreek, near Somerset. The trip is the culminating activity of a five week Social Studies Unit in which the local and national response to disasters such as these have been the special focus of interest for the class.

<Student First Name> will leave and return within the normal time frame of the school day, so there will be no disruption to your own schedule.

Please prepare <Student First Name> a pack lunch for the trip. The restaurant facilities, such as they are, at the various sites can be somewhat expensive and we have been unable to negotiate an acceptable reduced charge for school children.

Feel free to call me at school at (814) 772-3232 should you have need to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your help in this educational endeavor and for your support throughout the year.

Yours very sincerely,

Donna Hendry
1st Grade Teacher

Fig. 7.9 The final version of the Field Trip Notice form letter

Inserting the date

The unedited Field Trip Notice document is open on your screen with the bare bones of the form letter (the school address at the top, the beginning of the salutation “Dear”, and the conclusion (Yours sincerely, etc.).

You need to put the date at the top of your *Field Trip Notice* document, immediately after the address, which, in a real situation, would be the official address of the school where you are a teacher.

Position the cursor on the **blank line** immediately **after the address** at the top of the page, then, in the **Insert** menu select **Fields > Date**

You should now have the date displayed in your form letter right after the school address at the top of the page. You’ll maybe recall from Lesson 1 that the default all-numeric format for the date can be confusing in other countries, so you need to select a style that is unambiguous.

Right click on the inserted date and, in the **context menu**, select **Fields...** then, in the **Edit Fields dialog box**, click on the **date format** that looks like **Friday, December 31, 1999** and click on **OK**

That takes care of the date format.

Viewing the Data Source for the Field Trip Notice

Now it’s time to connect your Field Trip Notice to the Address List database that you created in the previous exercise (Section 7.3 of this tutorial).

In the **View** menu, select **Data Sources**

You should now have a new window right at the top of your screen at the top of the page showing, on the left, a list of the databases you have registered with *LibreOffice* (Fig. 7.10).

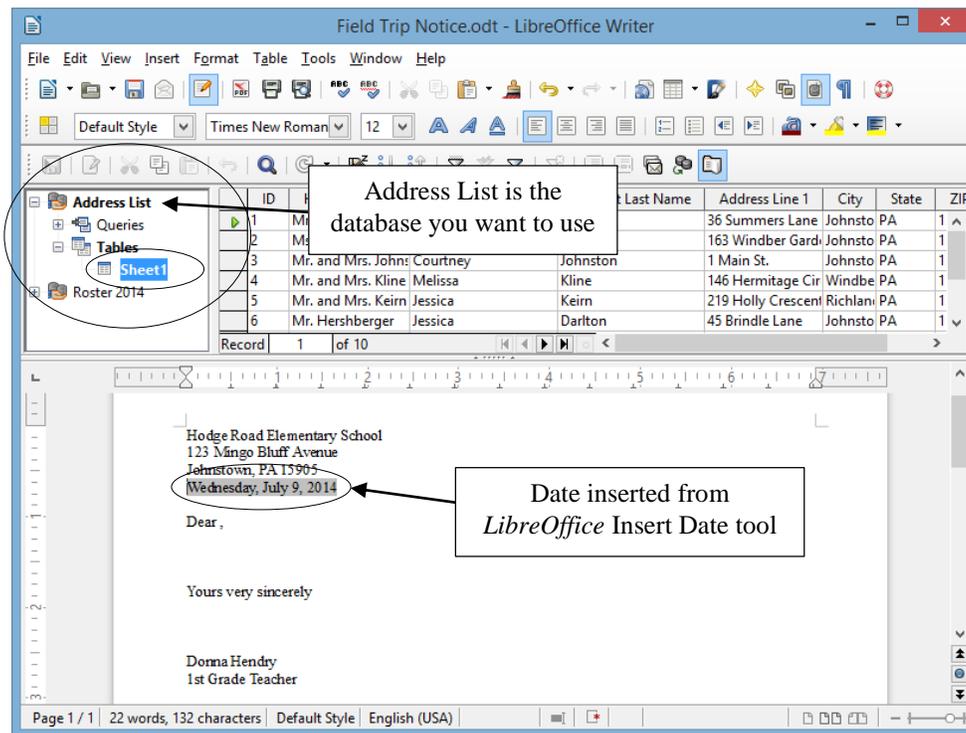


Fig. 7.10 Viewing the *LibreOffice* Data Sources

The Address List is the database you want to use with the Field Trip Notice.

In the list of registered databases, click on the **small + (plus sign)** to the immediate **left of Address List** to show **Queries** and **Tables** (Fig. 7.10 above), then click on the **small + (plus sign)** to the immediate **left of Tables** to show **Sheet1**

Sheet1 contains the data that you imported into the database from the Address List spreadsheet you created in Section 7.3 of this tutorial.

Click on **Sheet1** and wait while *LibreOffice* fetches all the data **from the Sheet1 table** and displays the data as a table in the window **above** the form letter and **to the right** of the list of registered databases (Fig. 7.10 again)

Now comes the tricky (but neat!) part of the mail merge process.

Inserting fields (placeholders) into your form letter

You are now going to insert into the form letter the first set of placeholders—for the receiver's (recipient's) name and address—the receiver is the parent or guardian of one of your students.

The receiver's address, after your own (school) address at the top of the letter, will start with the **Home Contact** field. So you need to tell *Writer* to merge the form letter with the corresponding data from the *Address List* database. Here is how you do this.

In the form letter, use the mouse to position the cursor on the empty line **immediately above** the salutation: "**Dear**" and press **Enter** to space down **one line**

Now, use the mouse to drag the *title Home Contact* down to the correct position for the **Home Contact** in the first line of the form letter recipient's address (Fig. 7.11)

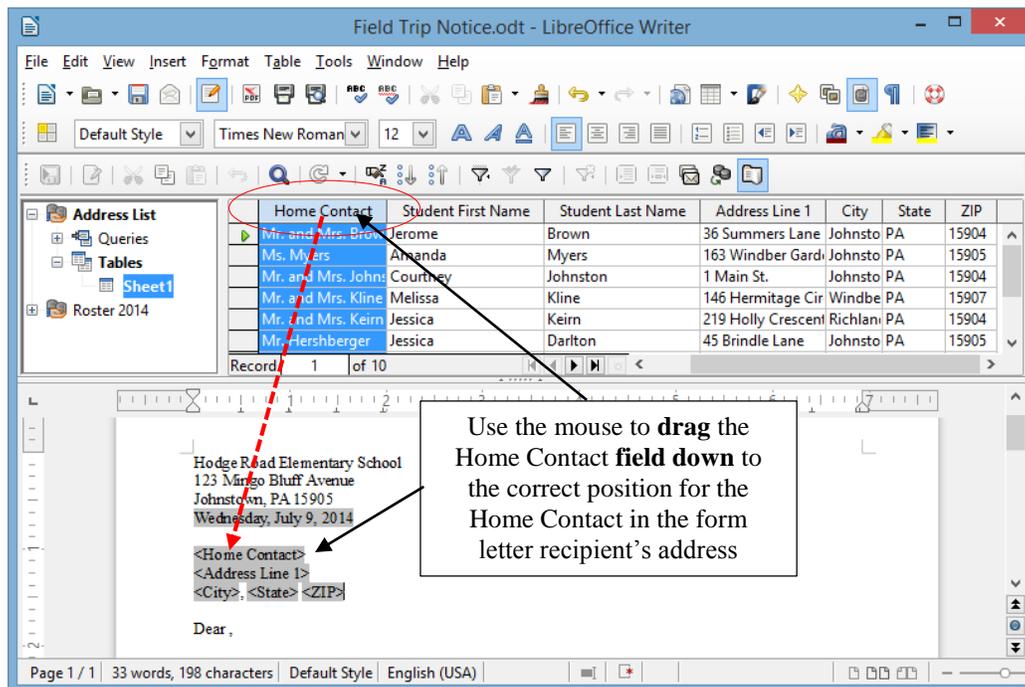


Fig. 7.11 Dragging the Home Contact merge field down into the form letter

Writer quickly displays **<Home Contact>** in the body of the form letter immediately above the salutation “Dear” (with the brackets around it as you see here—you never need to type the brackets with Mail Merge). Now, when eventually the letters (all ten of them) are printed out, the correct name of each student’s parent or guardian will be copied from the Address List database and inserted into this position in the letter.

Next you need to add the remaining placeholders for the Home Contact’s address (see Fig. 7.11 previous page).

The cursor should be waiting **at the end of <Home Contact>**, so press the **Enter** key to move to a new line

Once again, use the mouse to drag the *title* **Address Line 1** down to the correct position on the **new line** after **<Home Contact>** (which will be the second line of the form letter recipient’s address)

Writer adds the new merge field to the address.

Press the **Enter** key to move to a new line, use the mouse to drag the *title* **City** down to the correct position on the **new line** after **<Address Line 1>** (which will be the third and last line of the form letter recipient’s address)

Now **stay on the same line**, type a **comma (,)** followed by a **space**, and use the mouse to drag the *title* **State** down to the correct position on the **last line** of the recipient’s (Home Contact’s) address

Hit the **space bar once**, then use the mouse to drag the *title* **Zip** down to the correct position at the end the **last line** of the recipient’s (Home Contact’s) address

This rounds off the address that is to be merged with the Field Trip Notice form letter, which should now look like Fig. 7.12.

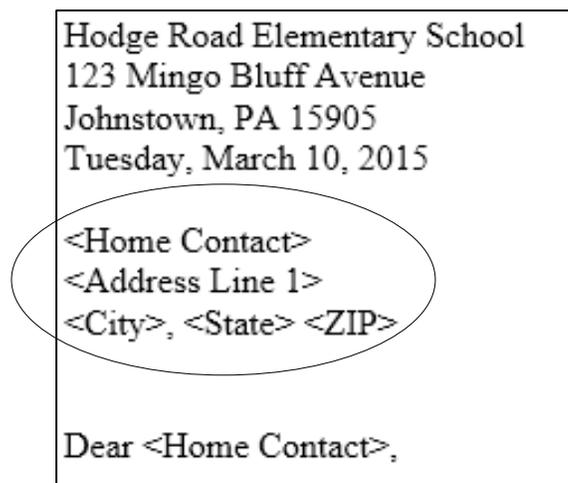


Fig. 7.12 Form letter after merging the recipient’s address and salutation

Press the **Enter** key to space down after the address

So far, so good. Next you need to put a placeholder for the **Home Contact** after the salutation **Dear...** at the beginning of the letter (Fig. 7.12 above).

Put the cursor *right after* the word **Dear**, then press the **Space bar** to space over **one space**

Now, then use the mouse to drag the *title* **Home Contact** down to the correct position after the salutation **Dear...**

By now you should be getting the idea of how to insert merge fields into the Field Trip Notice as you go along.

Refer to the **Field Trip Notice letter** (Fig. 7.9 on page 219) as you complete the rest of the form letter

Type the remaining text of the **Field Trip Notice** letter illustrated in Fig. 7.9, inserting the merge placeholders where indicated

Be sure to put a **space before** and/or **after each Placeholder** so that the data will be correctly spaced grammatically in the final version of the letter

When you have finished, **Save** the **Field Trip Notice** form letter once more

7.4 PRINTING THE FIELD TRIP NOTICE

Before printing your Field Trip Notice letters on paper (hard copy), it's always a good idea to preview them on the screen (soft copy), with the appropriate data filled in for each version of the letter, so that you can confirm that the data from the Address List source document has been correctly merged with the form letter.

In *LibreOffice*, this is all part of the Print function.

From the **File** menu select **Print**

LibreOffice immediately recognizes that the Field Trip Notice document contains Address List database fields and asks you to confirm that you want to print a form letter (Fig. 7.13).

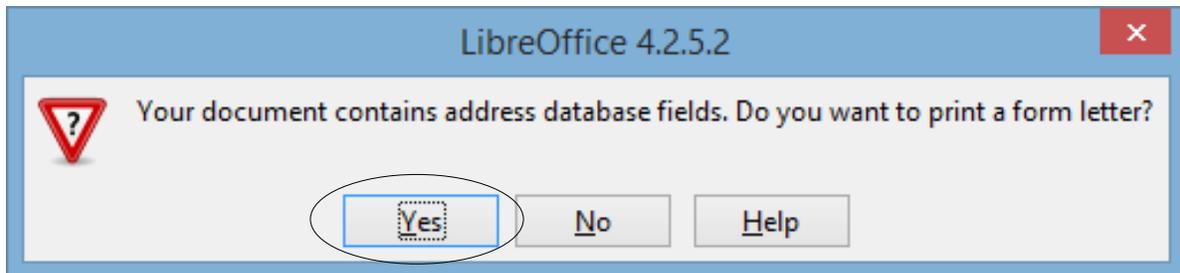


Fig. 7.13 Prompt to confirm form letter

Click on **Yes**

After a few seconds, you are presented with the Mail Merge dialog box (Fig. 7.14).

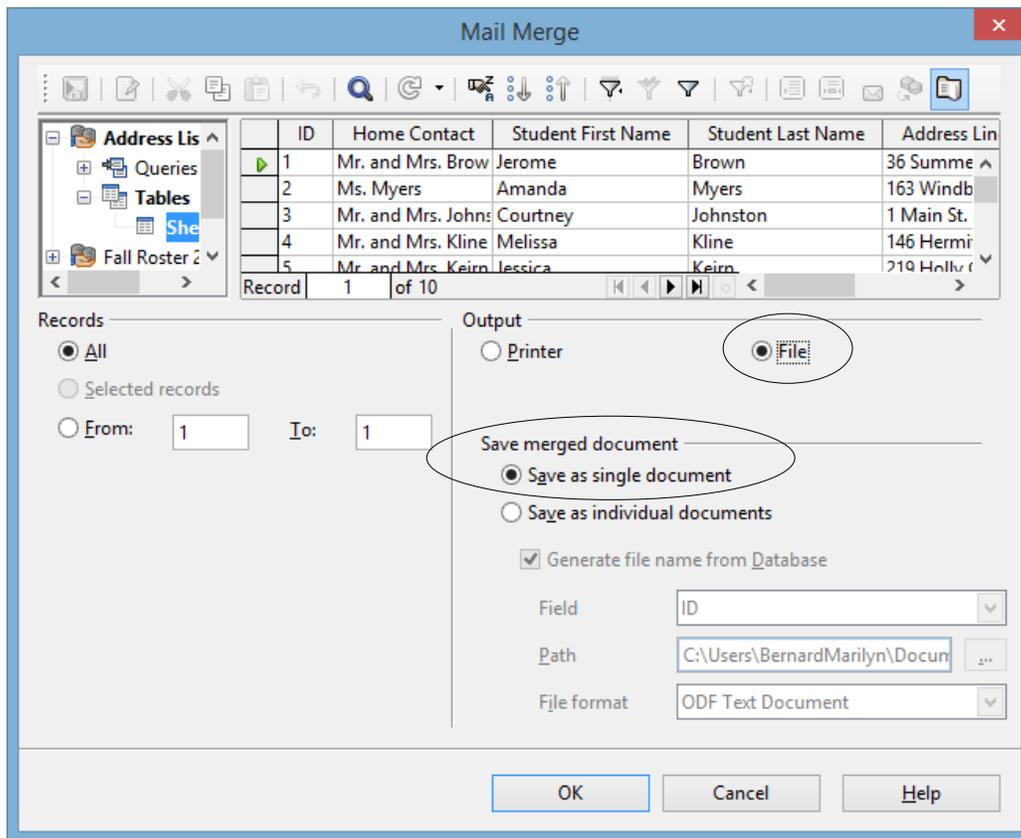


Fig. 7.14 Mail Merge dialog box

You want the output to go to a File. You also want to save the merged document as a *single document* which will contain all 10 of the Field Trip Notices, each one individually tailored to the *Home Contact* of a different student in the class.

Click on the **radio button** next to **File** to **select** that option and leave the **radio button** next to **Save as single document** selected (Fig. 7.14 above) then click on **OK**

LibreOffice now displays the *Save As* dialog box, prompting you to *Name* the Field Trip Notice merge file and decide where you want to save it.

In the **Save As** dialog box, navigate on your **USB drive**, to your **LibreOffice Work Files > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder, then, in the **File name:** data entry box, type **Field Trip Notice Merge Letters** and click on the **Save** button

The document *Field Trip Notice Merged Letters* is several pages long—at least 10 if each letter fits on one page, but 20 if each letter flows over onto a second page. Saving the merged letters is

a good idea. It means that you have a copy of the final version of the updated letters for your records—a customary practice with regard to professional correspondence.

Previewing your letters on screen

You're nearly there. But first you need to take a look at the Field Trip Notice Merge Letters to check that the data from the Address List has been correctly merged with the file.

Go to **File > Open** and **double click** on the **Field Trip Notice Merge Letters** file to **Open** it

This a long document, containing **all ten** of the field trip notices, so **scroll through to the end** to check **(a)** that there are indeed 10 letters (or however many you records you entered into the Address List database) and **(b)** that each letter has the appropriate merged data

Notice how the data from the Address List has been merged into each of the letters, giving each letter a personalized appearance (Fig. 7.15).

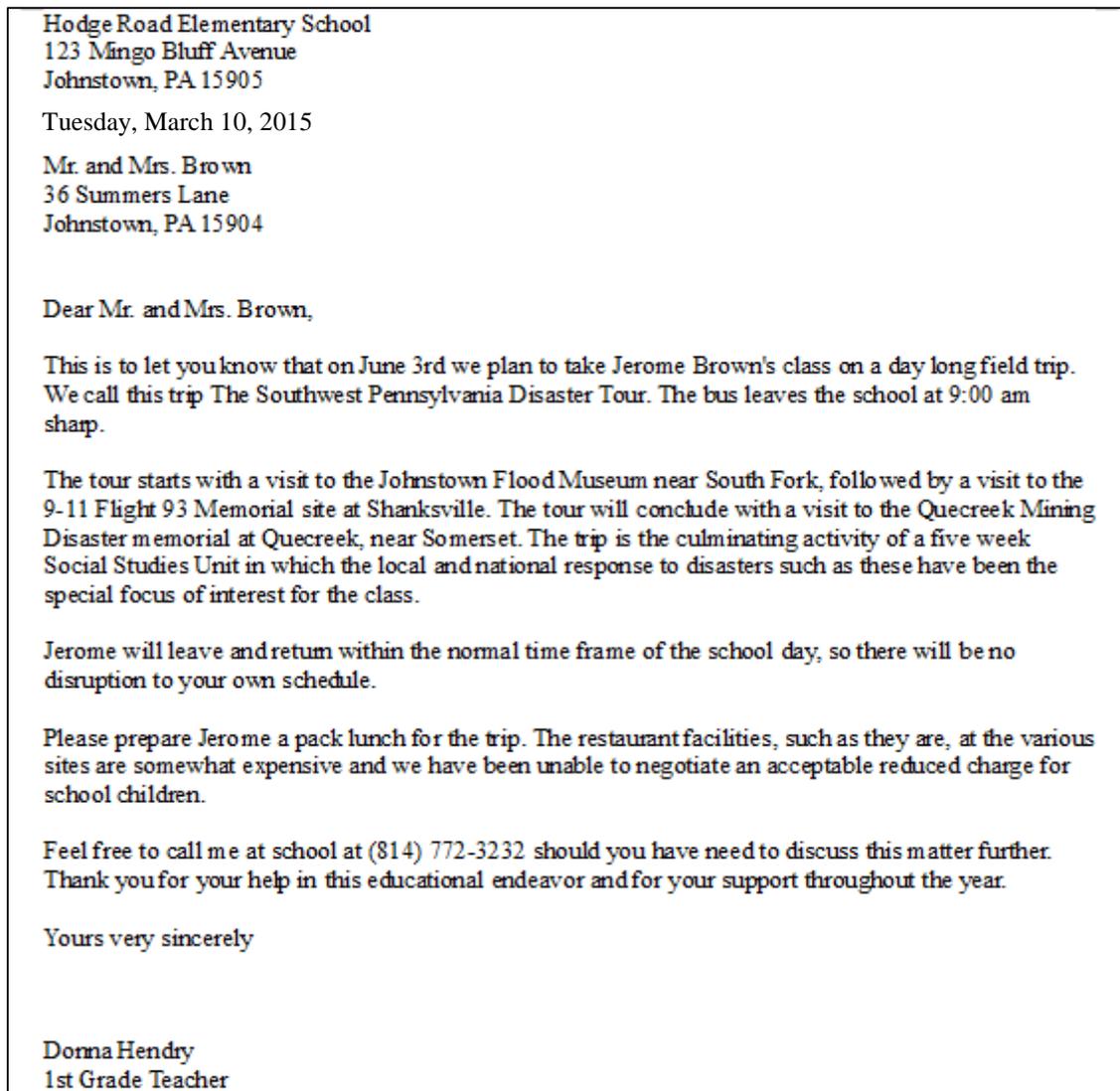


Fig. 7.15 The Field Trip Notice Merged Letters

Editing (further customizing) the recipients' letters

At this stage, you could do some final editing of the individual letters (the Field Trip Notices), prior to printing them as hard copy. The set of notices are all saved in one file and you can “visit” each letter and add a comment here or there which pertains to a particular student or the Home Contact.

For example, you could add a sentence to each letter saying something special about the student. This would further individualize the letters, giving parents the sense that the letter they receive is unique to them. In this way you can further personalize what is, in fact, a form letter. This is always a good thing to do, if you have the time.

After you have checked **all ten** of the Field Trip notices, and made any final edits or personal touches you want, **Save the Field Trip Notice Merge Letters** document

Saving a PDF version of the merged Field Trip Notices

Now is the time to convert the merged Field Trip Notices to PDF format.

At this stage, you have the Field Trip Notice merged with the Address List database and safely saved as a *LibreOffice Writer* document. But it would be a good idea to save the document as a PDF file, before going on to print the letters as hard copy (on paper) or soft copy (on the screen).

PDF stands for “Portable Document Format” and it was designed to allow for easy sharing a documents across different computers and operating systems. In other words, a PDF file, once saved, keeps its formatting/layout no matter where it might be viewed or printed. It is a more reliable format for all kinds of different types of documents.

Converting a document to PDF format is very easy to do. Essentially, you’re going to repeat the steps you took when you completed the merge of the Address List data into the Field Trip Notices merged document.

The **Field Trip Notice** merge document should still be open on your screen, but if it is not, from the **File** menu select **Open** and **double click** on the file **Field Trip Notice** to **open** it

Go to **File > Print** and, in the dialog box that pops up asking you to confirm that this is a **form letter** that you want to **print**, click on **Yes**

In the **Mail Merge dialog box** that comes up next, click on the **radio button** next to **File** to **select** that option

Leave the **radio button** next to **Save as single document** selected (Fig. 7.14 on page 224 above) then click on **OK**

The *Save As* dialog box comes up on the screen and you are asked to name the document and decide where you want to save it. This time you’re going to save the document as a **PDF file**, so here is how you do that.

In the **Save As Type:** data entry box, click on the **down arrow** next to **Save as type:** and, in the **menu of file types** that pops up, click on the option for **PDF - Portable Document Format (.pdf)** (Fig. 7.16 on the next page)

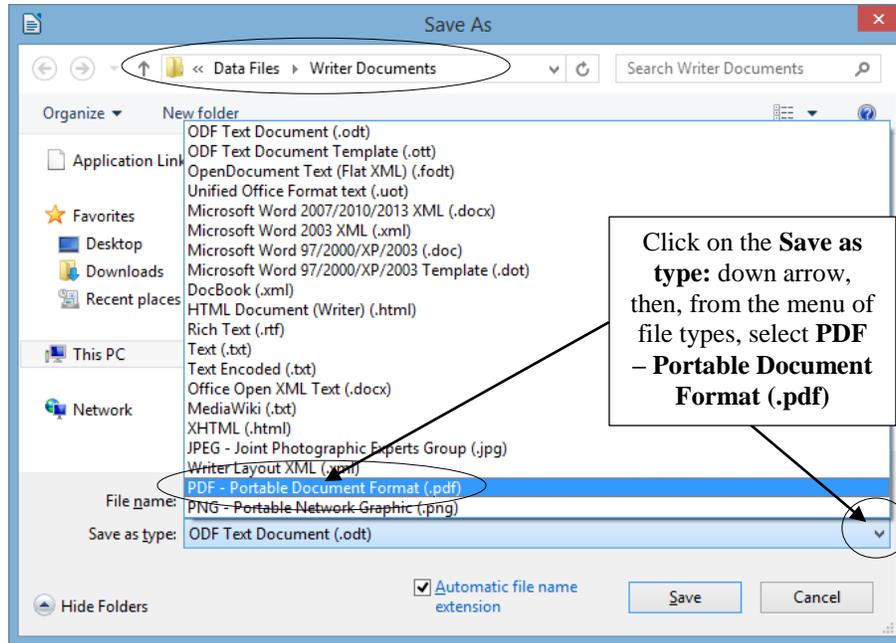


Fig. 7.16 Selecting the PDF file type for the Field Trip Notice merged document

Make sure you are saving to your **LibreOffice Work Files > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder (Fig. 7.15 above)

Now, in the **File name:** data entry box, type **Field Trip Notice Merge Docs** and click on **Save**, then wait while the Mail Merge Wizard's **Print Monitor** saves the ten Field Trip Notices in PDF format (Fig. 7.17)

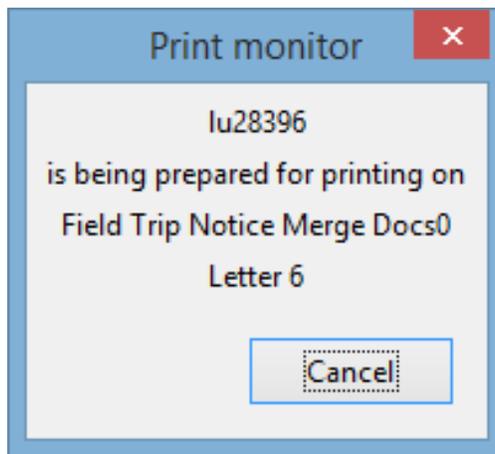


Fig. 7.17 Saving the PDF version of the Field Trip Notices

Printing the PDF version of the Field Trip Notices

You no longer need the **Field Trip Notice Writer** document, so **close** it, then go to **File > Open** and **open** the **Field Trip Notices Merge Docs** document (the **PDF** file)

In the left hand frame of the PDF window, you are now presented with thumbnails for each of the ten Field Trip Notices. On the right hand side of the window, you can see the *first* of the 10 Field

Trip Notices containing all the merge field data from the first record in the Address List database (Fig. 7.18).

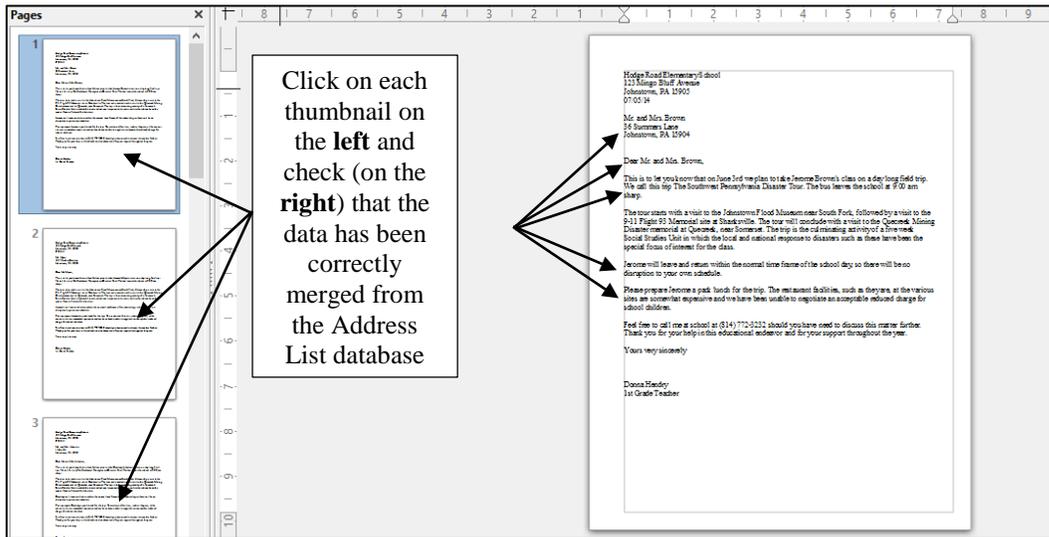


Fig. 7.18 Printing the PDF version of the letters with the Merge Fields filled in

In the **left hand frame** of the **PDF document** (Fig. 7.18 above), click in turn on each of the **thumbnails** of all **ten versions** of the **Field Trip Notice** to scan through the recipients' letters and confirm that the correct data has been merged with each one

If you intend to print out the Notices on paper, assuming all is well, and assuming you have a printer connected to your computer and turned on (with paper in the hopper), go ahead and click on **File > Print...** and *Writer* will print the 10 form letters

Close the Field Trip Notice Merge Docs PDF document when you are done

A summary of the *Writer* Mail Merge features

- You can insert the fields from the Address List database into the merge document (in our case the Field Trip Notice) in any order.
- You can put *more than one field in a line or in a paragraph*, and you can mix punctuation or other words or characters in amongst the fields. For example, you put City, State, and Zip on the same line, and you can insert a comma between the City and State fields.
- You can *repeat the use of a field* in a document. You put this feature into effect when you repeated the *Home Contact* field, once at the beginning of the receiver's address, and again in the salutation. You also repeated the *First Name* field several times.
- You can put together *an entire document containing only the data stored in the database*. You don't have to include any other text.

Mail merge is a powerful productivity tool. It takes planning, and a certain amount of work up front (which gets easier the more you do it), but it is obviously quicker than writing individual letters to the parents of a class of 20 to 30 students.

The more students you have in a class, the greater the productivity gain—though this is no argument for large class sizes! Plus, you can use the original form letter for generations of classes, year after year.

And don't forget that you can have your students help you plan and produce form letters, even when the contents may eventually contain privileged information. The tough part of the Mail Merge task is assembling the data. Your students will be happy to enter relevant data into the database. This data might include parent's names and addresses, for example, plus their own first and last names and any other useful info such as hobbies, and so forth.

Running off the letters then takes little effort on your part. When confidentiality is important, run off the letters when the students are not around. However, as a rule it is to everyone's advantage when you involve students in such tasks. It develops their sense of responsibility and increases their awareness that they are part of the process of education—not just victims of it!

7.5 PREPARING MAILING LABELS

Mailing labels are like those Return-Address stickers you put on the outside of your envelopes, or those address stickers that you often find on mass-mailed items that you receive in the mail. Producing them is simple enough, especially if you have completed all the tutorials up to this point.

Deciding on the data for the mailing label

Writer Merge documents, such as mailing labels, are always linked to a database. We'll keep it simple for now, so you'll use the *Address List* database you created for the *Field Trip Notice* form letter. You know by now how to create your own database of addresses, so you could create an address list of your own; in fact you probably have an electronic address list which you could, if you wanted, use for this exercise.

First you need to open a new *Labels* document.

Go to **File > New > Labels**

You should see the Labels dialog box on your screen (Fig. 7.19).

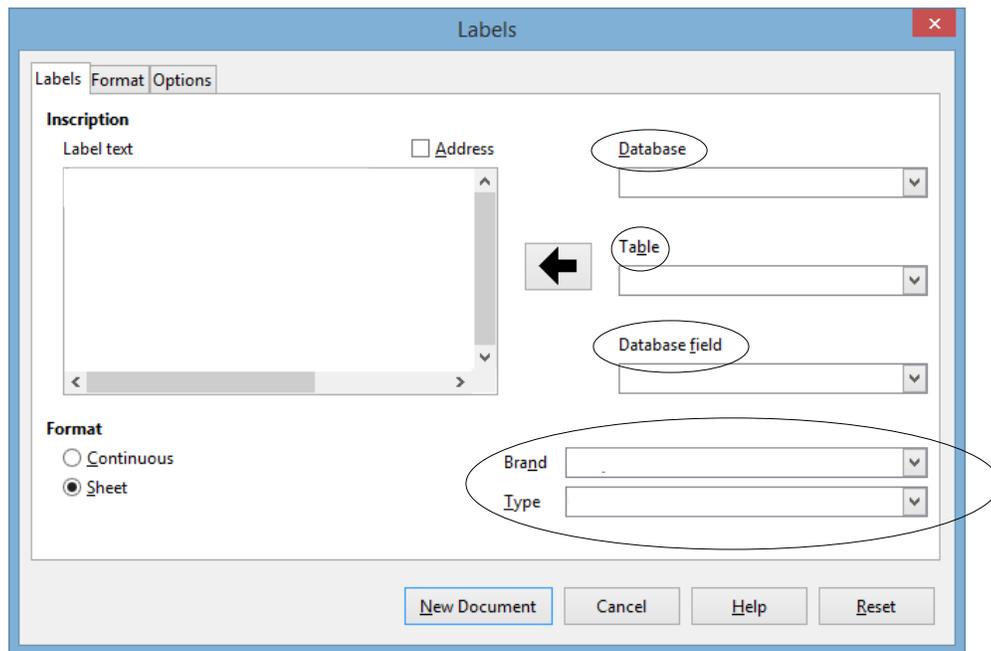


Fig. 7.19 The new Labels dialog box

You now need to make selections in the *Database*, *Table*, and *Database field* data entry boxes. You will also move into the Label Text box a complete set of *Address List database fields* for the Home Contact address, and you have to select the *Brand* and *Type* of mailing label you want to use (Fig. 7.19 above).

Fig. 7.20 shows the Labels dialog box after you have completed these tasks.

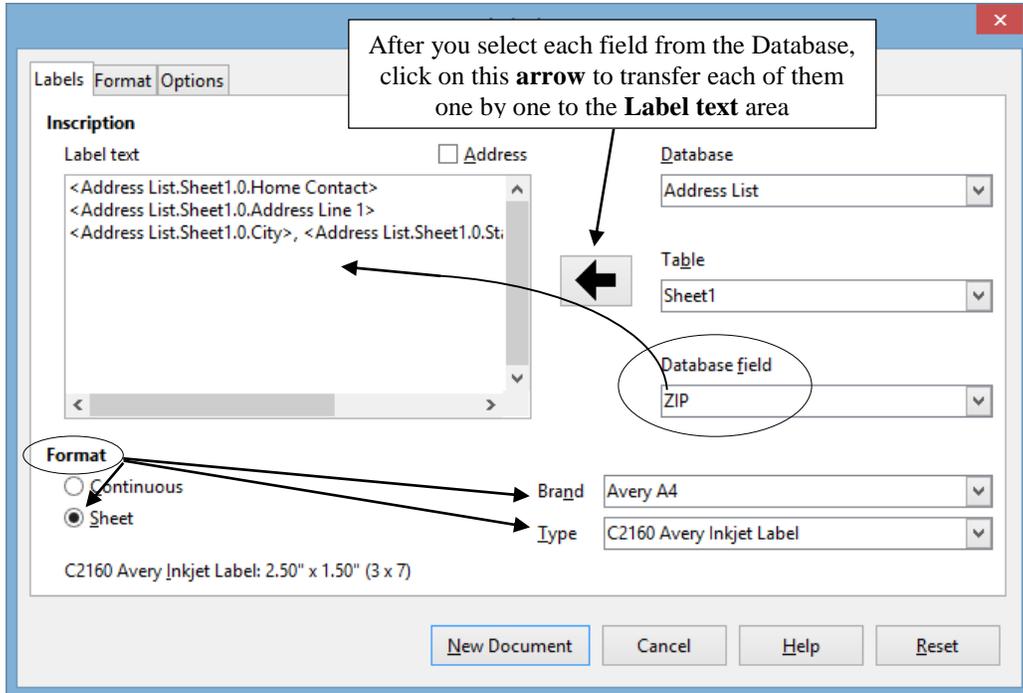


Fig. 7.20 The Labels dialog box after filling out the various entries

The following directions will step you through this process of filling out the Labels dialog box; follow them carefully. Notice, in Fig. 7.20, that you are going to lay out the Recipient address as it would appear on an envelope—as a *mailing label*.

In the **Database entry box**, click on the **down arrow** at the end of the data entry box and, from the list of **databases**, select **Address List**

Now, in the **Table entry box**, click on the **down arrow** at the end of the data entry box and, from the list of **Tables**, select **Sheet1**

Next you have to set up the layout for the recipient (Home Contact) address for the mailing label.

In the **Database field entry box**, click on the **down arrow** at the end of the data entry box and, from the list of **database fields**, select **Home Contact**, then click on the large arrow **←** to **transfer** the **Home Contact field** across to the **Label Text area**

Click on the **Enter** key to move the cursor to a **new line**

Again, in the **Database field entry box**, click on the **down arrow** at the end of the data entry box and, from the list of **database fields**, select **Address Line 1**, then click on the large arrow  to transfer the **Address Line 1** field across to the **Label Text area**

Click on the **Enter** key to move the cursor to a **new line**

In the **Database field entry box**, click on the **down arrow** and, from the list of **database fields**, select **City**, then click on the large arrow  to transfer the **City** field across to the **Label Text area**

Type a **comma** after the **City** field, then hit the **space bar**

In the **Database field entry box**, click on the **down arrow** and, from the list of **database fields**, select **State**, then click on the large arrow  to transfer the **State** field across to the **Label Text area**

Hit the **space bar** to space after the **State** field

Finally, in the **Database field entry box**, click on the **down arrow** and, from the list of **database fields**, select **Zip**, then click on the large arrow  one last time to transfer the **Zip** field across to the **Label Text area**

Selecting the standard format for the mailing label

The mailing labels are now filled with the database fields; all that remains is to tell *LibreOffice* what standard *format* you want them to have for your Field Trip Notices envelopes.

We're going to go with *Avery A4* for the *Brand* and *C2160 Avery Inkjet Label* for the *Type*. But the label format doesn't have to be *Avery A4*, of course.

If you already have sheets of mailing labels that you intend to use for this exercise, check out the box they come in and look for the Company Brand and Type of label. Then look up the appropriate Brand and Label Type in the menus that pop up when you click on the down arrows for the respective data entry boxes.

So, for your own purposes you can select any option you like; otherwise, for the sake of this tutorial go with the selections that follow for now.

In the **Format area** of the **Labels** dialog box (Fig. 7.20 previous page), leave the **Sheet** option already selected

In the **Brand** data entry box, click on the **down arrow** to bring up the menu of **standard** company mailing label formats and select the **Avery A4** option

Then, in the **Type** data entry box, select **C2160 Avery Inkjet Label**

In the **Labels** dialog box, click on the **Options** tab, and be sure to click to put a **check mark** next to **Synchronize contents** to ensure that all the labels are merged with the **Address List database**

Finally click on **New Document**

Immediately, *LibreOffice* presents a sheet of mailing labels with all the database fields laid out as per the design you specified in the Labels dialog box (Fig. 7.21).

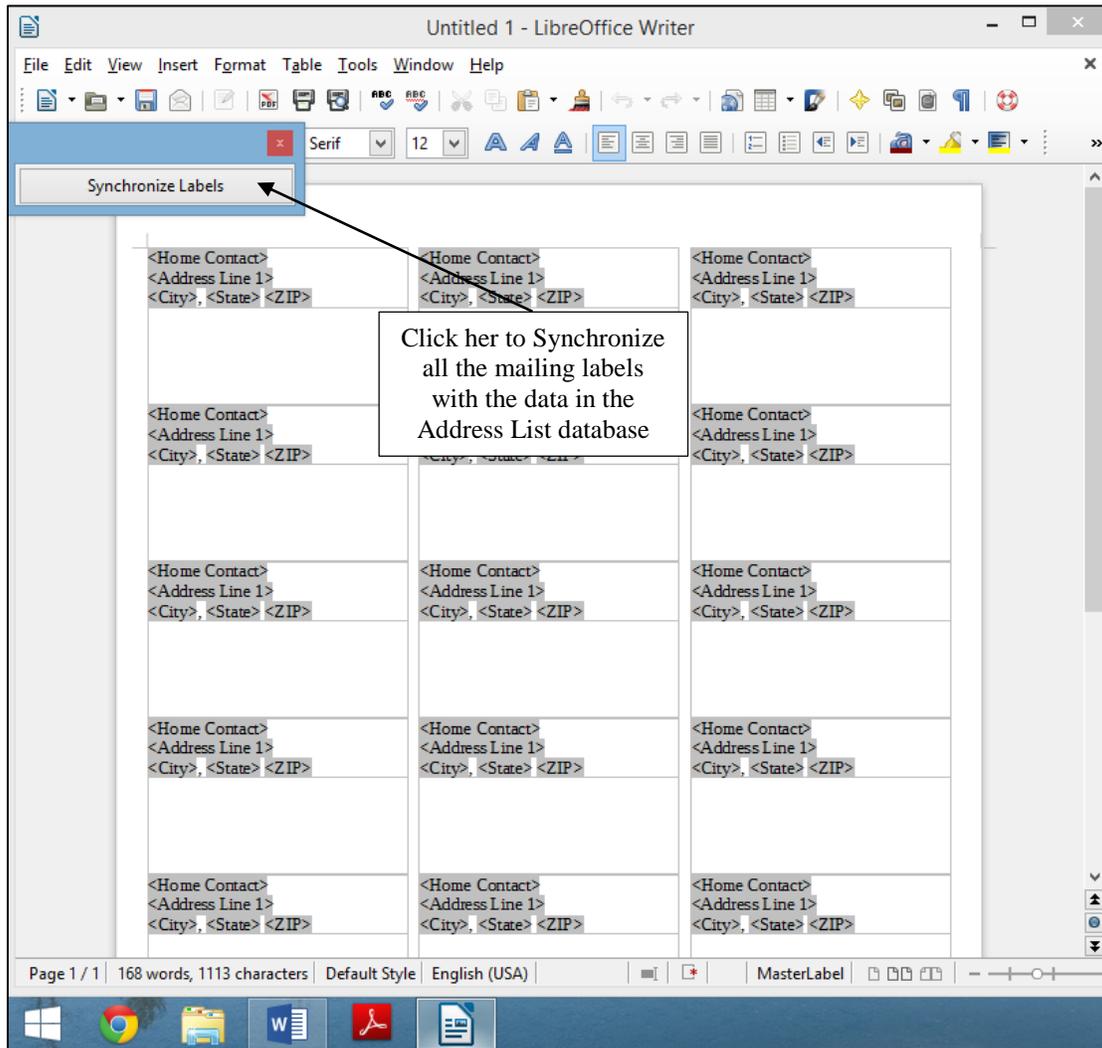


Fig. 7.21 The template mailing labels sheet

Click on the **Synchronize Labels** button (Fig 7.21), then go to **File > Save As...**, navigate to your **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder and **save** the new document with the name **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels**

Previewing your mailing labels on screen

Now you are ready to go ahead and *preview* the sheet of mailing labels with all the data from the database, which you should always do before sending them to the printer.

From the **File** menu select **Print**

As before, *LibreOffice* immediately recognizes that the *Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels* document contains *Address List* database fields and asks you to confirm that you want to print a form letter.

Click on **Yes**

After a few seconds, you are presented with the Mail Merge dialog box (Fig. 7.22).

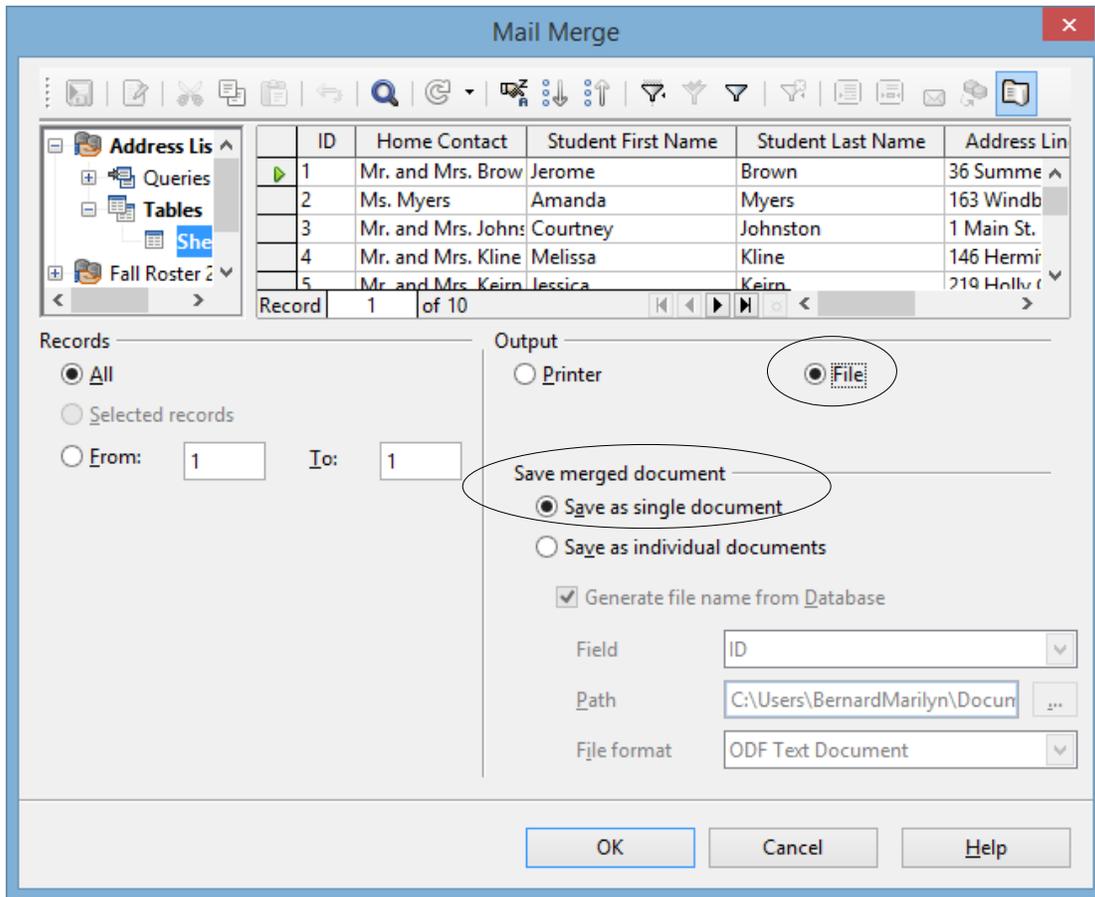


Fig. 7.22 Mail Merge dialog box

You want the output to go to a File. You also want to save the merged document as a *single document* which will contain all 10 of the Field Trip Notice Mailing Labels, each one individually tailored to the *Home Contact* of a different student in the class.

Click on the **radio button** next to **File** to send the **output** to a **File**, and leave the **radio button** next to **Save as single document** selected (Fig. 7.22 above) then click on **OK**

LibreOffice now displays the *Save As* dialog box, prompting you to *Name* the merge file and decide where you want to save it.

In the **Save As** dialog box, navigate, on your **USB drive**, to your **LibreOffice Work Files > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder, then, in the **File name:** data entry box, type **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** as before and click on the **Save** button

LibreOffice will ask you if you want to save the file with the same name as the existing file, which you do, so click on **Yes** then **Close** the **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels**

As noted above, it's always a good idea to take a look at the Field Trip Notice Mailing Labels to check that the data from the Address List has been correctly merged with the file.

Go to **File > Open** and **double click** on the **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** file to **Open** it

Notice how the data from the Address List has been merged into each of the mailing labels, giving each label a customized look (Fig. 7.23).

Mr. and Mrs. Brown 36 Summers Lane Johnstown, PA 15904	Ms. Myers 163 Windber Gardens Johnstown, PA 15905	Mr. and Mrs. Johnston 1 Main St. Johnstown, PA 15904
Mr. and Mrs. Kline 146 Hermitage Circle Windber, PA 15907	Mr. and Mrs. Keirn 219 Holly Crescent Richland, PA 15904	Mr. Hershberger 45 Brindle Lane Johnstown, PA 15905
Dr. and Mrs. Schmidt 2113 Coverdale Blvd Johnstown, PA 15905	Mr. and Dr. Suvak Gondola Mansions, Apt. 22 Meyersdale, PA 15945	Mr. and Mrs. Herter 43 Hermes Court Johnstown, PA 15906
Mr. and Mrs. Plummer 32 Maple Ave. Johnstown, PA 15905		

Fig. 7.23 The Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels

Check out the layout and content of the mailing labels. If you had many addresses in your Address List you might need to scroll to check them all out, or you could check out individual addresses by clicking on *Ctrl+f* to *Find* a recipient... This isn't necessary for this exercise since you have only a few (10) names and addresses in your Address List.

You don't need the **Field Trip Notice Mailing Labels** file for the exercise that follows, so go ahead and **Close** it, but keep open the **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** document

Saving a PDF version of the merged Field Trip Notice Mailing Labels

Now is the time to convert the Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels to PDF format so that you will have a version in that format for printing purposes. You'll recall that PDF stands for "Portable Document Format" and it was designed to allow for easy sharing a documents across different computers and operating systems. In other words, a PDF file, once saved, keeps its formatting/layout no matter where it might be viewed or printed. It is a more reliable format for all kinds of different types of documents.

Converting a document to PDF format is very easy to do. Essentially, you're going to repeat the steps you took when you completed the merge of the Address List database into the Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels document. Here's a reminder of the steps to do this.

The **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** document should still be open on your screen, but if it is not, from the **File** menu select **Open** and **double click** on the file **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** to open it

Go to **File > Print** and, in the dialog box that pops up asking you to confirm that this is a **form letter** that you want to **print**, click on **Yes**

In the **Mail Merge dialog box** that comes up next, click on the **radio button** next to **File** to **select** that option

Leave the **radio button** next to **Save as single document** selected (Fig. 7.1 on page 224 above) then click on **OK**

The *Save As* dialog box comes up on the screen and you are asked to name the document and decide where you want to save it. This time you're going to save the document as a **PDF file**, so here is how you do that.

In the **Save As Type:** data entry box, click on the **down arrow** next to **Save as type:** and, in the **menu of file types** that pops up, click on the option for **PDF - Portable Document Format (.pdf)** (Fig. 7.24)

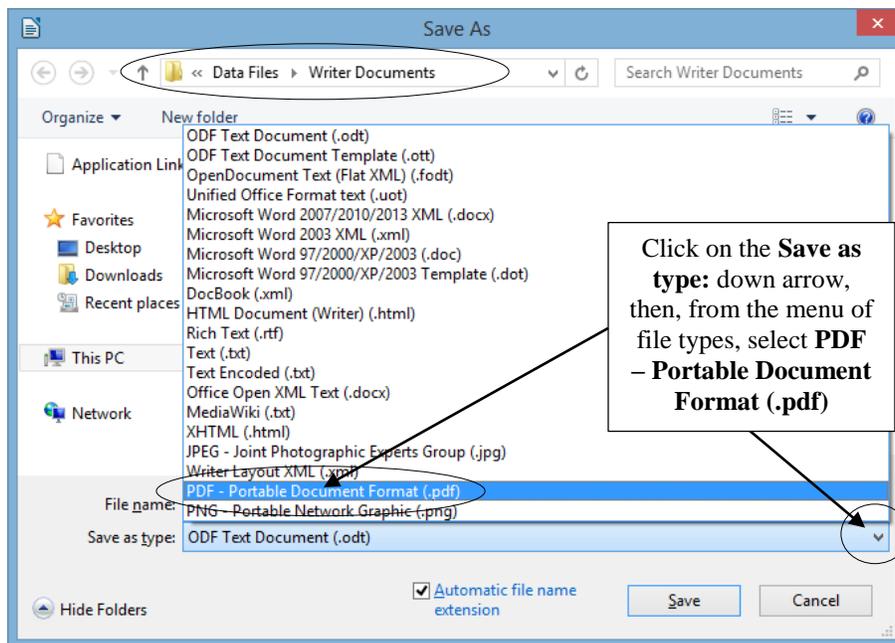


Fig. 7.24 Selecting the PDF file type for the Field Trip Notice merged document

Make sure you are saving to your **LibreOffice Work Files > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder (Fig. 7.24 above)

Now, in the **File name:** data entry box, type **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** (you can keep the same name since it's a different **file type (PDF)** than the *Writer* version) and click on **Save**, then wait while the Mail Merge Wizard's **Print Monitor** saves the mailing labels in **PDF format**

Printing the PDF version of the mailing labels

Go to **File > Open** and **open** the **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels** document (the **.pdf** version)

In the **right hand frame** of the **PDF document**, scan through the recipients' address on each of the labels and confirm that the correct data has been merged with each one

If you intend to print out the mailing labels on paper, and assuming you have a printer connected to your computer, go ahead and click on **File > Print...** and *Writer* will print the mailing label sheet(s) for you

Close the Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels PDF document when you are done

7.6 PREPARING A NEW FORM LETTER USING AN EXISTING DATABASE

By way of reinforcement of what you have learned in this lesson, let's prepare another form letter, this time using an existing database.

In your *Work Files for LibreOffice/Miscellaneous Documents/Merge Documents* folder there is a database called *Roster 2014*. It is a set of records for a sample class of 25 students. You are going to use the data in this database to prepare a form letter called *Mid Term Report*, which will report to parents/guardians on their child's progress-to-date half way through a semester. You are going to have *Writer* merge the *Mid Term Report* with the *Roster 2014* database.

First you need to open a *Writer* template as a basis for the report. The template is called *Letters*.

Go to **File > Open >** navigate to your **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Miscellaneous Files > Merge Documents >** and double click on **Letters** to open it

Registering the Roster 2014 database

You must register the *Roster 2014* database with *LibreOffice* before you can use it to merge the *Roster 2014* data into the *Letters* merge document. Follow these steps to do this.

Go to the **Tools menu > Options**, then in the **left hand frame of the Options window** select **LibreOffice Base > Databases** (Fig. 7.25)

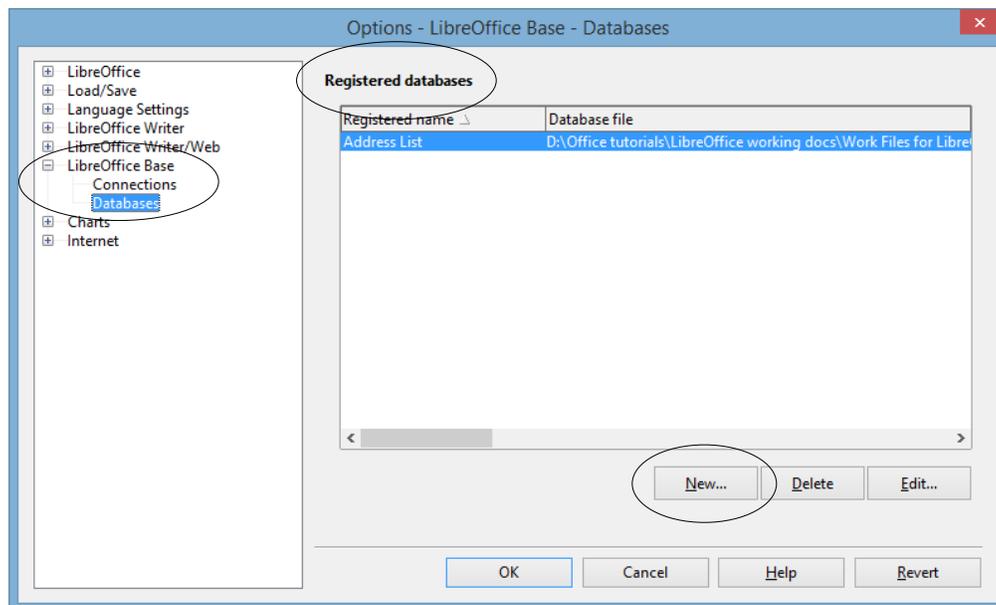


Fig. 7.25 The Tools > Options dialog box

In the **right hand frame**, in the **Registered databases** section, click on **New**

This brings up the *Create Database Link* dialog box (Fig. 7.26).

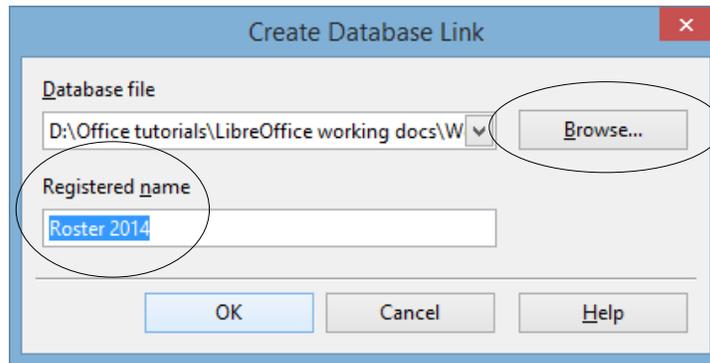


Fig. 7.26 Create Database Link dialog box

In the **Create Database Link dialog box**, click on **Browse** and navigate to your **USB drive > Work files for LibreOffice > Miscellaneous Documents > Merge Documents** and **double click** on **Roster 2014** to put it in the **Registered name** data entry box (Fig. 7.26 above), then click on **OK**

Notice that the *Roster 2014* database is now in the *Registered Name* list in the *Registered Databases* section of the *Options* dialog box (Fig. 7.27).

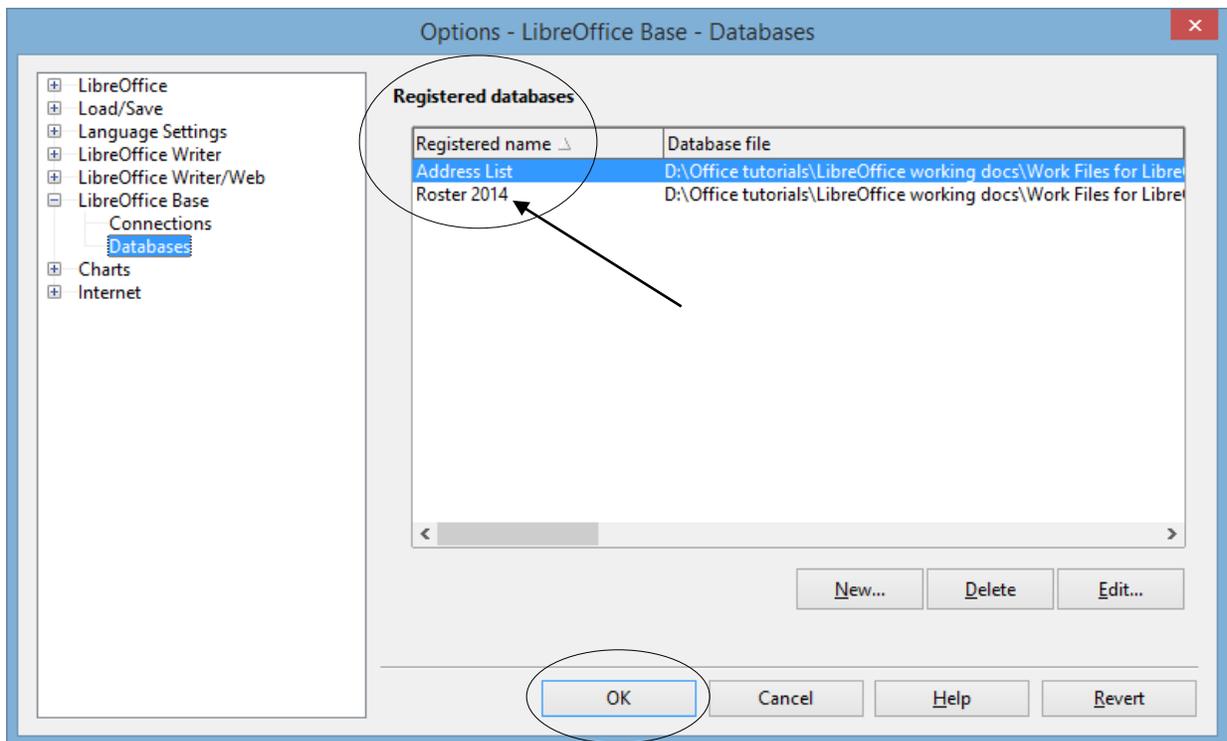


Fig. 7.27 Adding *Roster 2014* to the list of registered databases

Click on **OK** again to complete the **registration** of the **Roster 2014** database

The *Roster 2014* database is now a registered database and may be used as a data source for the *Letters* document you are working with and which should still be open on your screen.

In the **View** menu select **Data Sources**, then, in the list of databases at **top-left** of the **Letters** window, click on the **+** (plus sign) next to **Roster 2014** and again on the **+** (plus sign) next to **Tables** to bring up the **Roster 2014 Table** (Fig. 7.28)

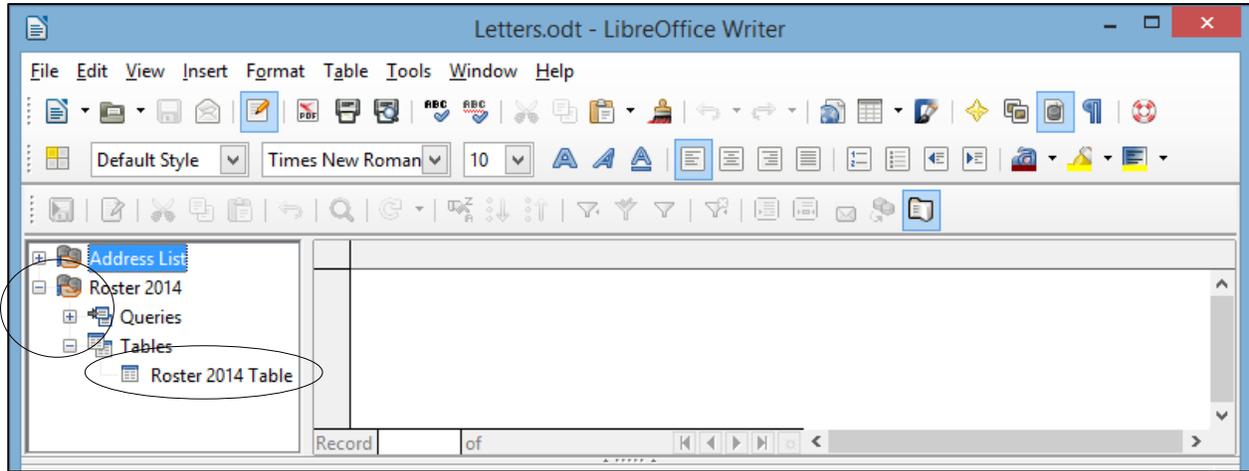


Fig. 7.28 Viewing the *Roster 2014* data source

Now, still in the top-left frame, click **once** on **Roster 2014 Table**, then wait while the data from the **Roster 2014 database** is displayed **top-right** (Fig. 7.29)

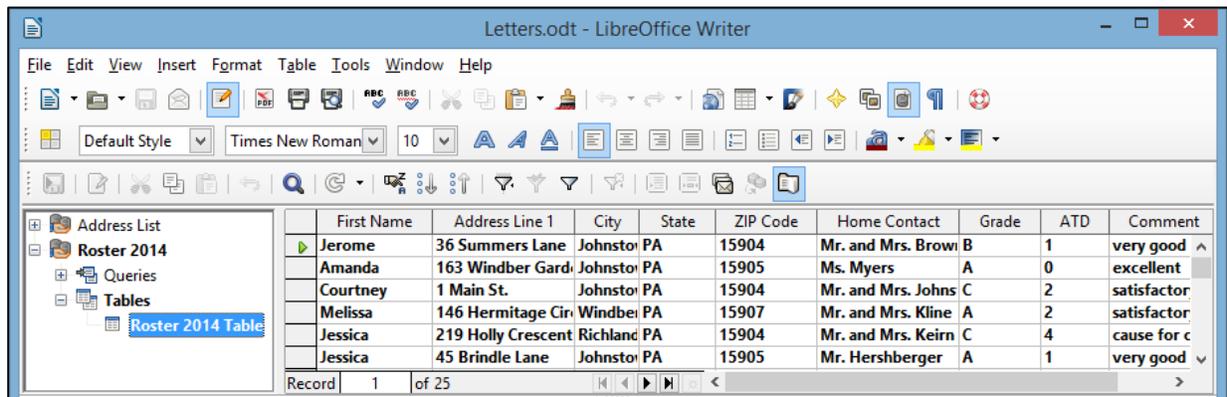


Fig. 7.29 The Roster 2014 data displayed top right of the Letters window

Creating the Mid Term Report form letter

Next you are going to use the *Letters Writer* document (still on the screen and also saved on your disk) to create a *Mid Term Report* document which will go out to the parents of your students. The report is illustrated in Fig. 7.29 on the next page. **Do NOT start typing the report in yet!** You have a couple of other things to do to get set up for the mail merge.

First you must save the *Letters* document with a different name so that you will keep the copy of the *Letters* document as a template for future use.

Select **File > Save As...**, change the name of the **Letters** document to **Mid Term Report** (this will be the name of the form letter you are going to create), then navigate to your **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Data Files > Writer Documents folder** and click on **Save**

You are going to have *Writer* produce one letter for each student in the *Roster 2014* class. As you can see, the form letter illustrated in Fig. 7.30 reports to parents on how well their child is doing half way through the semester.

Hodge Road Elementary School
123 Mingo Bluff Avenue
Johnstown, PA 23456

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

<Home Contact>
<Address Line 1>
<City>, <State> <ZIP Code>

Dear <Home Contact>,

As you may already be aware, I am <First Name>'s home room teacher this year. You will be pleased to know that the class has settled down well, and the children are making excellent progress on the whole.

I am writing to report to you about <First Name>'s participation in school this first half of the current session. I'm sure you appreciate how important it is for you to be aware of where your child stands, especially in regard to class grades and attendance.

<First Name>'s current grade is <Grade>. <First Name> has missed <Comment> days so far this session, which is <Comment>.

Please feel free to contact me at any time to arrange a conference, especially if the grade or attendance data in the previous paragraph are not what you expected.

I can be contacted at school between the hours of 7:30 am and 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. My phone number is 814-269-2923. You may also contact me using email. My email address is vanstanden@keystone.k12.pa.us.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours very sincerely,

Mandi Van Staden
Instructional Technology Coordinator

You need to insert the Date in this format, then insert the other placeholders/fields from the database where indicated in the letter

Fig. 7.30 The Mid Term Report form letter

You already told *Writer* that you want to merge the form letter with the data stored in the *Roster 2014* database. The placeholders in Fig. 7.30 above (where the field names are enclosed by the <...> brackets) indicate the location in the form letter where data from the *Roster 2014* database is to be merged when the letters are actually printed out.

Wherever you see a placeholder (<...>), use the *mouse* to drag the appropriate field header down from the data displayed top right as you work your way through the letter.

You already completed a similar exercise earlier in this lesson. If you are still unsure about what to do, you might like to check back at what you did—section 7.3 *Creating the form letter (the Field Trip Notice)*, starting on page 208.

All that remains is for you to type the letter as it is illustrated in Fig. 7.30 above.

So type the **contents** of the **Mid Term Report** as illustrated in Fig. 7.30 above

Be sure to use the **Date format** illustrated in Fig. 7.30 above—**Insert > Fields > Date**, **right click** on the default **numeric Date** and, in the pop up **context menu** of **Field Options**, select the **Wednesday, December 31, 1999 style**

When you are done, **Save the Mid Term Report**

Pasting a chart into the letter

The letter needs one final touch. You are going to put a chart in the Mid Term Report. You will create the chart in a *Calc* spreadsheet, then copy it into the Mid Term Report. It's easy enough to do if you already completed the *Calc* tutorials (Lessons 4 and 5) of this *LibreOffice* book.

Go to **File menu > Open...**, navigate to **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Miscellaneous Files > Merge documents** and **double click** on the **Gradedata** spreadsheet

You are going to create a simple chart using the data in the *Gradedata* spreadsheet. This will be useful reinforcement of what you learned in Lesson 5. Here are the steps, if you need the help.

Highlight cells **A1** through **B6** (the data that will be represented in the chart), then go to **Insert menu > Object > click on Chart...** (Fig. 7.31)

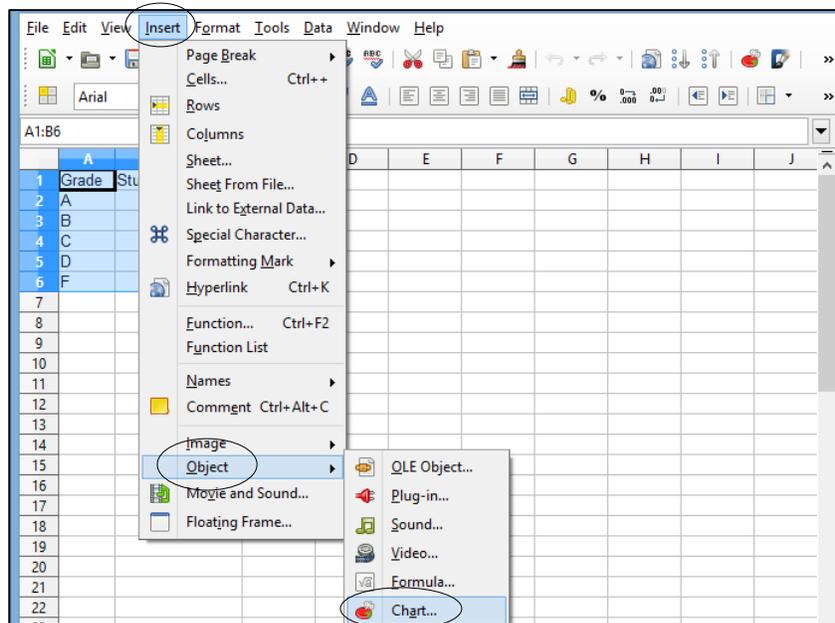


Fig. 7.31 Selecting the Chart option in Calc

LibreOffice Calc immediately creates a default plain Column chart based on the data in the spreadsheet, and then presents the Chart Wizard dialog box (Fig. 7.32) to help you create a more interesting or, more to the point, more *meaningful* chart.

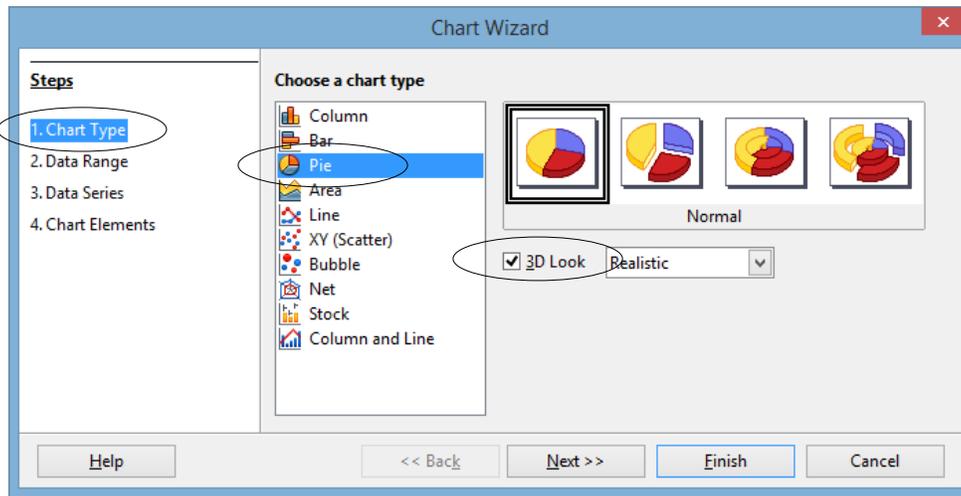


Fig. 7.32 The Chart Wizard dialog box

Start, in **Step 1**, by selecting the **Pie** chart option, then click in the check box next to **3D Look** (Fig. 7.32 above)

Calc quickly assembles the chart and displays it on the screen (you should see the small handles around the chart indicating that it is a *selected* object)—Fig. 7.33.

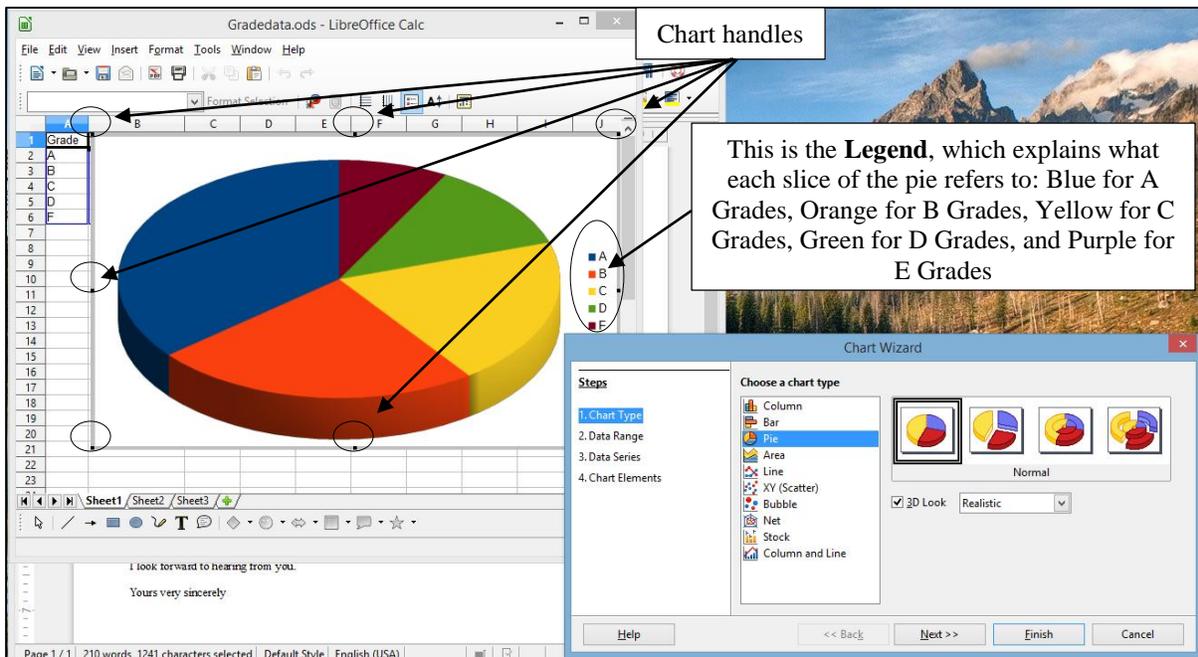


Fig. 7.33 The Grade 4 Reporting Period basic 3D Pie chart

As charts go, it's pretty plain at this stage, and not very meaningful at all. The chart needs a title and subtitle, and each of the slices need numerical values associated with them.

Fig. 7.34 illustrates what we're looking for in the final version of the chart.

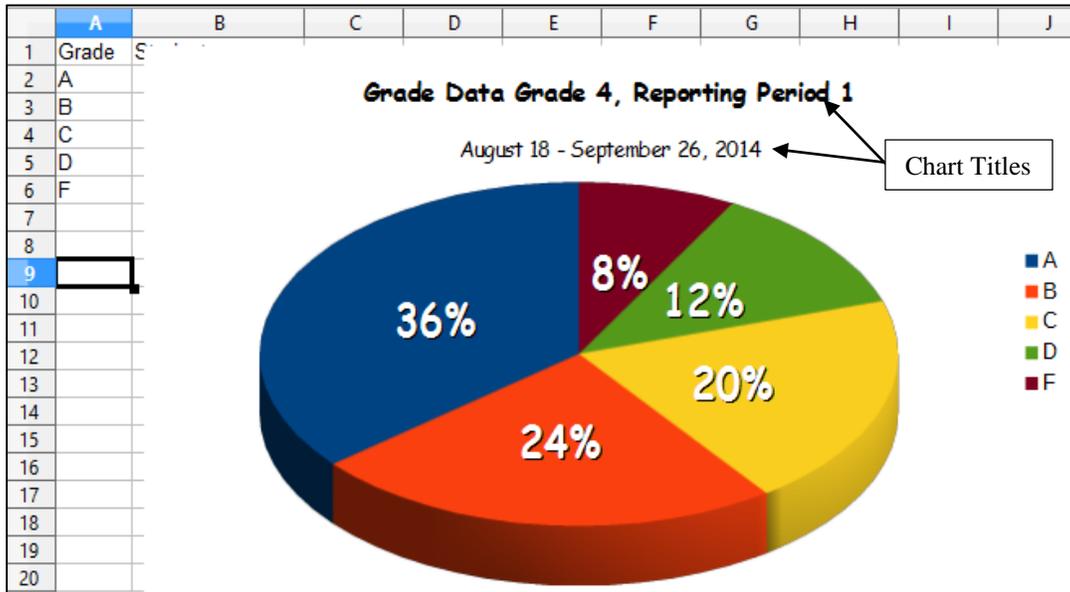


Fig. 7.34 Final version of the Grade 4 grading period data chart

Essentially, a chart like this is an *opportunity* to create “a picture worth a thousand words.” And the *LibreOffice* suite of productivity software does a good job of making this possible with little effort on your part.

Let's do what is necessary to arrive at this final version of the chart. We don't need to do anything with Steps 2 and 3 of the Chart Wizard because our data sample is very simple.

So... Start with the Chart Titles (see Fig. 7.33 above).

In the **left hand frame** of the **Chart Wizard** dialog box, click on **Step 4** to bring up the **Chart Wizard > Chart Elements** dialog (Fig. 7.35)

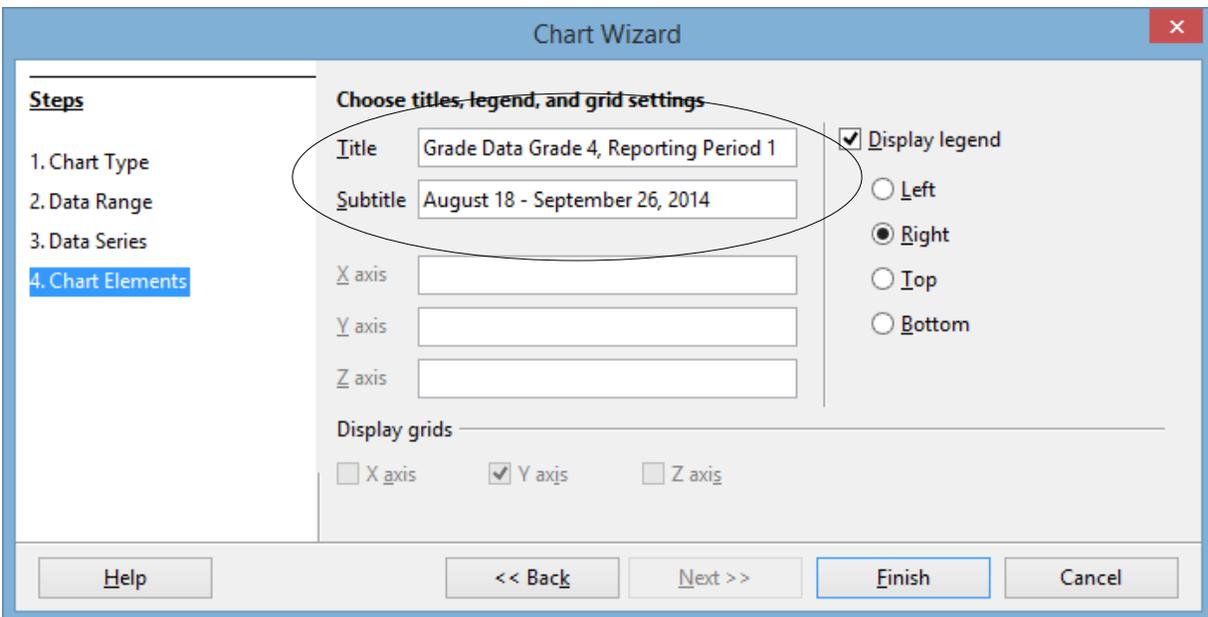


Fig. 7.35 The Chart Wizard > Chart Elements dialog

Go ahead and type in the *Title*: **Grade Data Grade 4, Reporting Period 1**, then type in the *Subtitle*: **August 18 – September 26, 2014** and click on **Finish**

Next, let's change the *font* of the Title and Subtitle text.

On the **Title text** (Grade Data Grade 4, Reporting Period 1), **double click anywhere** to put a **blue box** around it, then **triple click** on the **Title text** to select the **whole of the title text** (Fig. 7.36)

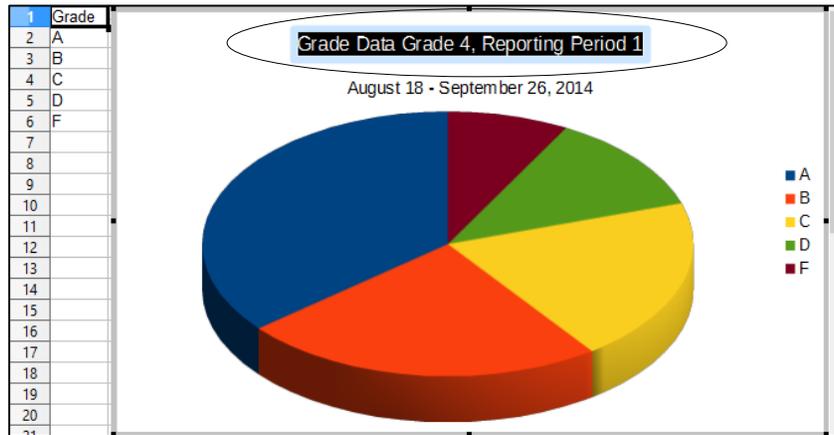


Fig. 7.36 Selected Title text

Now, **right click** anywhere in the **Title Text** box and, in the **context menu** that pops up, select **Format Title...** to bring up the **Main Title** dialog box (Fig. 7.37)

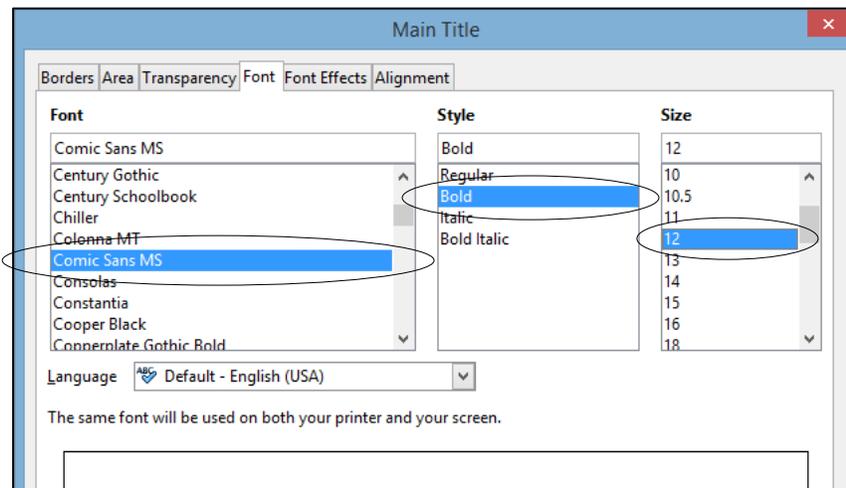


Fig. 7.37 Formatting the Chart Title

In the **Main Title** dialog box (see Fig. 7.37 above), click on the **Font** tab and, in the **Font** menu, scroll to select **Comic Sans MS**, then in the **Style** menu select **Bold**, and in the **Size** menu select **12**, then click on **OK**

Now you need to do the same for the *Subtitle* text: *August 18 – September 26, 2014*.

Double click anywhere on the **Subtitle** text to put a **blue box** around it, then **triple click** on the **Subtitle** text to select the **whole of the text**

Now, **right click** anywhere in the **Subtitle Text** box and, in the **context menu** that pops up, again select **Format Title...** to bring up the **Subtitle** dialog box (more or less the same as Fig. 7.37 above)

In the **Subtitle** dialog box, click on the **Font** tab and, in the **Font menu**, scroll to select **Comic Sans MS**, then in the **Style menu** select **Regular**, and in the **Size menu** select **10**, then click on **OK**

That takes care of the chart titles. All that remains is to put *labels* on each of the slices in the Pie Chart to help the reader of the Mid Term Report *interpret* the data in the chart.

Right click anywhere on the **pie chart itself** and, in the **context menu** that pops up, select **Insert Data Labels**

LibreOffice immediately updates each slice of the Pie Chart with the value (number) from the *Gradedata* spreadsheet that corresponds to each of the Grades—A, B, C, D, or E (Fig. 7.38).

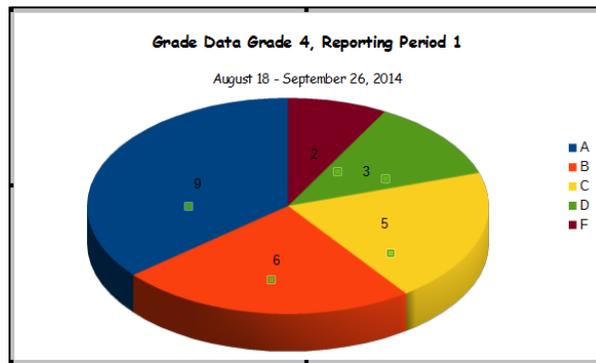


Fig. 7.38 Updated slices of the Pie Chart

Your last task is to format those numbers in each of the slices so that they stand out and provide more information to the parents or guardians who are going to use the chart to compare their child's grade with those of the rest of the class.

Right click anywhere on the **Pie chart** and, in the **context menu** that pops up, select **Format Data Labels...** to bring up the **Data Labels for Data Series 'Students'** dialog box (Fig. 7.39)

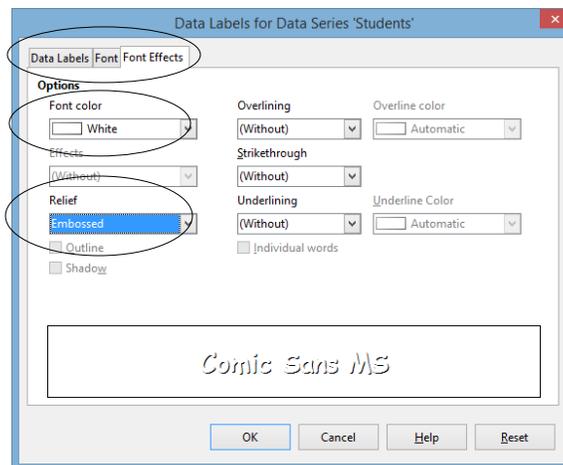


Fig. 7.39 Data Labels dialog box

Click first on the **Data Labels tab** and click to put a **check mark** in the **box** next to Show value as **percentage**

Next, click on the **Font tab** and select **Comic Sans MS** for the **Font**, **Bold** for the **Style**, and **20** for the **Size** of the font

Finally, click on the **Font Effects tab** and select **White** for the **Font Color**, and **Embossed** for the **Font Relief**, then click on **OK**

Save the **Gradedata spreadsheet** with the **chart** embedded in it

Now you can copy the chart and paste it into the Mid Term Report.

Click anywhere on the **white background** of the pie chart so that you see the **small green handles** around the edges of the chart box—which means that the chart is selected (Fig. 7.40)

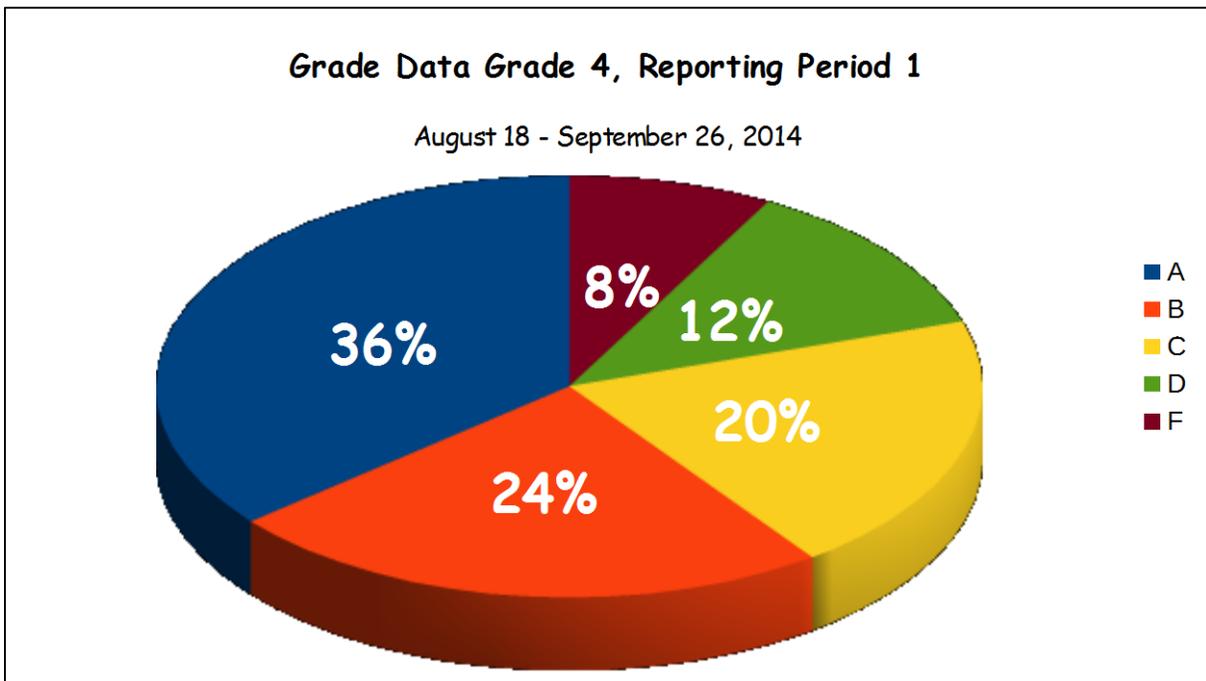


Fig. 7.40 Finished chart ready to be copied and pasted

Press **Ctrl+c** to **copy** the chart to the clipboard

Locate and switch back to the *Writer Mid Term Report* which is still open on your screen

The *Mid Term Report* document should now be the active window on the screen.

Click to position the cursor at the **very beginning** of the paragraph that reads **"Please feel free to contact me...."**

Press **Ctrl+v** to paste the chart into the **Mid Term Report** document then, in the **Formatting toolbar** at the top of the screen, click on the **Center** icon to **center** the chart

As is, the letter probably spills over onto a second page because of the chart. This is no problem if it cannot be avoided.

Navigate to your **USB drive > Work Files for LibreOffice > Data Files > Writer Documents** folder and **Save the Mid Term Report**

Final tasks

First you need to complete the merge of the Mid Term Report with the Roster 2014 database.

In the **File** menu select **Print**, in the dialog box that pops up click on **Yes** to confirm that this is a **form letter**

In the next dialog box, click to send the **Output** to a **File** and click on the **radio button** to **Save as a single document**, name the file **Mid Term Report Merged Document**, and **Save** it again

Next you need to save the merged Mid Term Report as a PDF file.

In the **File** menu, again select **Print**, and, in the dialog box that pops up, click on **Yes** to confirm that this is a **form letter**

In the next dialog box, click to send the **Output** to a **File** and click on the **radio button** to **Save as a single document**, then in the **Save As** dialog box, in the **Save as type:** data entry box, click on the **down arrow** at the end of the entry box and, in the menu of file types that pops up, click on the option for **PDF - Portable Document Format (.pdf)**

Name the file **Mid Term Report Merged Document**, and **Save** it again

If you wanted to print them all out on paper, make sure the printer is turned on and has paper in it, then click on **File > Print...** and proceed as you now know how.

LOOKING BACK

This tutorial has involved you in activities that would normally be expected of a sophisticated computer user. This is not to say that you have therefore become an advanced user yourself. Actually, you are the best judge of that, because the term is relative anyway. As the old adage goes, people who think they know everything usually know next to nothing at all; and people who genuinely know a great deal generally recognize that they still have so much to learn.

What is important is that you use the computing skills you have acquired. Only thus can they become second nature, a natural extension of your body and mind, making you more productive, and freeing you from preoccupation with the humdrum daily grind of classroom administration and control.

LOOKING FORWARD

The remaining lessons in this set of ESSENTIAL *LibreOffice* tutorials will provide you with the opportunity to learn more about the *LibreOffice Base* database and with the *Impress* presentation application. For the former you will learn how to work with an existing database for tasks such as searching and report-generation. For the *Impress* lessons you will prepare an outline and you will

work with clip art and other graphics to create slide shows for presentations. You will also learn how to create an interactive PowerPoint presentation

Having worked your way through the lessons to this point, you should be in a position to recognize the value of what you have learned, value both to you and to your students in the context of the K-12 classroom.

SKILL CONSOLIDATION

Complete these exercises to reinforce what you learned in Lesson 7.

1. Imagine a scenario where you invite your students (as an assignment, perhaps) to prepare sets of questions for tests based on the material that you have covered in class. Each student types his or her questions into the database. You would check the database to make sure that each student had completed the assignment. Then you would print a copy of the full set of test questions for every student to use as a study guide. When the date for the test approaches you would simply select out those that you want to use, and print up the test using the pre-prepared test report format.

Individually or together with a team of your classmates, prepare a database to store sets of test questions. Make up a representative set of, say, 20 questions, and store them in the database. Prepare a test report format (form letter) to merge with the test question database. Use record selection rules to select ten out of the 20 questions. Print out the test (merge to printer).

2. Get together with a group of your classmates or colleagues. Compile a list of suggestions for useful macros to use with *Writer*—macros like the SchoolAddress macro that you learned in this tutorial. For example, you could create a macro that types out your letterhead—address, telephone number, and the date, using different fonts and sizes. Create half a dozen macros from the best suggestions.
3. Create a form letter to print a set of continuous index cards cataloging your collection of music. Use the Mailing Labels feature for this purpose. Set up a data source containing a sample set of data for at least 6 records. Each record should have at least 5 fields (CD Title, etc.).
4. Meet together with a group of your fellow students or colleagues, come up with a list of suggestions for useful form letters to be used in a school environment, share out the ideas among the group (a minimum of two each), and create the templates for the form letters. Each person in the group should save a complete set.
5. Create a Labels form letter to print a set of individualized set of name tag stickers for a class of students to be worn on the first day of class so that everyone can get to know each other. Use the Mailing Labels feature for this purpose. Set up a data source containing a sample set of data for at least 25 records (use an existing class database, if you have one, or use the Roster 2014 database that accompanies this tutorial).