## Using Word to create argument diagrams

Using Word to create an argument diagram can be a little frustrating. However, there are steps that can significantly reduce the hassle.

Firstly, the most important thing is to create your diagrams inside text boxes. Trying to create them directly in the body of the text by spacing the numbers with tabs is a main reason for diagrams falling apart.

Secondly, know how to group objects together so that they get treated as a single object. In my version of Word selecting multiple objects and right clicking gives the group option but there are other ways of doing it. Grouping items such as the underline and down arrow of linked arguments mean these can be copied as one item and reused elsewhere.

| Cut                 | ЖX |         |
|---------------------|----|---------|
| Сору                | жc |         |
| Paste               | жv |         |
| Save as Picture     |    |         |
| Arrange             | •  |         |
| Grouping            | •  | Group   |
| Alian or Distribute | •  | Ungroup |

Thirdly, when creating a diagram each of the elements should have a wrapping style of 'In front of text' and within the advanced options the 'move object with the text' option should be unticked.

Fourthly, in terms of layering, the text box should be brought to the front, i.e. the shapes — the underlining and arrows — should be behind the text box. This makes it easier to edit the numbers if you want to copy and reuse the diagram elsewhere. A slight problem is this then makes it difficult to select the underlying shapes in the final step.

|    | <u>ii</u> -                 |
|----|-----------------------------|
|    | Reorder Objects             |
|    | Reorder Overlapping Objects |
| Ľ, | Bring to Front              |
| -  | Send to Back                |
|    | Bring Forward               |
|    | Send Backward               |
|    | Bring in Front of Text      |



To select the underlying shapes you will need the 'select objects' tool or whatever the equivalent is in your version of Word. In some versions of Word this tool isn't on any of the toolbars and you will need to create a custom

toolbar and add the tool to that. This may seem a hassle in itself but can be worth it as trying to carefully select lots of small items by clicking on them can cause them to move so undoing your earlier work of carefully placing them.

Finally, select all the relevant shapes and text box(es) and group them. Voila! An argument diagram that can be moved about, placed anywhere on the page, and one that will not be affected if text is edited elsewhere on the page or tabs are moved.



## Additional suggestions

Within the text boxes the text should be centred. This is particularly helpful when using multiple lines of text.

It would be possible to use a separate text box for each line of text but it usually makes more sense to use the relevant number of lines. These can be spaced out in the normal way with 'returns' but if you need more precision to get just the look you are after then the lines can be spaced using the paragraph formatting option of 'Space before'.

Adjusting small arrows by hand can be tricky and it is often easier to go into 'Format shape' and make fine adjustments by typing in the height and width.

It is often necessary to have symmetrically slanting arrows. One way of achieving this is through rotation.



In this example both arrows are vertical arrows that have been rotated. The first has been rotated by 27 degrees and the second has been rotated by 333 degrees (i.e. 360-27)

Another way is to draw the first arrow and get it set correctly. Then go into 'Format Object...' and note its height and width. Draw a second arrow facing the other way and then again using 'Format Object...' set its height and width to same as the first. Because you centred the numbers it should fit the diagram precisely.



Making complex diagrams is a simple matter of using separate components, placing them appropriately, and then grouping them to make a single diagram. The diagram at the bottom of the previous page was created by combining



To get the components placed precisely you may need to go into your grid options and deselect all the 'Snap Objects' options. A quick fudge that may sometimes prove helpful is to put dummy content into the text box and then set the colour to be the same as the background....



Once you have created your diagrams it may be worth keeping them in a diagram library so that they can be copied quickly whenever needed.

