



TAKE CONTROL OF
SCRIVENER 3

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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Scrivener 3*, version 1.2, published in June 2025 by alt concepts. This book was written by Kirk McElhearn and edited by Joe Kissell.

Literature & Latte's Scrivener is an innovative app for writing fiction, non-fiction, screenplays, and other long-form texts. This book helps you start writing your masterpiece with Scrivener by showing you how to get the most out of the app's basic concepts and features.

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Thanks to Keith Blount at Literature & Latte for making this such an enjoyable project.

Updates and More

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What's New in Version 1.2

This small update reflects some minor interface changes in Scrivener and revises some of the information in [Learn More](#). This is a minor update; there have been no new features added to Scrivener since the previous edition.

- I've added links to articles that I've written for the Literature & Latte blog allowing you to get more information about some of the features I discuss in this book.
- I discuss AI, highlighting how Literature & Latte has stated that the app uses no AI and does not upload data that users write in Scrivener to train AI models. I also discuss how Apple's Writing Tools, part of their Apple Intelligence suite, are accessed within Scrivener on a Mac. See [Use AI Writing Tools with Scrivener](#).
- There are many small changes throughout the book, expanding on previous content and simplifying some areas.

What Was New in Version 1.1.1

This small update revised some of the information in [Learn More](#), including the mention of a new Scrivener podcast.

What Was New in Version 1.1

Version 1.1 of the book was updated and released to coincide with the release of Scrivener 3 for Windows, the first version of the app that has feature parity with the Mac version. In previous versions of this book, I highlighted features that were not available in the Windows app, but in

this version, there were only a few such differences. Most of them are due to differences in the operating system.

I have also made small updates throughout the book to discuss new or changed features in Scrivener 3 for Mac, and I have added Windows keyboard shortcuts and menu item names whenever I mention controlling the app from the keyboard or from the menus.

Other changes in this version included:

- Scrivener now has “themes,” which are groups of settings that change the way the interface displays. I discuss this in [Adjust the Interface with Themes](#).
- A Focus Mode has been added to Scrivener, which allows you to fade out everything except the current line, sentence or paragraph as you write. I discuss this in [Focus on Your Work](#).
- Scrivener now supports Dark Mode in macOS, and offers settings allowing you to automatically change the Scrivener interface if your Mac switches to Dark Mode according to the time of day. There are also settings for using Scrivener in dark or light mode regardless of what macOS is using, and there are individual interface settings for both dark and light mode. See [Use Dark Mode](#) for more on this.
- There are some changes to the way Scrivener handles and displays project statistics. I cover this in [Get Statistics, Set Targets, and View Your Writing History](#). The latest version of Scrivener has also removed the option to tweet your writing progress on a Mac.
- There were lots of small changes to Scrivener’s Compile feature, which are not specifically mentioned in the book, but which you can see on the Literature & Latte website in the detailed [Scrivener release notes](#).

Introduction

Most of the word processors and text editors available today were designed for linear writing, where you start at the beginning and write until you reach the end. Scrivener was created with the assumption that many writers of long-form works—novels, non-fiction books, theses, screenplays, and so on—do best with a different approach. (Of course, you can still write in a linear fashion with Scrivener if you want.)

Scrivener provides a unique environment that frees you from the constraints of beginning, middle, and end. If you like, you can start at the end of your work, then write the beginning, and then fill out the middle. As you write, you can easily move scenes, sections, and chapters, until your work is exactly as you want.

In addition, Scrivener provides an easy way to store items such as research material, character sketches, and setting information in the same project file as your writing, giving you instant access to this material, such as photos, videos, webpages, audio files, and text files.

As you become comfortable with Scrivener’s unique and powerful features, and its incredible flexibility, you may find that it becomes essential to your writing workflow.

In this book, I look at Scrivener from the point of view of a writer about to embark on a project. This project could be fiction or non-fiction; it could be a screenplay or a collection of short stories. I show you how to easily start working with Scrivener, leverage its powerful organizational and text management features, move ahead as you write, and then forget that you’re using the app so that you can focus on your text.

In order to present a realistic project in the examples used in this book, I have chosen Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, the classic novel of obsession and the quest for redemption.

Scrivener Versions for Mac and Windows

This book discusses Scrivener 3 on Mac and Windows, along with a chapter about Scrivener for iPhone and iPad. When this version of the book was published, Scrivener for Mac was at version 3.4, and Scrivener for Windows was at version 3.1. The apps are nearly identical, in spite of the difference in version numbers, and I highlight any differences between the Mac and Windows versions of Scrivener in notes throughout the book.

When presenting keyboard shortcuts, I show you both the Mac and Windows shortcuts, in that order. For example, to copy some text, I tell you to press ⌘-C/Ctrl+C, which means ⌘-C on a Mac and Ctrl+C on Windows. Some Windows shortcuts use the Windows key, which is the key with the Windows logo located between the Ctrl and Alt keys on a Windows keyboard. I abbreviate that key as Win in shortcuts; for example, to access project keywords, press Win+Shift+K.

And when I tell you to choose a menu item (such as File > Compile), I only mention specific Mac and Windows terms if they differ. In most cases, the terms used are the same. One key difference occurs when settings for Scrivener. On a Mac, you choose Scrivener > Settings to access these settings; on Windows you choose File > Options.

Note: You can view the Scrivener manual from within the app by choosing Help > Scrivener Manual. Since the Scrivener manual is constantly being updated as Scrivener evolves, and chapter and section numbers may change, all references to the manual in this book include chapter names, in the format *Chapter > Section > Sub-Section* (if any). Check the manual's table of contents for the specific sections I refer to.

Scrivener Quick Start

The early chapters offer an overview of Scrivener's essential features for preparing to write, and to help you feel more comfortable with the interface. Even if you've been using Scrivener for a while, you might find these chapters useful. Have a look through them, then pick from the remaining topics to hone your knowledge.

For all readers, before you get too far into your masterpiece, I especially recommend that you read [Take Snapshots of Your Texts](#), since it could help you sail around leviathan-sized problems.

Meet Scrivener:

- Become acquainted with Scrivener in [Call Me Scrivener](#), where you can [Understand the Scrivener Philosophy](#) and explore the app visually in [Discover the Scrivener Window](#).

Start Your Project:

- Scrivener includes a number of templates for writing different types of texts: pick the right one in [Create a New Project](#).
- Add any already existing materials in [Add Files and Other Content](#).

Brainstorm and organize:

The Binder, Corkboard, and Outliner each allow you to work with the same material in a different way:

- See how the left-hand Binder sidebar stores your work and structures a project in [Understand the Binder and Collections](#).
- With the unique Corkboard, you can work with your materials on virtual index cards. Read [Organize Visually with the Corkboard](#).
- You can also work in an outliner environment that integrates perfectly with your writing. See [Use the Outliner](#).

Set up your writing environment and avoid distractions:

- Set default fonts, colors, and more in [Customize Your Writing Environment](#).
- Many of Scrivener's interface elements can be hidden to simplify your workspace. Read [Show and Hide Interface Elements](#).
- Scrivener's [Composition Mode](#) and Apple's [Full Screen Mode](#) both give you views that remove many distractions. See [Go Full Screen](#).
- If your project is a script or screenplay, be sure to [Use Script Mode](#).

Go further with Scrivener:

- [Scrivenings View](#) lets you write in separate sections, but view sets of sections as though they were a single document.
- Discover more powerful features aimed at helping you write: [View More Than One File at Once](#), [Use Collections to View Selected Items from the Binder](#), and [Store Bookmarks and Project Notes](#).
- Handle advanced features as you learn to [Work with Styles](#), [Use Annotations and Comments](#), and [Add Footnotes and Endnotes](#).
- Snapshots allow you to make and view periodic backups of your text. You can also restore those sections that didn't sound so good at first, but read better now. See [Take Snapshots of Your Texts](#).
- Is it time to edit? Get tips in [Find and Replace Text](#) and [Work with Revisions](#).
- [Share and Sync Your Project](#) by, for example, emailing it to a colleague or using Dropbox to sync it between computers.

Use Scrivener on iPhone or iPad:

- Scrivener for iPhone and iPad reproduces most essential features of the desktop app on mobile devices, and syncs your projects so you can work anywhere. See [Meet Scrivener for iPhone and iPad](#).

Print and export:

- You can either [Print Your Work](#) or [Compile Your Draft](#) in a different format that you can share with others.

Call Me Scrivener

Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no knowledge of writing Mac applications, and wanting a word processor that would be more appropriate for his creative writing and a PhD thesis, Keith Blount thought he would delve into programming and see whether he could learn how to write the app he wanted.

After much hard work, Scrivener was born.

This chapter is for Scrivener newcomers, but those who want to understand the app more deeply should also give it a read. I look at the philosophical underpinnings of Scrivener, how to [Create a New Project](#), and [What’s Inside a Scrivener Project](#). I also describe the basic parts of the Scrivener window in [Discover the Scrivener Window](#).

Note: I discuss Scrivener for iPhone and iPad later in this book, in [Meet Scrivener for iPhone and iPad](#). Even if you plan to use only the mobile version, you should read all the information in this book. Scrivener works in a very similar way on all platforms where it is available, so it is important to understand its basic principles as they are deployed on the desktop.

Understand the Scrivener Philosophy

Neither a word processor nor a text editor, Scrivener presents a writing environment that puts all the parts of a work into a *project*. These are the files that contain text, the folders that organize that text into chapters and sections, as well as research material that you’ve gathered.

Scrivener lets you view a work’s structure in various ways. You can exercise a constant give and take between the visible part of the writing process—getting those words down on virtual paper—and the effort that goes on in the background, such as outlining and re-arranging texts. Also, Scrivener makes it easy to approach a long-form work in a

non-linear manner: instead of starting at the beginning and writing until the end, you can start anywhere. You can write a work from the inside out.

Scrivener's philosophy can be summed up in a few basic points (summarized from the first chapter of the app's manual, *Philosophy*):

- **Permit the author to work with formatted text:** The writer should be able to use many formatting features—different fonts, character styles, paragraph styles, and so on.
- **Separate formatting from content:** The user should be able to completely reformat the text on export or for printing, if so desired, without affecting the original, working with one font and size while writing, and exporting a document with different formatting.
- **Break out of the rigid “file” mentality of most word processing apps:** It should be possible to create and view a project as individual “files” that combine to make up a text, and to combine files of varying lengths. Thus, for instance, a chapter could be viewed as a whole, or each scene could be viewed individually.
- **Provide a useful outline feature:** It should be easy to view the project as an outline and use drag and drop to restructure it. Moving between the outline and the text itself should be fluid.
- **Use synopses to bridge the gap between the big picture of an outline and individual sections:** There should be a synopsis linked with each part of a project, which can be viewed with other synopses to get an overview of the project as a whole.
- **Give easy access to background and research material:** The software should be capable of storing and displaying common research documents, because writers do not just use text, they also refer to images, webpages, recorded interviews, and other media.
- **Offer flexible viewing options:** The user should be able to view more than one document at the same time—for instance, the end of one chapter alongside the beginning of the next, a character sketch

Plan Your Project

Scrivener lets you jump back and forth between planning and writing, but many writers like to do some basic preparation before they start putting words on (virtual) paper. In this chapter I discuss several important aspects of planning your Scrivener project:

- In order to outline, visually brainstorm, and otherwise organize your thoughts, you can use Scrivener's key tools: the Binder, the Corkboard, and the Outliner. In [Know the Key Organization Tools](#), immediately following, I explain how to use each of these. Also, in [Store Bookmarks and Project Notes](#), I tell you how to bookmark files for quick access and how to take notes that you can store in your project.
- There are many ways you can import content into your new project, which I detail in [Add Files and Other Content](#). You can even take a file you've started writing in another app and work with it in Scrivener.

Note: If you want to skip ahead to [Start Writing Your Manuscript](#), you can come back to this chapter later. Scrivener is ideal for those who want to write without setting things up, as well as for those who want to do detailed planning before they start putting down words.

Know the Key Organization Tools

Scrivener provides three high-level views of your work: the Binder, Corkboard, and Outliner. You can work in one view, switch to another, add more information and ideas, and then switch again. Some people may never use the Corkboard, and others may swear by it; some may use only the Binder, while others may make detailed outlines.

As you read about these tools, you may find it useful to start thinking about which one will work best for you. The Binder is always there, in the form of a left-hand sidebar (unless you hide it), giving you immedi-

ate access to your work and enabling certain ways of organizing it. Collections—which appear at the top of the Binder—give you new ways to consider and experiment with your project. However, you may also want to spend time in the Corkboard and Outliner, with their respectively visual and hierarchical approaches to the same information.

Understand the Binder and Collections

Most of the organizational work you perform in Scrivener involves the Binder, the sidebar at the left of the window. Organizing, planning, restructuring, and exporting your project all depend on the arrangement of files and folders in the Binder. The contents of the Binder vary depending your project’s template. **Figure 5** shows the default Binder for the Blank template and the Novel template.

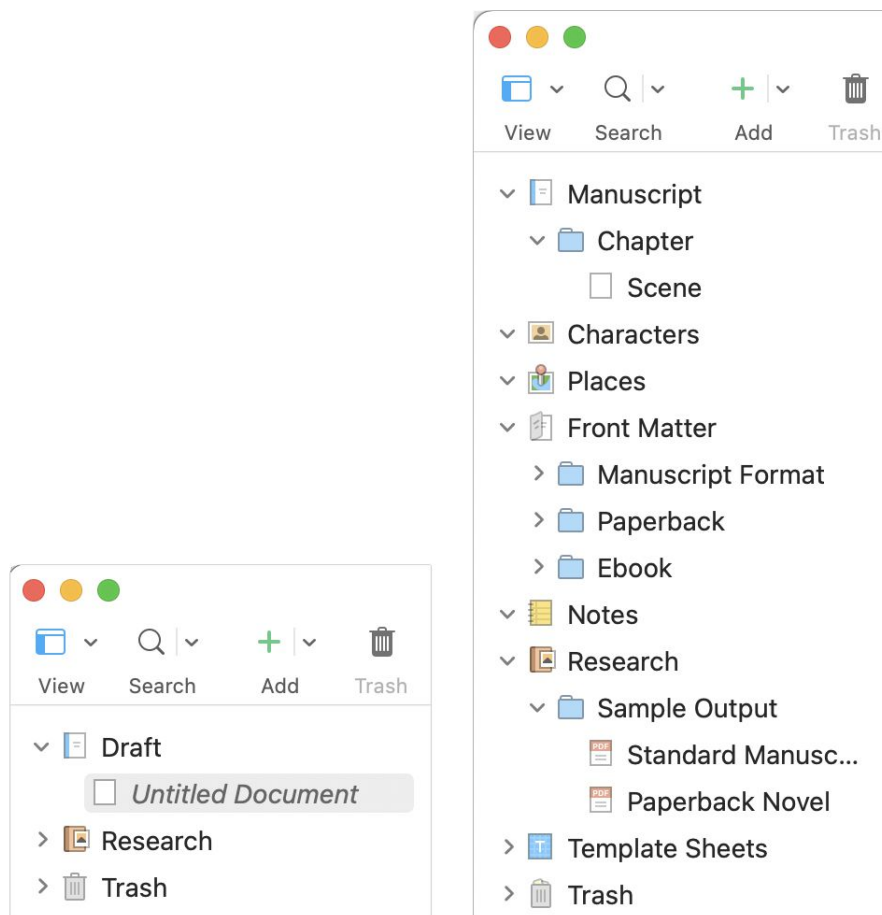


Figure 5: The default Binder for the Blank template (left) has only a few containers. Other templates, such as Novel (right), have more.

Write Your Masterpiece

If you've been following along in this book, you know your way around the basic Scrivener interface (see [Discover the Scrivener Window](#)), you know how to [Create a New Project](#), and you've learned how to [Plan Your Project](#). Now it's time to start writing. With Scrivener, you can shift between planning and writing at any time, moving from ideas to sentences and paragraphs, and then back again.

This chapter helps you get comfortable with Scrivener's writing environment so you can use the app efficiently, and it covers various topics that you may want to consider immediately as you start writing.

I show you how to use your screen space in various ways, first talking about how to hide and show the elements within the Scrivener window, then looking at how to [Go Full Screen](#) to minimize distractions from not only Scrivener's tools but also from the rest of your computer's interface elements. I then look at adjusting the look of certain Scrivener window elements in [Customize Your Writing Environment](#).

The chapter ends with a discussion of how to [Work with Styles](#), plus pointers on how to [Use Script Mode](#) to craft a script or screenplay.

Show and Hide Interface Elements

In **Figure 24**, you can see that the Scrivener window contains several elements. (Refer to [Discover the Scrivener Window](#), earlier, if you need basic help with understanding this window.)

When you get down to serious writing, you can hide many of these elements, reducing the window to a minimal display, as in **Figure 25** and **Figure 26**. This flexibility allows you to choose what you see when you work. For example, if you need to work with your outline, the files in the Binder, or metadata, you can display those elements as needed. If you don't need them, and want to focus only on text, you can do that as well. You can alter the window's display whenever you like.

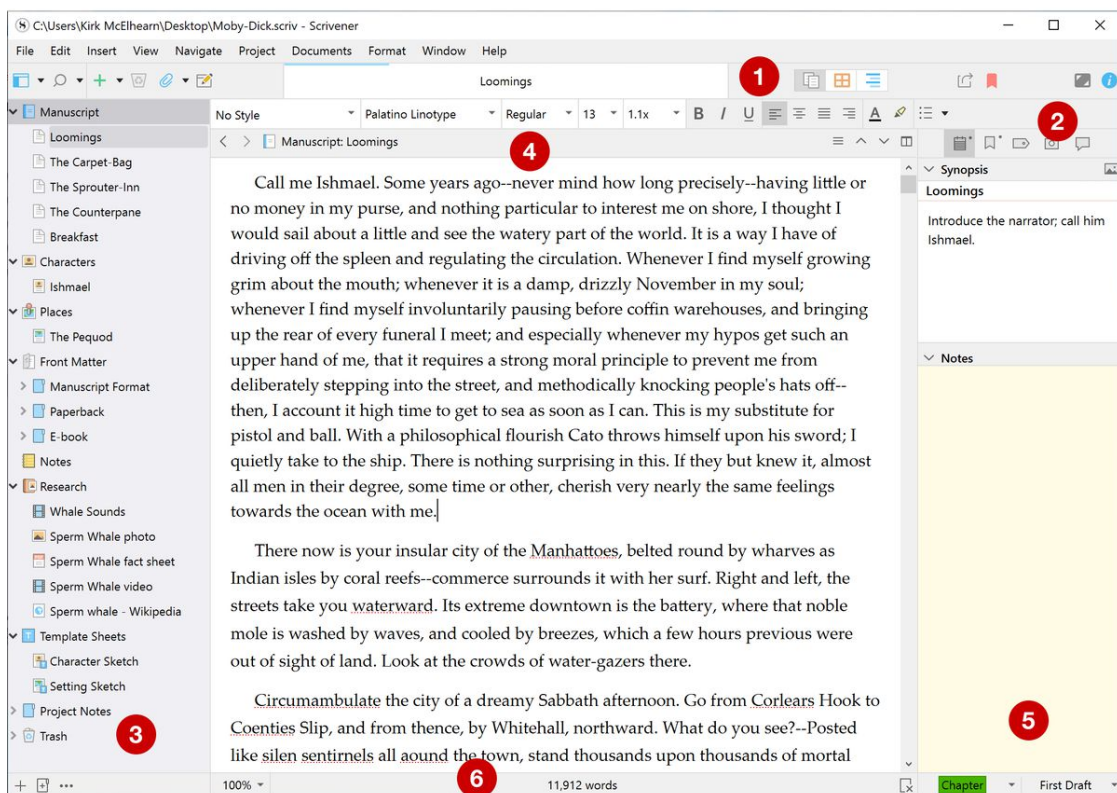
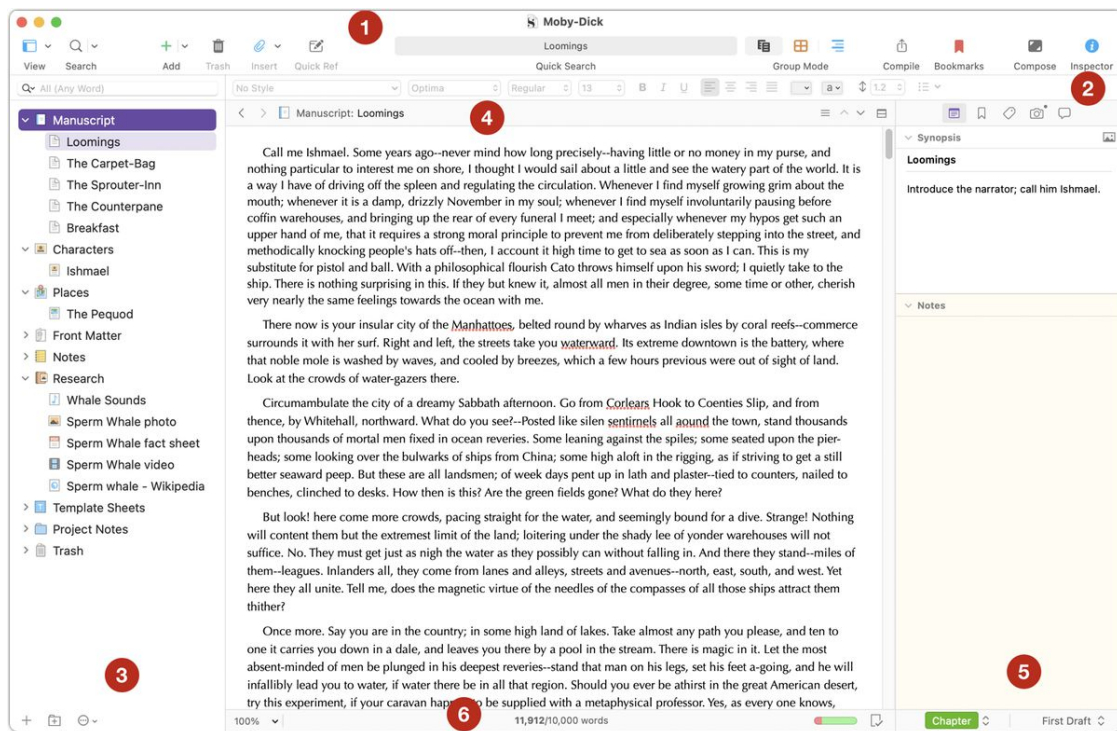


Figure 24: The main Scrivener window on a Mac (top) and Windows (bottom) has several elements that can be hidden if they get in your way while writing: (1) the Toolbar, (2) the Format Bar, (3) the Binder, (4) the Inspector, (5) the Header View, (6) the Footer View. The Editor is the section containing text in the middle of the window.

Take the Helm of Your Project

This chapter covers the many things you'll want to do after your inspiration is flowing and you've started pursuing the big white whale of your work:

- **Work with items in the Binder:** Get tips for moving files, working with folders, and deleting items. See [Manage the Binder](#).
- **View multiple files simultaneously:** Scrivener offers many features that help you refer to one file while you work in another: [Splits and Copyholders](#), [Scrivenings View](#), and the [Quick Reference Window](#). See [View More Than One File at Once](#).
- **Annotate your text:** Read about how to insert both inline and extra-textual comments. Neither of these items will appear in your compiled project. See [Use Annotations and Comments](#).
- **Add notes and references:** Get directions for adding these items to your project. See [Add Footnotes and Endnotes](#).
- **See how much you've written, and make writing goals:** Stay on track to meet your writing goals and more with the features covered in this topic. See [Get Statistics, Set Targets, and View Your Writing History](#).
- **Get info about your project and its contents:** This topic covers the Inspector generally and focuses on the [Notes Panel](#) (with its Synopsis section) and the [Metadata Panel](#). See [Use the Inspector](#).

Manage the Binder

You may find yourself wanting to rearrange portions of a manuscript. For example, for a novel where the chapters shift points of view, you

may decide to switch two chapters so protagonist A presents their story before protagonist B. If you were using a standard word processor, you would have to cut and paste blocks of text, but in Scrivener, this is as easy as dragging icons in the Binder. No matter how much you have written, you can move files and folders around in the Binder to change your narrative.

Note: For tips on adding files and folders, read [Add Items to the Binder](#), earlier.

Moving Files in the Binder

Earlier in this book, I discussed how to [Use Collections to View Selected Items from the Binder](#). *Collections* are a way to view your Binder when you want an alternative re-arrangement, one that doesn't reflect the order of your written work. For example, you could use a standard collection to group chapters that are ready to be edited. Here, I talk about how to move files in the Binder in a way that also changes the outline.

You can move a file in the Binder in two ways. With the first, the file stays at the same hierarchical level, and with the second, the file becomes a child file:

- **Keep the file on the same level:** Drag the file vertically in the Binder. The Binder shows a line with a circle on the left to indicate the new position before you let go of the file (**Figure 37**, left). Drop the file where you want it.
- **Create a child file:** Drag a file and drop it on top of another file, so it becomes a child of the latter file (**Figure 37**, right). This can be useful when you work with shorter sections and want to group them logically, yet still retain the individual sections as separate files. (This is as opposed to simply copying the content of a section and pasting it at the end of another one.)

Share and Sync Your Project

As your Scrivener projects develops, you may also want to provide your work in progress to a collaborator or editor. I start this chapter by showing how you can share your project file using simple methods, such as email.

Most of this chapter focuses on syncing projects between computers. Writers who work in only one location—their home or office—generally work with their Scrivener projects on one computer in that location. Some writers, however, will want to work on the road or carry out research in different locations. With Scrivener’s syncing features you can make your project available via different cloud services—I discuss how to [Sync Projects Between Computers with Dropbox](#)—so you can work with it from different locations and on different computers.

In addition, you can sync a Scrivener project from your computer to Scrivener for iPhone or iPad. I discuss this feature later in this book, in [Sync with Scrivener for iPhone and iPad](#).

Move Projects to Another Computer

If you work on two different computers—say a desktop and a laptop—there may be times when you want to move your current project from one computer to another. In general, this is easy, but there are some points to consider:

- **Method:** There are many ways to transfer files between computers, including email, file sharing, and sharing via a cloud service such as Dropbox, which I discuss below.
- **Size:** While there is technically no size limit to a Scrivener project, if you store a lot of research in a project—especially videos, or lots of

PDFs—the project may take up several gigabytes and be too big to send by email.

- **Packaging:** A Scrivener “document” is really a *package*, a special kind of folder that a Mac presents as a single file, even though it can contain many files and sub-folders. (On Windows, a Scrivener project displays as a folder.) Packages can present a problem in some situations. For example, some email clients might not accept a Scrivener project attachment as-is. To be safe, it’s a good idea to compress your Scrivener project so it is seen as a single file.
- **Compression:** Compressing a project makes it smaller and allows it to be sent more quickly. It also reduces the likelihood of problems that can occur if a single file within a project bundle gets corrupted during transfer. To compress a project on a Mac, Control-click (right-click) it in the Finder and choose Compress *project name*. On Windows, right-click the `.scriv` folder for your project and choose Compress To, then choose Zip File to create an archive.

Sync Projects Between Computers with Dropbox

A popular way of synchronizing files is [Dropbox](#). This service—free for 2 GB storage, with additional storage available for a fee—offers transparent syncing to a cloud server, and it automatically updates your Dropbox folder on other devices linked to your Dropbox account. For example, the Dropbox folder on my desktop Mac contains files for a number of projects. When I make changes to those files, they are saved to Dropbox’s servers. When I open my laptop, the Dropbox app on that computer updates its Dropbox folder so the files are in sync. As I make changes to files on my laptop, the changes sync back to the server, and so on.

Dropbox is a great way to sync Scrivener projects across computers, even between a Mac and a Windows PC, and it’s how Scrivener for iPhone and iPad sync projects with desktop versions of the app (see [Sync Projects to Dropbox](#)). Just drag your project into your Dropbox

Revise and Edit Your Work

When the writing's done and your draft is finished, you can take a break for a while. But then it's time to work on revising, rewriting, and editing your work. As you go from first draft to second, and then to your final draft, you may make a lot of changes, and you may want to record them in case your original turns of phrase were better.

This chapter looks at the revision and editing process, talking about parsing your work using the Linguistic Focus tool, finding and replacing text, taking snapshots, and marking revisions.

Analyze Your Work

When you're nearing the end of your project—when you're almost finished with your first draft—you may want to scan your work to find certain words you've used too much, such as adverbs, or you may want to focus just on the dialog if your work is fiction. Scrivener has a useful Linguistic Focus tool that can help you zero in on certain types of words and texts.

Note: Linguistic Focus is not available on Windows. However, Windows does offer a Dialog Focus tool that you can access from Edit > Writing Tools > Dialog Tools. This provides the Direct Speech focus that I describe below for the Mac.

View a document or your entire project (by selecting your Manuscript folder), click anywhere in the Editor, then choose Edit > Spelling and Grammar > Linguistic Focus (Control-⌘-L). In the panel that appears, select a focus, such as nouns, verbs, or adverbs. Scrivener dims text in the Editor that doesn't match that focus. (Depending on your Editor's view, you may need to switch to Scrivenings view to display more than one file. To do this, choose View > Scrivenings, or press ⌘-1.)

If you select Direct Speech, Scrivener dims all text that is not between quotes, so you can scan dialog more easily (**Figure 50**).

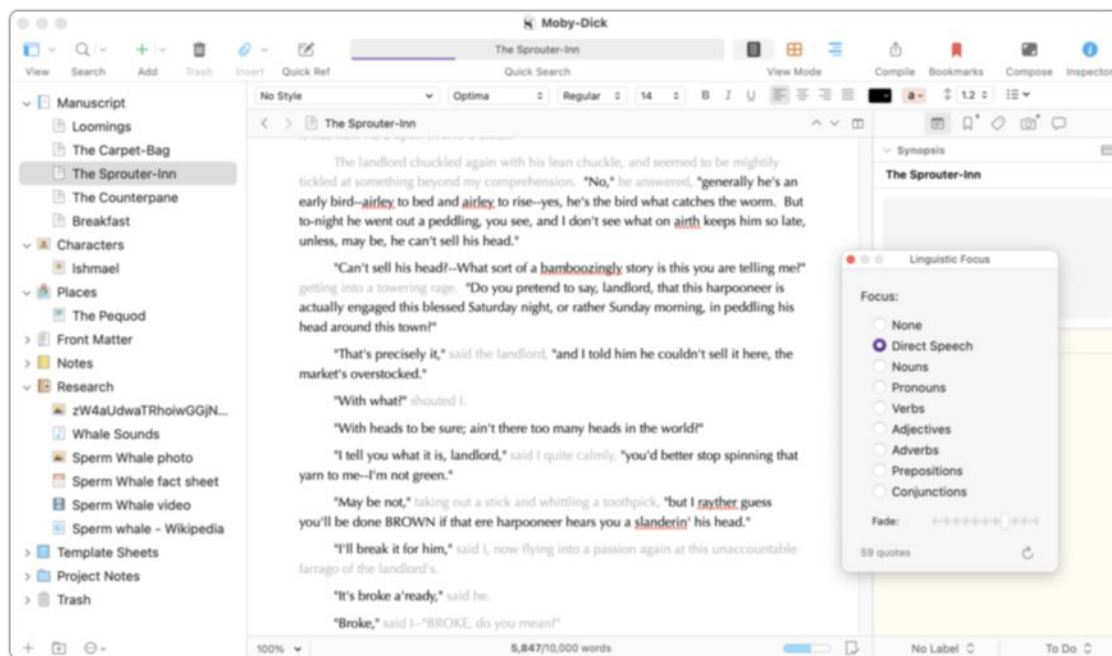


Figure 50: The Linguistic Focus panel floats over my project. I have chosen Direct Speech to focus on dialog.

To adjust the dimming of the un-focused text, use the Fade slider at the bottom of the Linguistic Focus panel; if you drag that slider all the way to the right, the un-focused text becomes invisible.

Note: The algorithm for choosing parts of speech is part of macOS and is not perfect, so you may find that certain words are mislabeled when you choose a specific part of speech.

Print Your Work

While most writers submit manuscripts in digital form, some writers still submit them in printed form. As just one of many examples, if you're a student writing a thesis, you may need to provide a hard copy of your final work. Or, you may want to print it for yourself. You may find that reading on paper makes it easier to spot some mistakes and infelicitous words. After working on screen, reading on paper is like a change of scenery.

In this chapter, I'll show you how to print your Scrivener projects, and how to save them as PDF files that you can share digitally or print later.

Before You Print

Here are a few things to know about what Scrivener can print:

- Scrivener can print anything in your project: not just the texts you've written, but also research materials you've imported, your outline, the index cards on your Corkboard, character and setting sketches, and more.
- You can print a single file, multiple files, or even a folder—Scrivener prints whatever you've selected in the Binder. However, to print a full draft of your project in a way that puts it all together into a final manuscript, you should compile it—see [Compile Your Draft](#).
- You can print to paper, of course, but you can also print to a PDF file, if you'd prefer to keep your “printout” in the digital realm. Of course, you can print the PDF later if you need to.
- Scrivener prints what it displays in the Editor, though it places footnotes at the end of your text and it prints the other elements that you've specified in the Page Setup dialog, such as page numbers, which I discuss next. So, if you've selected, say, three text files in the

Binder, and the Editor shows these files with dashed lines separating each one, they are printed as such with no page breaks between them (if you want page breaks, you must print the files separately). Or, select the Corkboard to print your project in index-card form. Or select the Outline to print an outline, and choose which metadata is printed in the Page Setup dialog.

- Before you print, it's best to open the Page Setup dialog and specify what page elements Scrivener should print.

Using the Page Setup Dialog

To open the Page Setup dialog on a Mac, choose File > Page Setup. Next, click Scrivener on the right side section of the dialog. Working in the button bar near the top of the dialog, click a button to customize those settings. For example, click Margins to set how far the text prints from the edge of the page. Or, click Text to specify what prints along with a text file (**Figure 53**).

Compile Your Work for Export

You've finished your novel, screenplay, non-fiction book, thesis, short story, or article. It's time to liberate your work from Scrivener and send it to your agent, editor, or producer. You'll now need to export your work to a standard file format used in the publishing or movie industry. Or you may want to save your work in a special format so it can be read on ebook readers.

In this chapter, I cover compiling and exporting Scrivener projects, and notably show you how to save your work in the appropriate formats so that other people can read your words.

Compile Your Draft

This should be a time of celebration. You have battled against blank pages, procrastination, and distractions and have reached the end of your journey; or at least this leg of the journey. It's time to export your project in a format that you can send to an agent, editor, or producer, or that you can print before you start the process of rewriting. Compiling your draft combines all your many files into one, and it either outputs them in the format you want or prints your manuscript.

With Scrivener, you are not stuck with just one way of formatting a compiled document. You can use the compile feature to create different documents for different purposes, such as sharing an outline with an editor, generating a copy of your draft on paper, or creating a final ebook destined for online sales.

At this point, all your text files should be in your Manuscript folder, or in a collection containing files from one of these folders. Also, you should know what type of file you want to create. Your choices include Print, PDF, Rich Text (.rtf), Plain Text (.txt), Microsoft Word (.doc

and [.docx](#)), OpenOffice ([.odt](#)), Final Draft ([.fdx](#)), and more, including EPUB and MOBI ebook formats. The options available depend on the file format you choose.

Note: Scrivener's Compile feature contains some options that are deprecated—that's the tech term for “no longer currently used”—but which you can access with certain older projects where you configured compile settings using these formats, such as ePub 2. The MOBI format is still available, and labeled Kindle Ebook, though Amazon stopped accepting MOBI files in March, 2025. For all ebook vendors, use EPUB, unless otherwise specified.

Before diving into the many details about compilation, I recommend that you try compiling with a preset format, such as PDF, though you can try any preset. This will give you a better idea of how the Compilation feature works, and it may result in a file that works so well for you that you don't need to learn anything more about compiling. Here are the steps:

1. Choose File > Compile (⌘-Option-E/Ctrl+Shift+E) to open the Compile dialog (**Figure 55**).

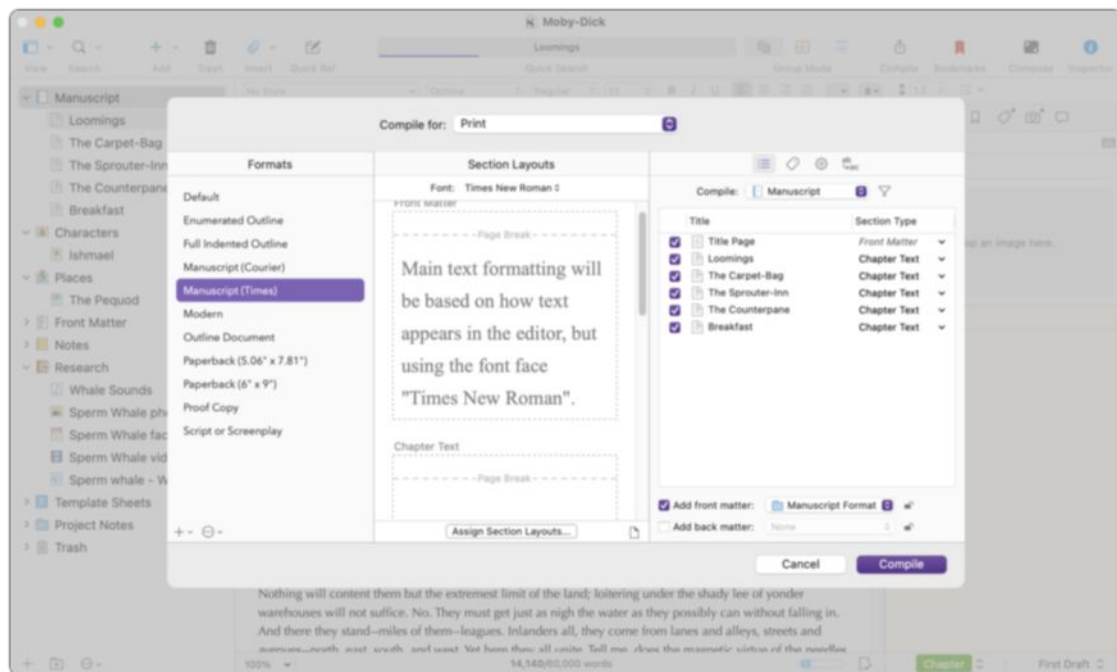


Figure 55: Compiling *Moby-Dick*, using the Manuscript (Times) compile format.

Meet Scrivener for iPhone and iPad

Scrivener for iPhone and iPad lets you work on your projects on your mobile devices and continue working on your Mac or Windows PC, or vice versa. Add a keyboard to an iPad, and you may want to do much of your writing that way.

The main concepts behind working with Scrivener are no different on iPhones and iPads than they are on the desktop. In fact, if you know how to work with Scrivener for Mac or Windows, then you already know most of what you need to use the mobile version. In this chapter, I start by helping you navigate around the basic screens and interface elements, tell you about the handy and customizable extended keyboard row, and talk about how to access special keyboard shortcuts when you [Use an External Keyboard](#).

I look at how to move your projects between a desktop computer and Scrivener for iPhone and iPad, in [Sync with Scrivener for iPhone and iPad](#), and then I finish the chapter by explaining how to [Compile with Scrivener for iPhone and iPad](#).

Note: purchasing Scrivener for iPhone and iPad allows you to use the app on both devices, and on as many such devices as you own, as long as they are all signed in to the same Apple Account.

Get Started with Scrivener on iPhone or iPad

When you first open Scrivener on an iPhone or iPad, the app walks you through a few welcome screens that contain essential tips, like pinching and spreading your fingers to zoom text. Once you've swiped

through those screens, you see the Projects view with its link to a tutorial and an empty list of available projects.

To transfer an existing project to your mobile device, see [Sync with Scrivener for iPhone and iPad](#), ahead.

To start a new project, tap Create Project. Name your project and tap Create. If Scrivener asks whether you want to store the project on your device or in Dropbox, choose which you prefer. (If you choose Dropbox, the project won't automatically sync to Dropbox, you'll have to do this manually; see [Sync While You Work](#), later.)

Note: While Scrivener on the desktop offers a number of project templates, Scrivener for iPhone and iPad offers just one template, the Blank project. If you want to use a more complex project, it's best to create it on the desktop and then sync it so you can use it on your mobile device. Another option is to set up your own template from the Blank project, and duplicate it for use on your iOS/iPadOS device.

Checking the Settings

As you start working in Scrivener for iPhone and iPad, be sure to look through its settings to make sure they're configured optimally for you. To access these settings, you open the Settings app on your device and scroll down to Apps, then scroll down to Scrivener. Look through the options for Appearance, Editor, Spelling & Substitutions, Corkboard Navigation (iPad-only), Background Colors, and Syncing & Sharing.

I also recommend that you take a careful look at the project settings available through the Project Settings  icon, available at the bottom of the Scrivener screen when you're viewing a project. From the Project Settings screen, you can also access the global Scrivener settings by tapping Show App Settings.

Most of the main elements of the desktop app are reproduced on the iPhone and iPad. **Figure 61** shows the app with a project open on an iPad. Tap an item in the sidebar to view it.

Learn More

Throughout this book, you've seen how you can leverage the powerful tool that is Scrivener to create and manage projects, and to write texts from short stories to novels, from screenplays to theses.

If you need more details about specific features, I suggest that you check the app's manual for more details about the features you use most. To do this, choose Help > Scrivener Manual. The manual is updated regularly, so each time there is a new app update, there is new content in the manual. You can save the manual to view it separately: when viewing it, choose File > Save As (Mac) or click the Save button in the toolbar (Windows) to save a copy of the manual where you want. Make sure to replace that copy each time the app is updated.

Also, in Scrivener for iOS and iPadOS, look on the Projects screen for the helpful tutorial, which points out important concepts and tips for working effectively on a mobile device.

To learn more about Scrivener, visit the [Scrivener](#) website, where you can get support for the app and view [screencasts](#) presenting introductions to the app and walkthroughs of many of its features. Check out the [Scrivener blog](#) that I contribute to regularly for articles about the app, and if you want to ask questions and connect with other Scrivener users, visit the [Scrivener Forums](#). And the [Knowledge Base](#) offers answers to a number of frequently asked questions, as well as links to articles and videos about using Scrivener.

You may also want to check out the [Write Now with Scrivener](#) podcast, which I host. I interview authors about their books, screenplays, and more, and discuss how they leverage Scrivener to create their works.

Finally, I offer [personalized one-to-one online Scrivener coaching](#). My coaching sessions take place over Zoom and focus on what *you* want to learn about Scrivener, whether you are a beginner or an experienced Scrivener user looking to learn more about advanced features.

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About the Author

Kirk McElhearn writes about Apple hardware and software, digital music, photography, and more. He contributes to a number of publications, and writes for the [Literature & Latte Blog](#), where he publishes weekly articles about how to use Scrivener. He has written or co-written more than two dozen books about using the Mac, including [Take Control of macOS Media Apps](#), [Take Control of Audio Hijack](#), and [Take Control of LaunchBar](#), and [produces several podcasts](#), including [Write Now with Scrivener](#), where he interviews authors about their work and about how they use Scrivener.

Kirk's website, [Kirkville](#), presents articles on Macs, iPhones and iPads, books, music, photography, and more. A lapsed New Yorker, Kirk has lived in Europe for more than 40 years; he currently lives near Stratford-upon-Avon, in the United Kingdom. You can email Kirk at kirk@mcelhearn.com or follow him on Bluesky: [@kirkville.com](#).

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Naturally, in spite of the Ahabian efforts of my editors to ensure that this book is perfect, any errors or lacunae in the book are my responsibility, and I humbly ask your forgiveness, dear reader.

The latest edition of this book was written in Nisus Writer Pro on an M4 iMac, with help from a 13-inch M2 MacBook Air, an M4 iPad Pro, and an iPhone 16 Pro Max, as well as VMware Fusion to run Windows. It was created under the influence of some wonderful Japanese green teas and some first flush Darjeelings.

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