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 tasks[1]:

- 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.

7.1 PREPARING AN ADDRESS LIST IN *CALC*

This exercise is 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 *10 records for a hypothetical class of 4th graders*. With a real class, you would enter as many sets of address data as you have students in your class. Feel free, if you are a practicing teacher, to add as many records as you need. 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 **open**ing a **new** *LibreOffice* **Calc** spreadsheet and immediately go to **File** > **Save As…**, navigate to the **Work Files for LibreOffice** > **Data Files** > **Spreadsheet Documents**, type **Address List for Grade 4 2019** and click on **Save**

Hit **Ctrl+a** to select **all the cells** in the spreadsheet, go to **Format** > **Rows** > **Height…**, in the **Row Height dialog box**, enter the value **0.20"**, then click on **OK**

With all the cells in the spreadsheet still selected, go to **Format** > **Columns** > **Width…**, in the **Column Width dialog box**, enter the value **1.50"**, then click on **OK**

---

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

Click in **cell A1**, then 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	**Postal Code**

When you are done, the column headers in your spreadsheet should look like Figure 7.1.

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

Fig. 7.1 Naming the column headers for the data source document

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 **Postal 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, your spreadsheet will look something like Fig. 7.2

Fig. 7.2 Address List with 10 records

Very important! Be sure to **Save** (**Ctrl+s**) the **Address List for Grade 4 2019** spreadsheet with the data that you have so carefully filled in, then **File** > **Close** the **Address List for Grade 4 2019** spreadsheet

7.2 CONVERTING THE *CALC* SPREADSHEET TO A *BASE* DATABASE

The next step in our mail merge process involves converting the *Address List for Grade 4 2019* 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)
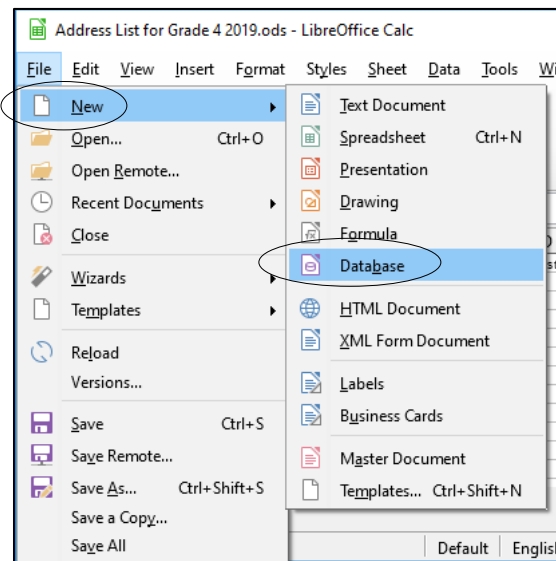
Fig. 7.3 Opening a new database

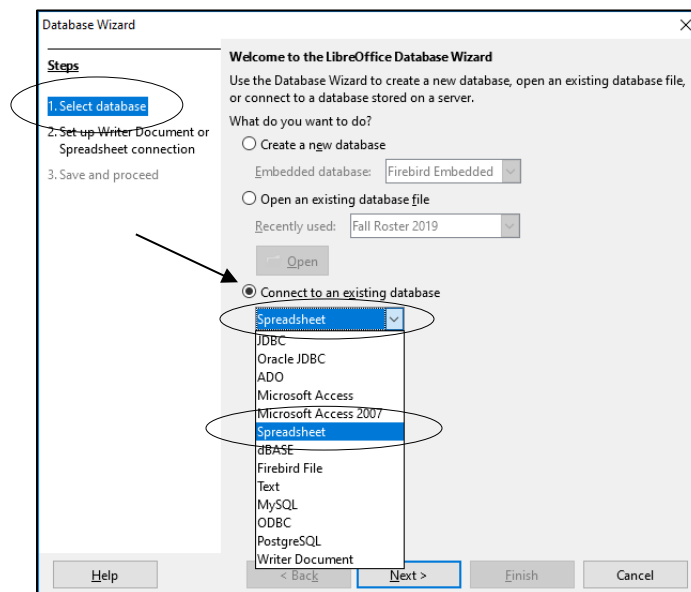This will bring up the Database Wizard (Fig. 7.4).

Fig. 7.4 The *LibreOffice* Database Wizard

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

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 data in the Address List for Grade 4 2019 spreadsheet into a *Table* in a new database.

> Click on **Next >** and in **Step 2** (**Set up Writer Document or Spreadsheet connection**—Fig. 7.5), click on **Browse** and, in the **Open** dialog box, in your **Data Files** > **Spreadsheet Documents** folder, **double click** on **Address List for Grade 4 2019** to put it in the **Location and file name** data box (Fig. 7.5)
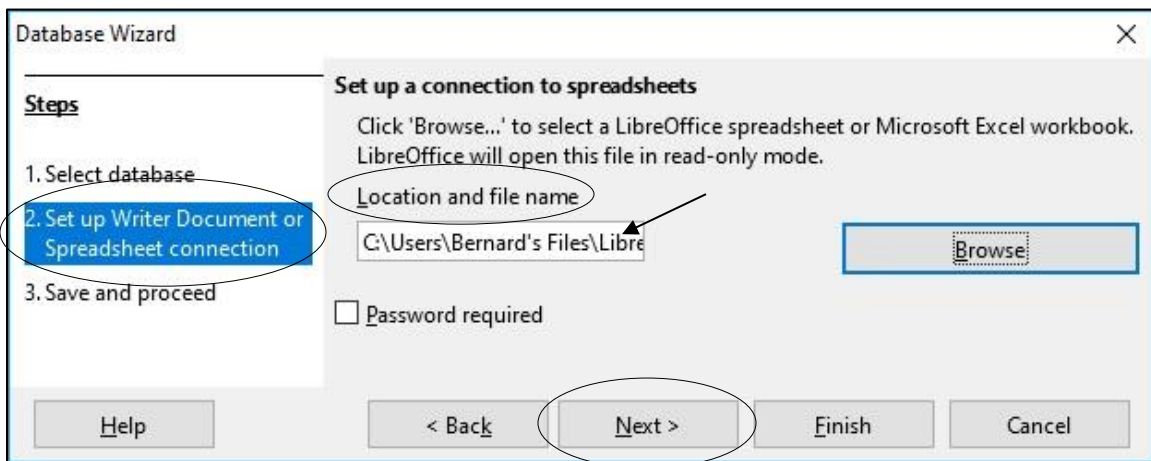

Fig. 7.5 Setting up a Spreadsheet connection

> Click on **Next >**, then in **Step 3** of the Wizard (**Save and Proceed**), keep the default selections—**Yes, register the database for me** and **Open the database for editing** (Fig. 7.6) then click on **Finish**
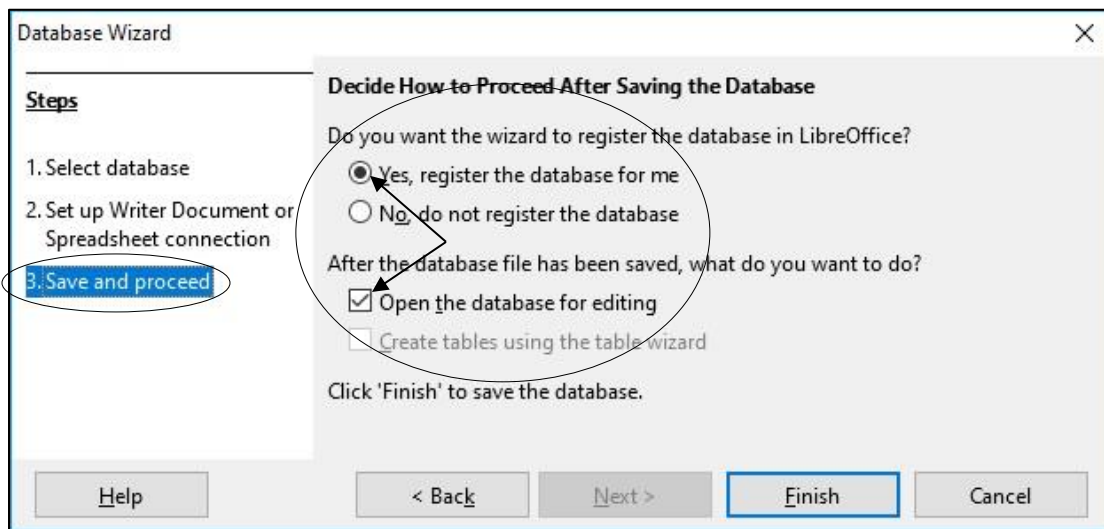

Fig. 7.6 Final step in converting the Address List data source to a *Base* database

If you do not *register* the database it will not be visible to any other *LibreOffice* documents, such as the *Letters* document you are going to use soon for the *Form Letter*.

The Wizard will now display the *Save As* dialog box (Fig. 7.7) to prompt you to *Save* the new database in your *Work Files for LibreOffice > Data Files > Base Documents folder*
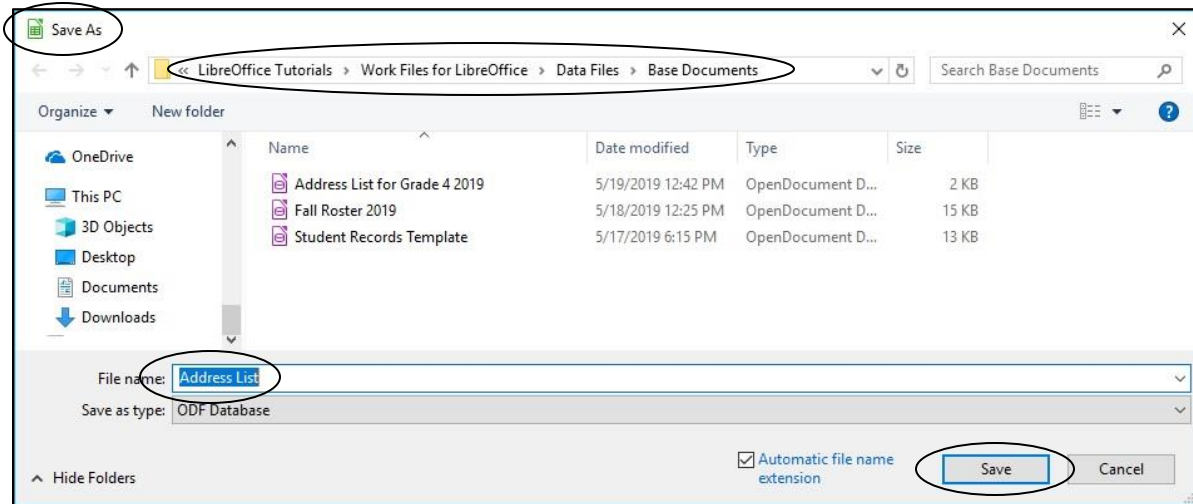

Fig. 7.7 Save As dialog box

Name the new database **Address List** and click on **Save**

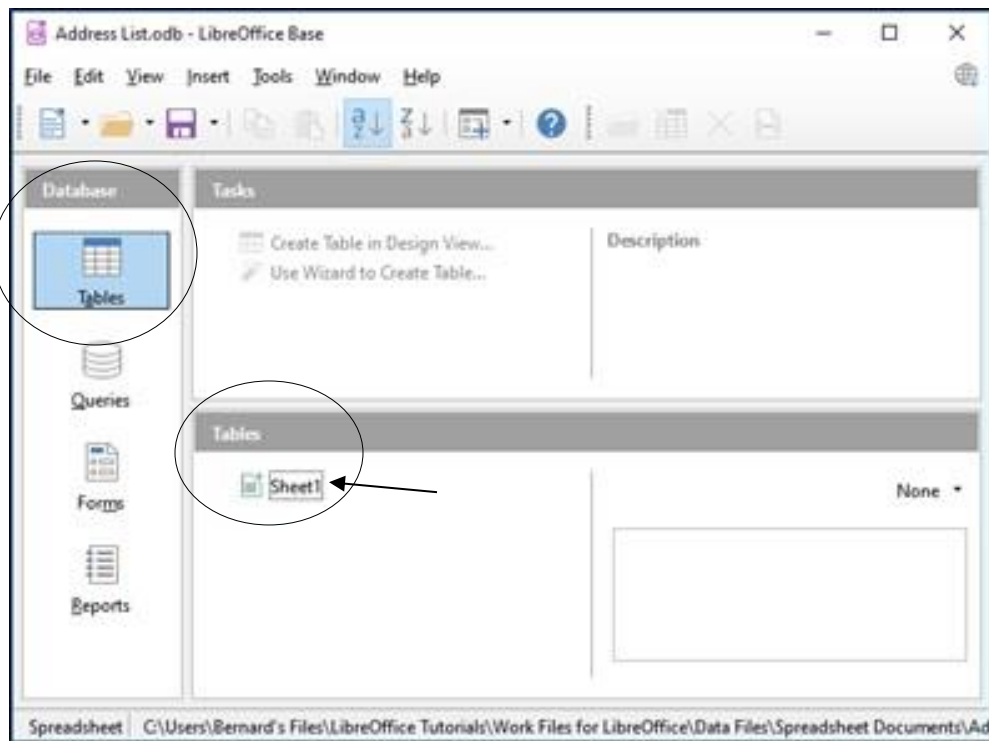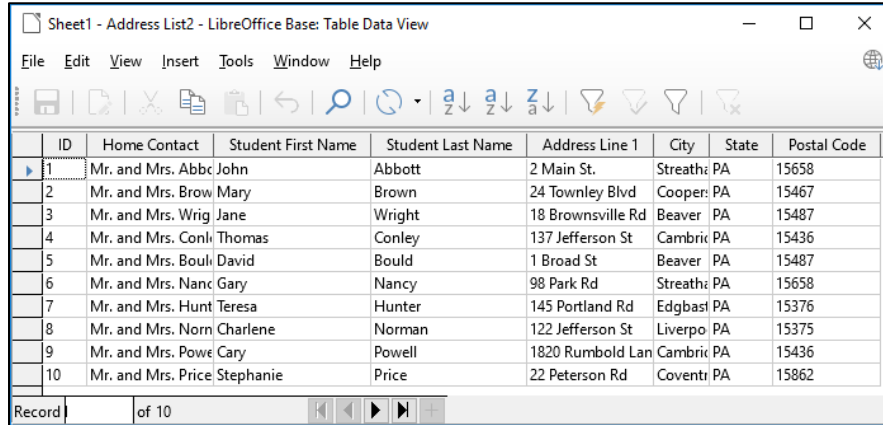The new *Base* database will open as a Table on your screen (Fig. 7.8).

Fig. 7.8 The data source uploaded to the new Address List *Base* database

Make sure **Tables** is selected in the **Database frame** (Fig. 7.8 above), then **double click** on **Sheet1** (see Fig. 7.8) to open the imported **Table** so that you

233

can check that the **Address List data** has been correctly **imported** from the **spreadsheet** you created at the beginning of this exercise (Fig. 7.9)

Fig. 7.9 The *Address List* imported to the *Base* database

Your data, of course, will be different. 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**—carefully read the directions here and on the ensuing pages in order to avoid making mistakes.

You'll begin by opening, and renaming, a *Writer* template document called *Letters*, which is already stored in the *Work Files for LibreOffice folder* on your disk drive. You should have the *Address List > Sheet1 Table* still open on your desktop.

In the **File** menu select **Open**, then navigate to your **disk drive** > **Work Files for LibreOffice** > **Miscellaneous Files** > **Merge Documents**, and **double click** on the **Letters** document (it's a template) to open it (Fig. 7.10)

Fig. 7.10 The Letters template

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**

234

You are now almost ready to use *Writer's* mail merge tools to produce *customized*, that is to say *individualized*, letters to send to the parents or guardians of each student in your class. In Fig. 7.11 below, 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 will be merged with each of the letters in order to personalize them. **DO NOT START TYPING YET!** The exercises that follow Fig. 7.11 will take you step-by-step through the process. Follow the steps carefully.

Before you start typing, go to the top of the **next page** > **Inserting the Date**

Hodge Road Elementary School
123 Mingo Bluff Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15905
Wednesday, May 22, 2019

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

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 are 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. 7.11 The final version of the Field Trip Notice form letter

Inserting the date

The unedited Field Trip Notice document is open on your screen containing 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 official address of the school where, in a real situation, you might be 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 **Field** > **Date**

You should now have the date displayed in your form letter right after the school address at the top of the page (Fig. 7.11 previous page). You'll maybe recall from Lesson 1 that the default all-numeric format for the date can be confusing in some countries, so you need to select a style that is unambiguous.

> **Right click** on the inserted date and, in the **context menu**, select **Edit Fields…** then, in the **Edit Fields dialog box** > **Select** column, click on **Date**—*not* Date (fixed)

> In the **Edit Fields dialog box** > **Format** column click on the date format that looks like **Friday, December 31, 1999**, then click on **OK**

The date won't be fixed, which means that each time you open the Field Trip Notice it will have the current date displayed without your needing to update it. 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 7.2 of this tutorial).

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

You should now have a *new frame* at the top of the *Field Trip Notice page* showing, on the left, a list of the *Base* databases that you have registered with *LibreOffice* (Fig. 7.12).
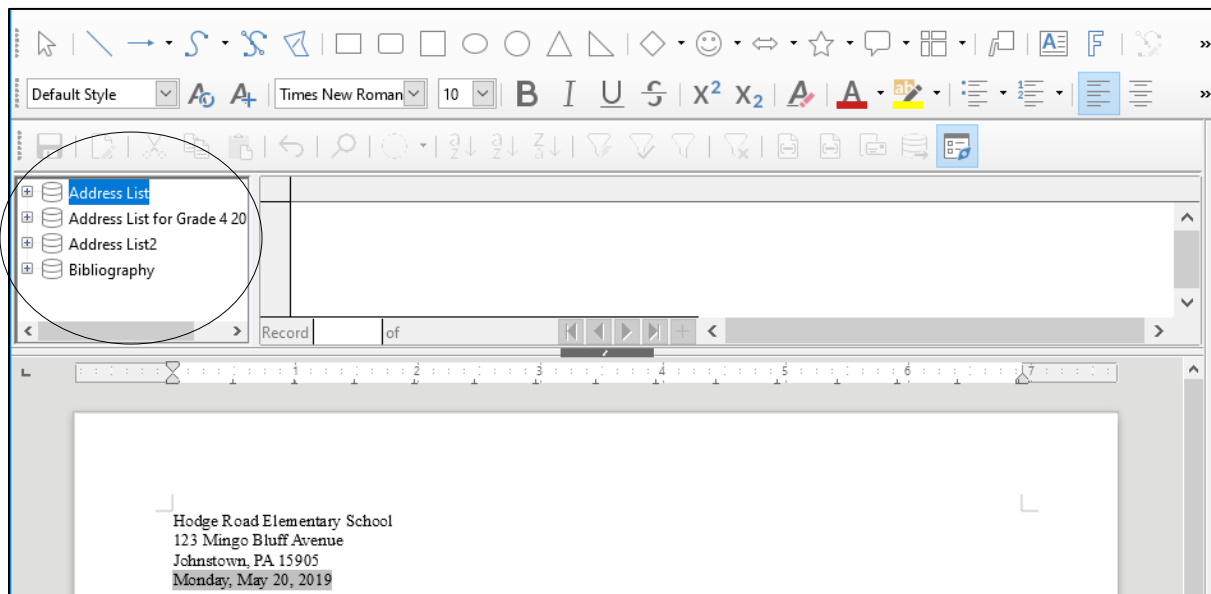

Fig. 7.12 Viewing the *LibreOffice* list of Data Sources

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** then click on the **small + (plus sign)** to the immediate **left** of **Tables** to show **Sheet1** (Fig. 7.13)
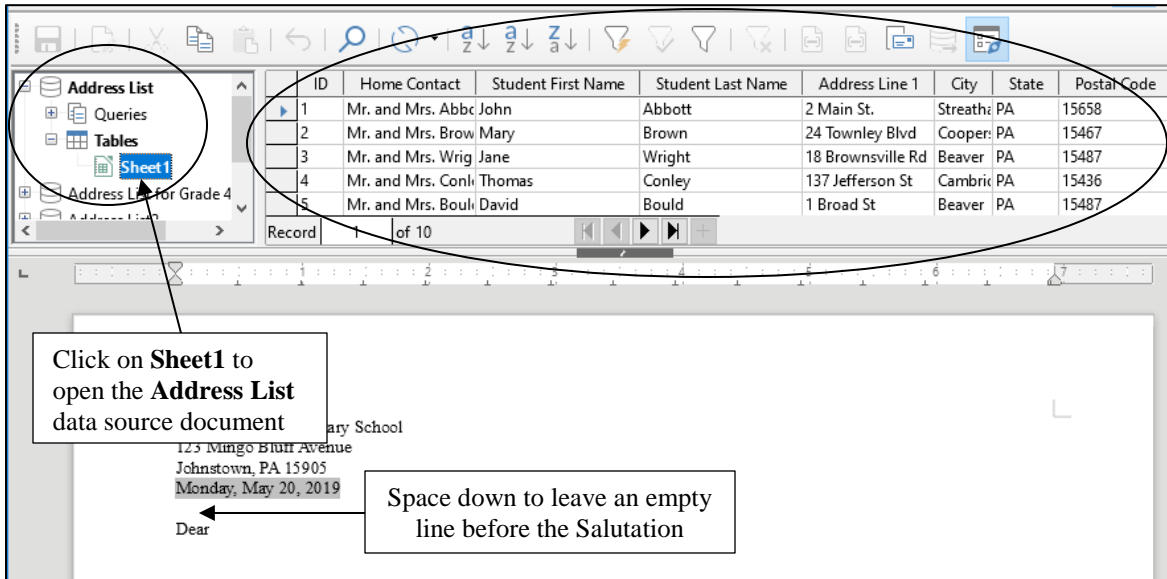

Fig. 7.13 Address List Queries and Tables (Sheet 1)

Sheet1 contains the data that you imported into the database from the *Address List spreadsheet* you created in Section 7.2 of this tutorial.

> Click on **Sheet1** and wait while *LibreOffice* fetches all the data **from the Sheet1 table** (Fig. 7.13 above)

The data in the *Sheet1 table* is displayed in the window above the form letter and *to the right* of the list of registered databases (Fig. 7.12 on the previous page).

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

Inserting fields (placeholders) into your form letter

You are 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 *Home Contact* data from the *Address List* database. Here is how you do this.

> The **Field Trip Notice** form letter should still be open on your screen (it's the active document and you should still be able to see its *window*)

> 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** (Fig. 7.13 above)

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 **immediately *above*** the salutation: "**Dear**" (as shown in Fig. 7.14)
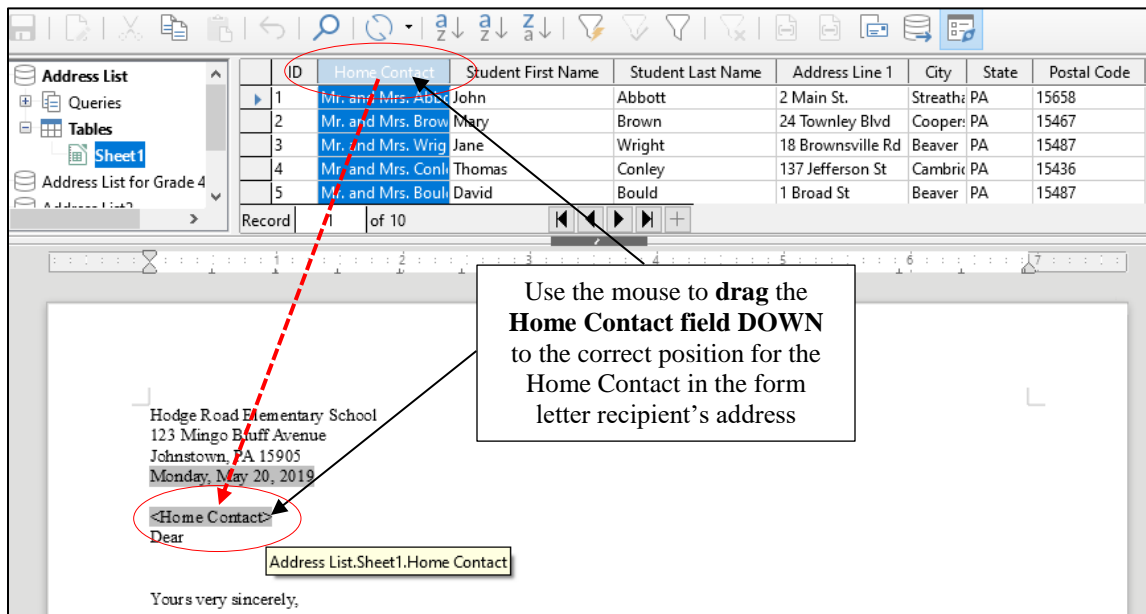

Fig. 7.14 Dragging the Home Contact merge field down into the form letter

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. The *brackets* tell you that this is a *placeholder*—you never need to type the brackets with Mail Merge.

Now, when the letters (all ten of them) are eventually 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 rest of the *Home Contact*'s address (refer to Fig. 7.11 on page 235 above).

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 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 (after the City) on the **last line** of the recipient's (Home Contact's) address

Hit the **space bar once**, use the mouse to drag the *title* **Postal Code** down to the correct position at the end the **last line** of the recipient's (Home Contact's)

address, hit the **Enter** key to move the cursor to the next line, then hit the **Enter** key again to create an **empty line** after the address (Fig. 7.15 below)

This rounds off the *Recipient's address* that is to be merged with the *Field Trip Notice* form letter, which should now look like Fig. 7.15.
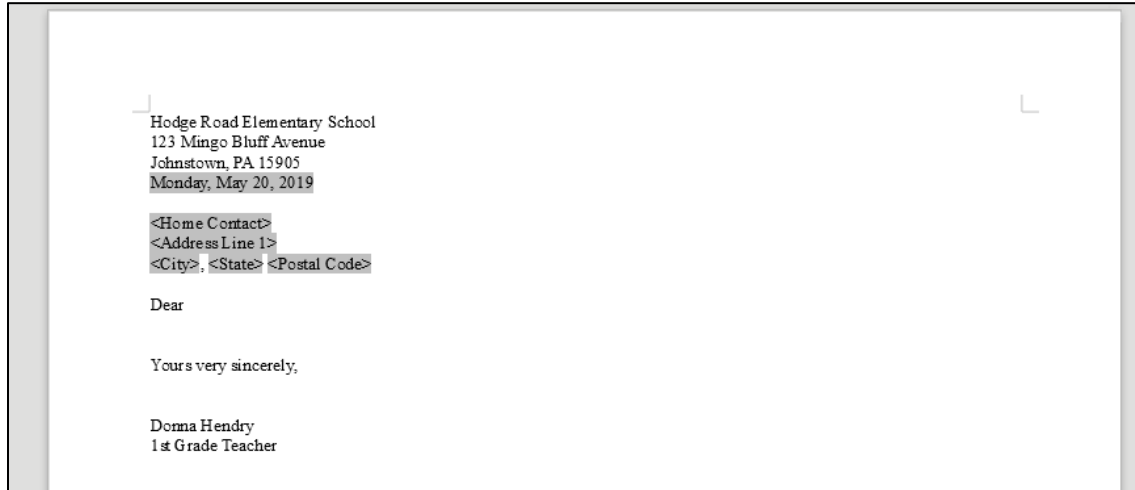

Fig. 7.15 Form letter after merging the recipient's address

So far, so good. Next you need to put a *placeholder* for the *Home Contact* immediately after the salutation *Dear* at the beginning of the letter (refer again to Fig. 7.11 on page 235 above).

Click to put the cursor *immediately after* the word **Dear**, press the **Space bar** to space over **one space**, then use the mouse to drag the *title* **Home Contact** down to the correct position *after* the salutation **Dear**

Type a **comma**, then hit the **Enter** key

By now you should be getting the hang of inserting merge fields into the *Field Trip Notice*.

Refer to the **Field Trip Notice letter** (Fig. 7.11 on page 235) as you complete the rest of the form letter

Type the remaining text of the **Field Trip Notice** letter illustrated in Fig. 7.11 on page 235, inserting the **merge placeholders** where indicated

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

When you're done, **Save** the **Field Trip Notice** form letter (**Ctrl+s**) once more

7.4 PRINTING THE FIELD TRIP NOTICE MERGED LETTERS

Before printing your Field Trip Notice merged 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 *Field Trip Notice 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. 7.16).
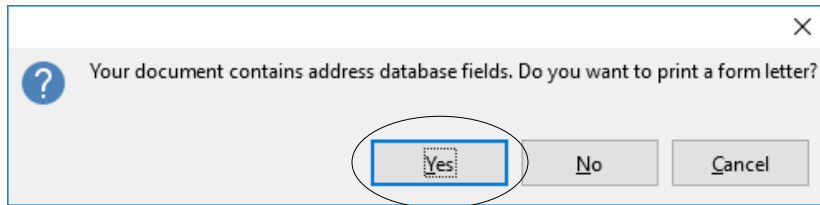

Fig. 7.16 Prompt to confirm it's a Form Letter

Click on **Yes**

After a few seconds, you'll be presented with the Mail Merge dialog box (Fig. 7.17).
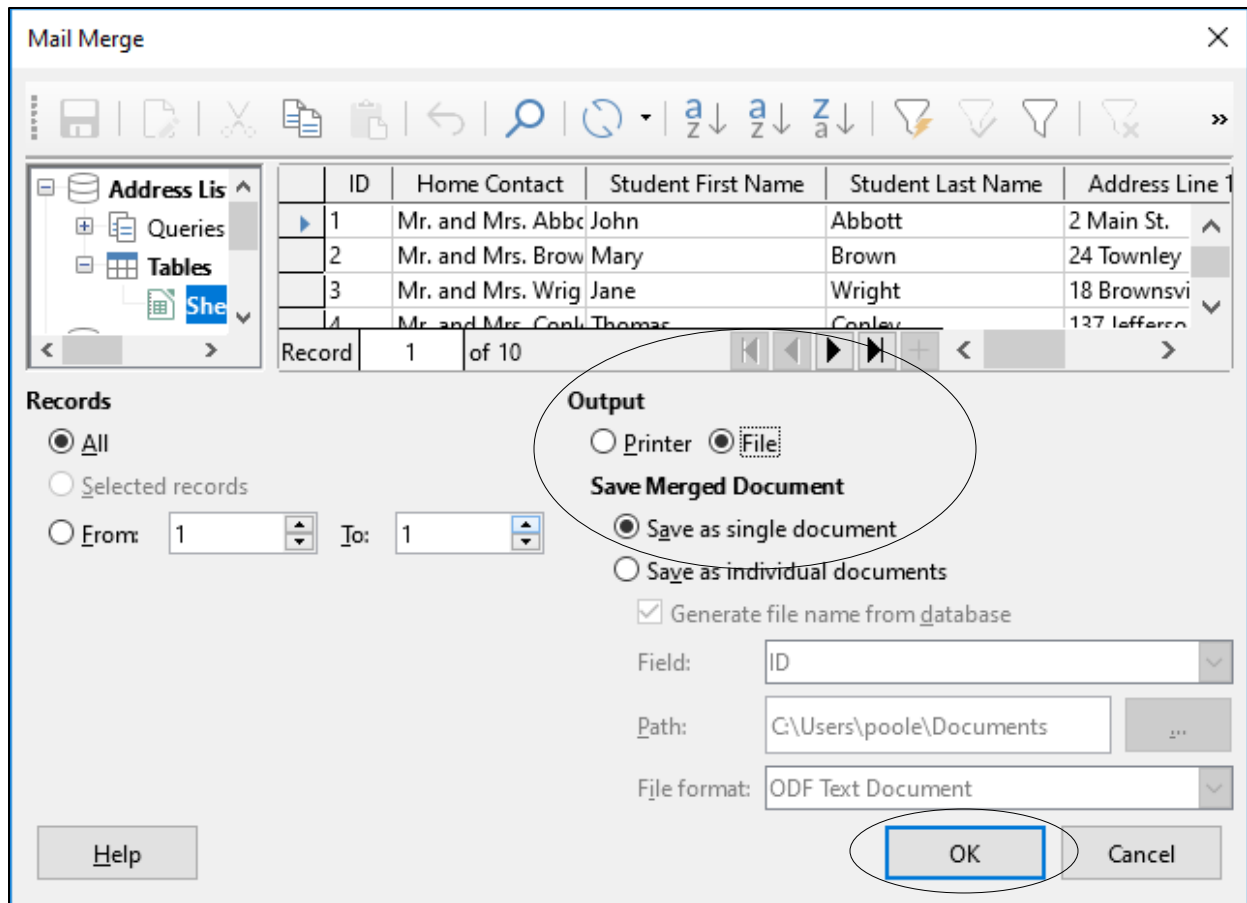
Fig. 7.17 Mail Merge dialog box

You do *not* want the output to go to the *Printer* just yet. Instead, 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. Here's what you do to make this happen.

In the **Output** area of the dialog box, 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. 7.17 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 (Fig. 7.18).
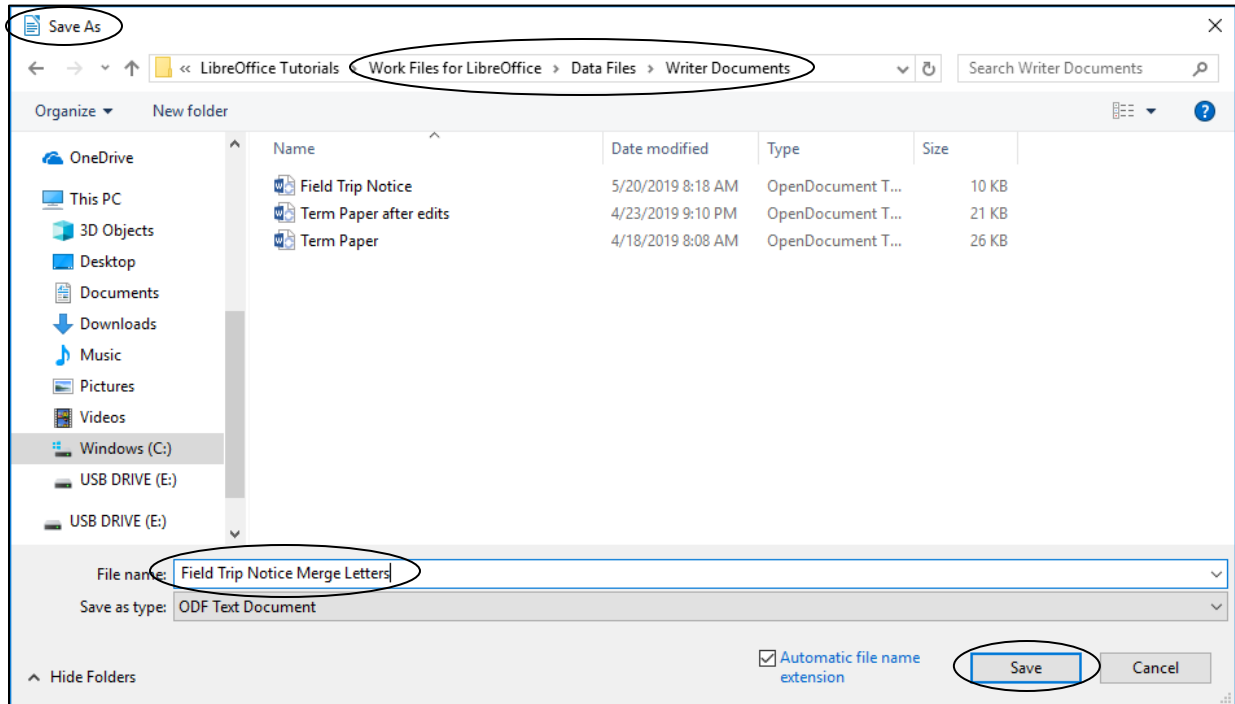

Fig. 7.18 Saving the Field Trip Notice Merge Letters

> In the **Save As** dialog box, navigate on your **disk drive** to your **LibreOffice Work Files** > **Data Files** > **Writer Documents** folder Fig. 7.18 above)

> In the **File name:** data entry box, type **Field Trip Notice Merge Letters,** click on **Save** and wait while LibreOffice saves the set of letters in the **Data Files** > **Writer Documents** folder

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 complete set of 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* document to check that the data from the *Address List* has been correctly merged with the placeholders in the new document (*Field Trip Notice Merge Letters*).

> Go to **File** > **Open** and **double click** to open the **Field Trip Notice Merge Letters**

> This document contains **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. 7.19).
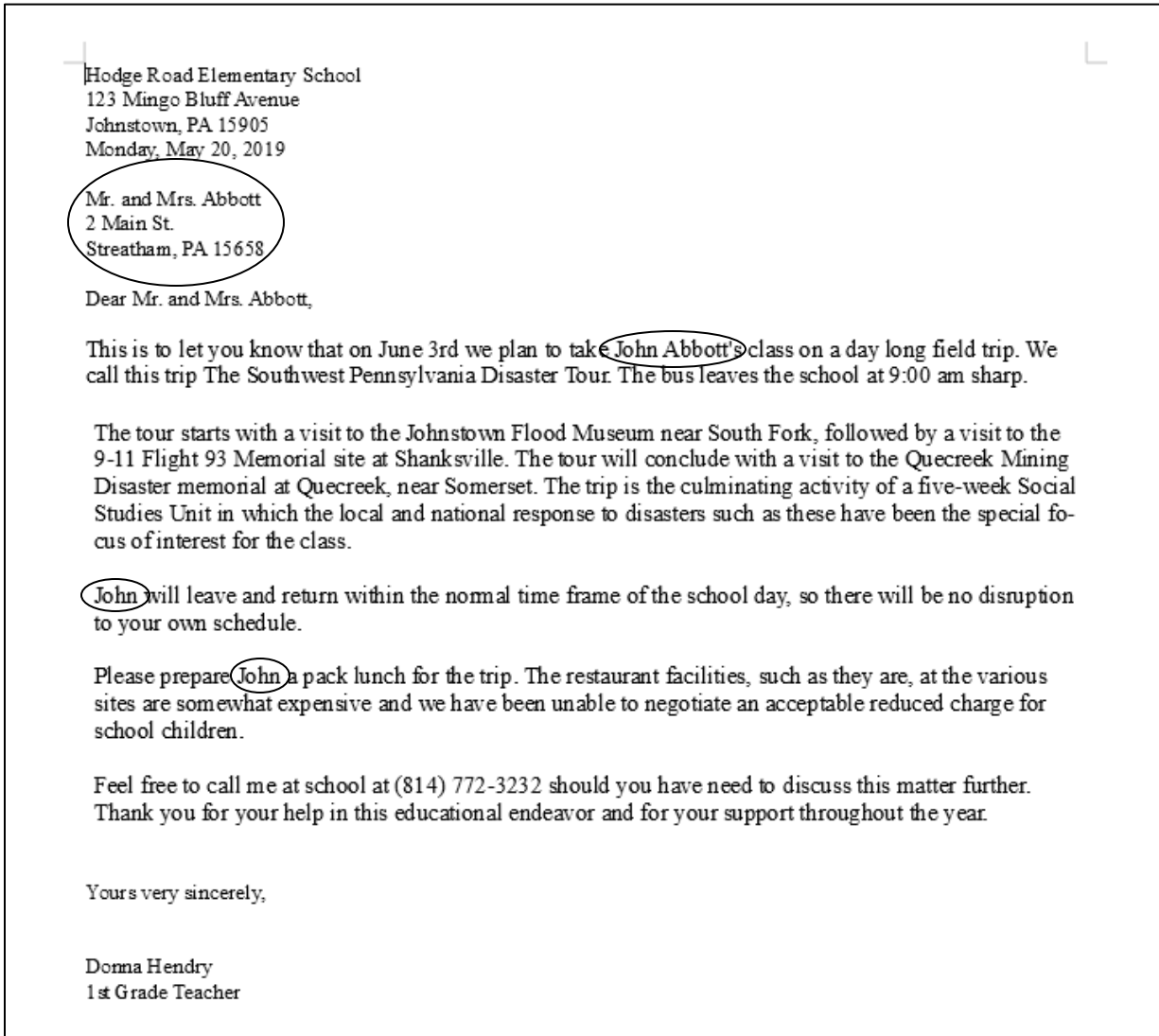
Hodge Road Elementary School
123 Mingo Bluff Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15905
Monday, May 20, 2019

Mr. and Mrs. Abbott
2 Main St.
Streatham, PA 15658

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Abbott,

This is to let you know that on June 3rd we plan to take John Abbott'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.

John 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 John a pack lunch for the trip. The restaurant facilities, such as they are, at the various sites are 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. 7.19 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 again the **Field Trip Notice Merge Letters** document

Printing the merged Field Trip Notices
If you are able to print the set of 10 merged letters you can go ahead and do so now.

Go to **File** > **Print**, then in the **Print dialog box** select any options that are necessary for your printer setup and, when you're ready, click on **OK**

When the set of **Merge Letters** are all printed, **Close** the **Field Trip Notice Merge Letters** document, and **Close** the **Field Trip Notice**, but keep **open** the **Address List database**, along with its **Sheet1 Table**—you're going to need them for the next exercise

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 Postal Code 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 your students can 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. Confidentiality is important, so you might 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. 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 may well 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** (Fig. 7.20)
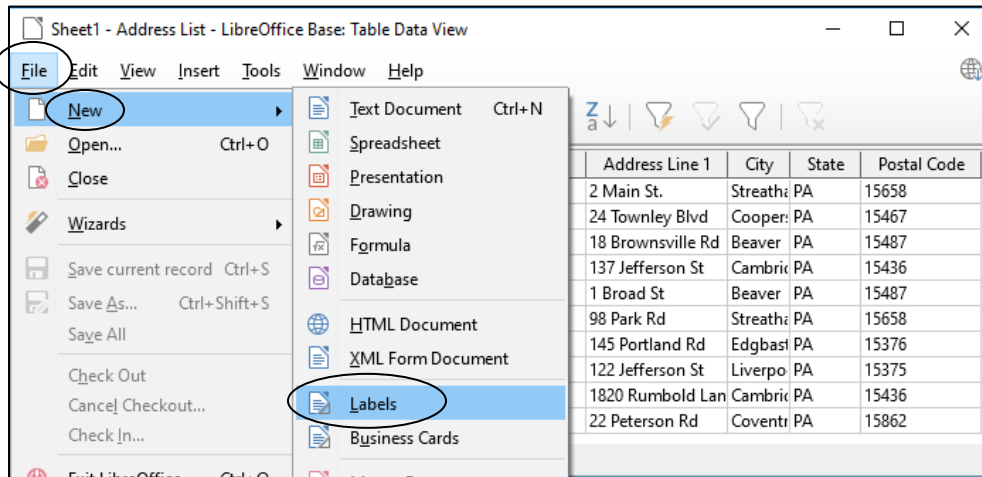
Fig. 7.20 File > New > Labels menu

You should see the Labels dialog box on your screen (Fig. 7.21).
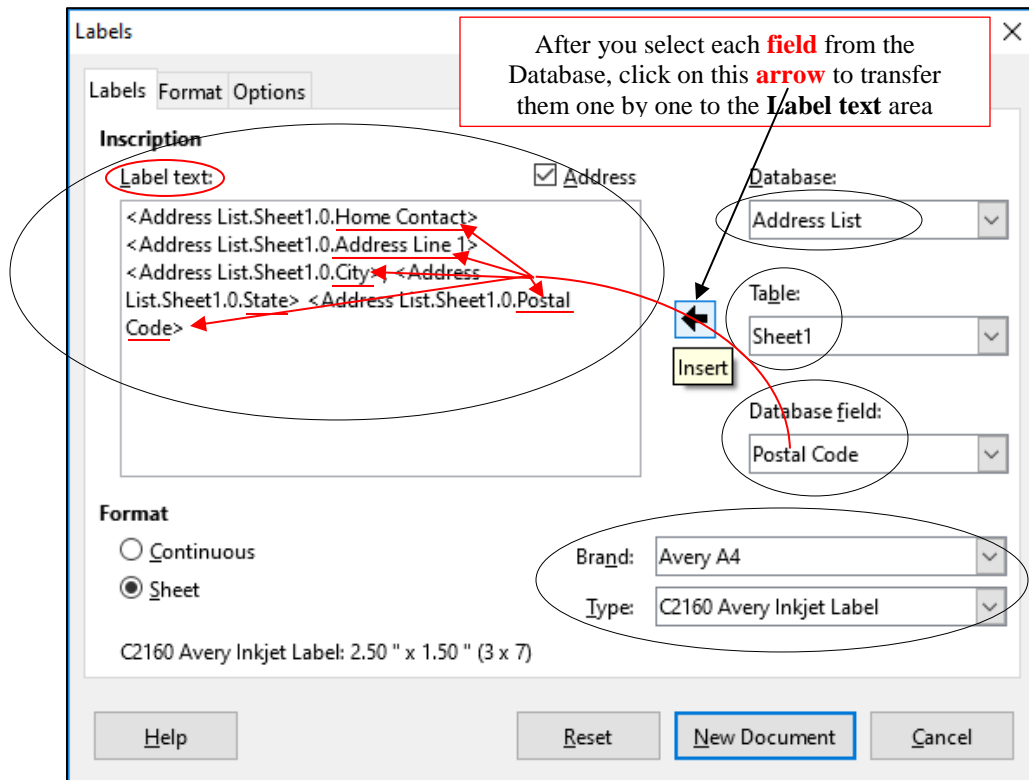
Fig. 7.21 The annotated *Labels* dialog box

As illustrated in Fig. 7.21 on the previous page, in the Labels dialog box you are going 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, as highlighted in Fig. 7.21 on the previous page, which shows the Labels dialog box after you have completed these tasks.

The following directions will step you through this process of filling out the *Labels* dialog box; follow them carefully. Notice, in Fig. 7.21, that you are going to lay out the Recipient address as it would appear on an envelope—as a *mailing label*.

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

> In the **Labels** > **Table:** item, 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 **Labels** > **Database Field:** item, click on the **down arrow** 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** in the **Label Text:** area

> Again, in the **Labels** > **Database Field:** item, 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** to the **Label Text:** area

> Click on the **Enter** key to move the cursor to a **new line** in the **Label Text:** area

> Again, in the **Labels** > **Database Field:** item, click on the **down arrow** and, from the list of **database fields**, select **City**, then click on the arrow ⬅ to transfer the **City field** to the **Label Text:** area

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

> In the **Database Field:** item, 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:** item, click on the **down arrow** and, from the list of **database fields**, select **Postal Code**, and click on the large arrow ⬅ one last time to transfer the **Postal Code** field across to the **Label Text:** area

Hopefully, you were able to follow all those directions and, with the aid of Fig. 7.21, you successfully completed the tasks to this point. There are a couple more things you have still to do in this Labels dialog box.

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. 7.21 on page 244), make sure the radio button next to **Sheet** is 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 (Fig. 7.22) to bring up the **Options** dialog box
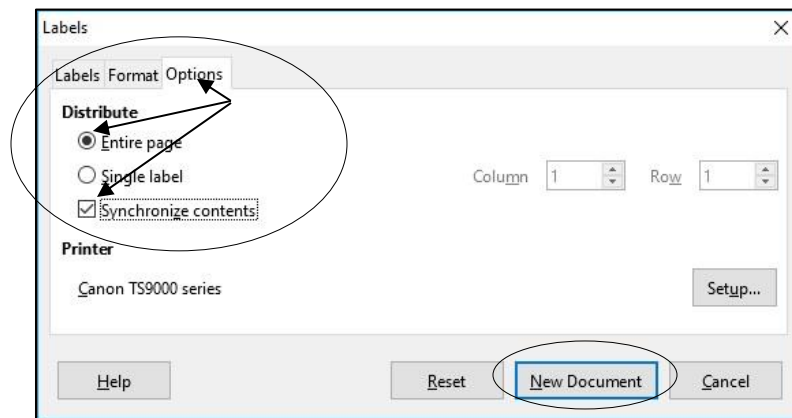

Fig. 7.22 Options tab in the Labels dialog box

> Make sure the **radio button** for **Entire page** is selected and that there is a **check mark/tick** 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. 7.23).
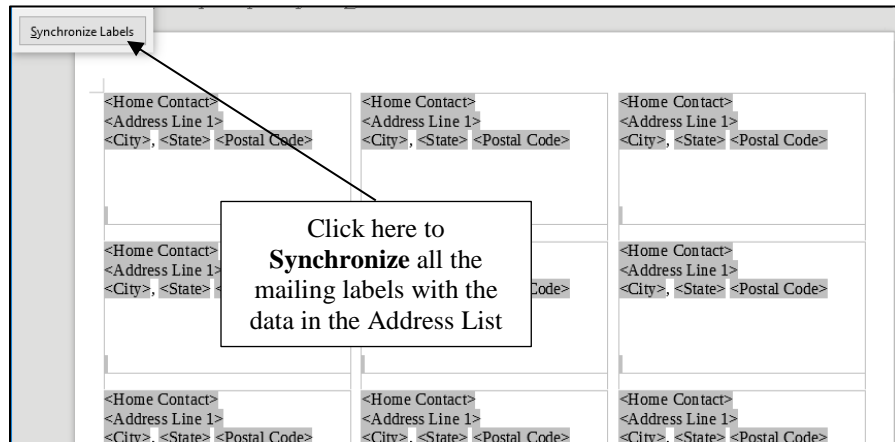

Fig. 7.23 The template mailing labels sheet

Click on the **Synchronize Labels** button (Fig 7.23 above), then go to **File** > **Save As…**, navigate to your **disk 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 (Fig. 7.24).
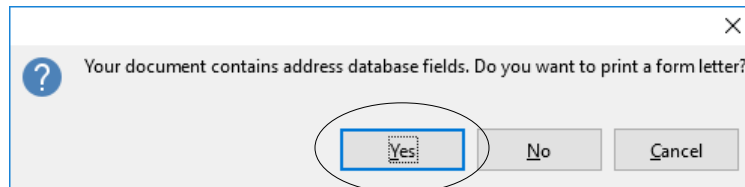

Fig. 7.24 Request to print a form letter

Click on **Yes**

After a few seconds, you are presented with the Mail Merge dialog box (Fig. 7.25).
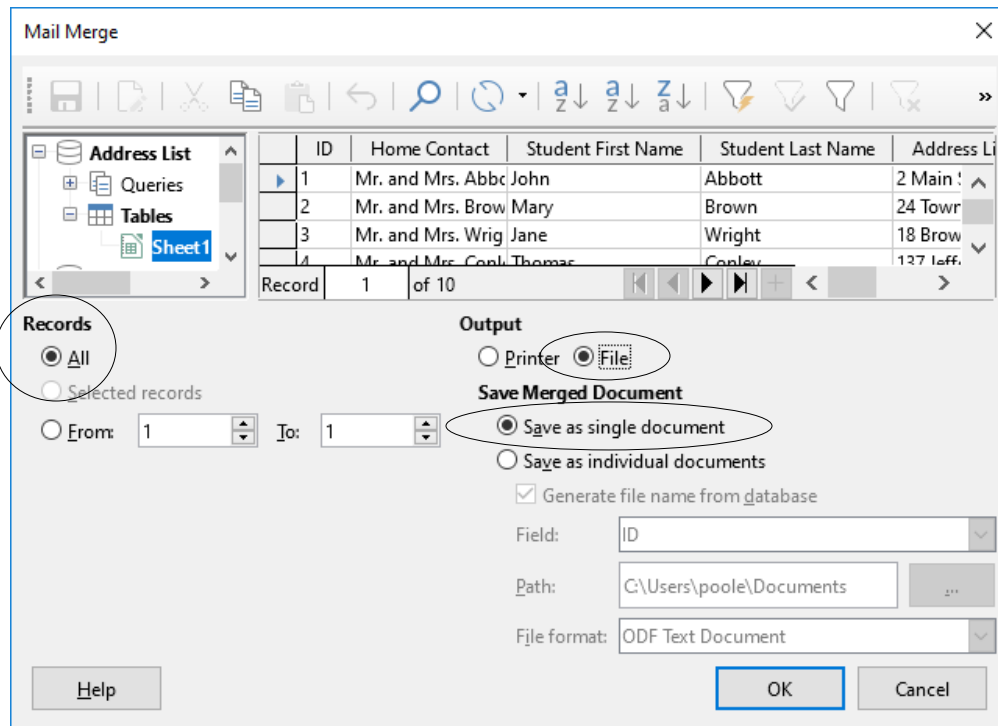

Fig. 7.25 Mail Merge dialog box

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.

247

> 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. 7.25 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 **disk 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 Printout file** and click on the **Save** button

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 Printout File** 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. 7.26).

Mr. and Mrs. Abbott 2 Main St. Streatham, PA 15658	Mr. and Mrs. Brown 24 Townley Blvd Coopers Grade, PA 15467	Mr. and Mrs. Wright 18 Brownsville Rd Beaver, PA 15487
Mr. and Mrs. Conley 137 Jefferson St Cambridge, PA 15436	Mr. and Mrs. Bould 1 Broad St Beaver, PA 15487	Mr. and Mrs. Nancy 98 Park Rd Streatham, PA 15658
Mr. and Mrs. Hunter 145 Portland Rd Edgbaston, PA 15376	Mr. and Mrs. Norman 122 Jefferson St Liverpool, PA 15375	Mr. and Mrs. Powell 1820 Rumbold Lane Cambridge, PA 15436
Mr. and Mrs. Price 22 Peterson Rd Coventry, PA 15862		

Fig. 7.26 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 Printout File** document

Printing the mailing labels

> If you intend to print the mailing labels, click on **File** > **Print** > **OK**… and *Writer* will print the mailing label sheet(s), then **Close** the **Field Trip Notice Merged Mailing Labels Printout File** document

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 *Fall Roster 2019*. It is a set of records for a sample class of 25 students. You are going to use the data in the *Fall Roster 2019* 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/Term. You are going to have *Writer* merge the *Mid Term Report* with the *Fall Roster 2019* database. But first you need to open a *Writer* template as a basis for the report. The template is called *Letters*.

> Your **Address List database**, along with its **Sheet1 Table**, should still be open on your desktop, so go to **File** > **Open,** navigate to your **disk drive** > **Work Files for LibreOffice** > **Miscellaneous Files** > **Merge Documents** then **double click** to open the **Letters** *Writer* document

Registering the *Fall Roster 2019* database

You need to register the *Fall Roster 2019* database with *LibreOffice* before you can use it to merge its data into the *Letters* merge document. Here are the steps to do this.

> Go to the **Tools menu** > **Options…**, then in the **left-hand frame** of the **Options window** click on the "**+**" sign next to **LibreOffice Base** to show the items in the **LibreOffice Base sublist**, and click on **Databases** (Fig. 7.27)
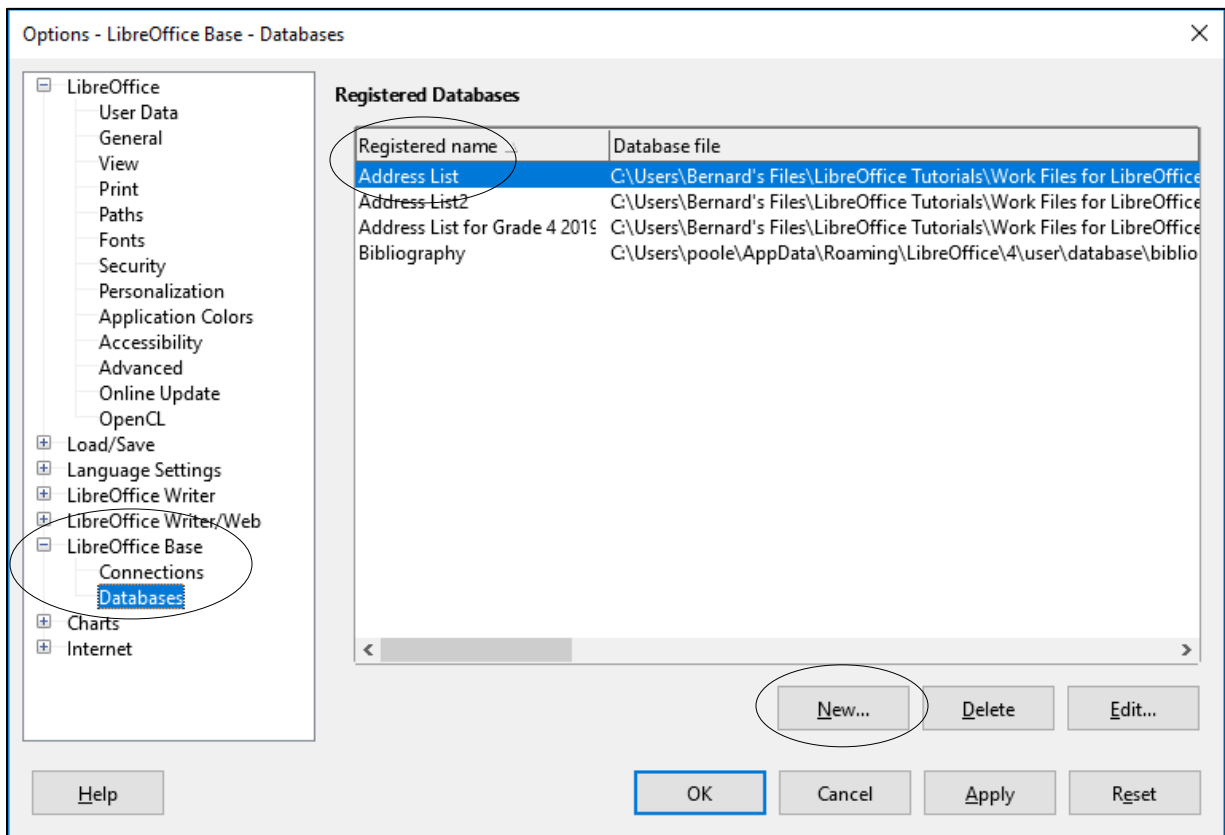

Fig. 7.27 The Tools > Options > LibreOffice Base > Databases dialog box

> In the **right hand frame**, in the **Registered databases** section, check that **Address List** is highlighted (Fig. 7.27 above), then click on **New**

This brings up the *Create Database Link* dialog box (Fig. 7.28).
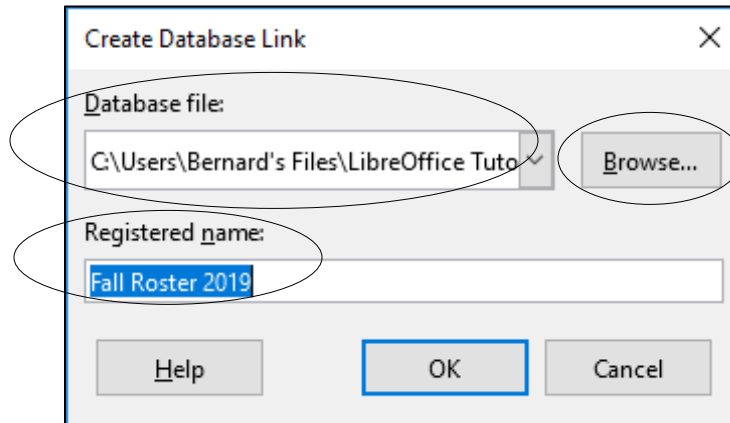

Fig. 7.28 Create Database Link dialog box

> In the **Create Database Link dialog box**, click on **Browse** and navigate to your **disk drive** > **Work files for LibreOffice** > **Miscellaneous Files** > **Merge Documents**, then **double click** on **Fall Roster 2019** to put it in the **Registered name** data entry box (Fig. 7.28 above), then click on **OK**

Notice that the *Fall Roster 2019* database is now in the *Registered Name* list in the *Registered Databases* section of the *Options* dialog box (Fig. 7.29).
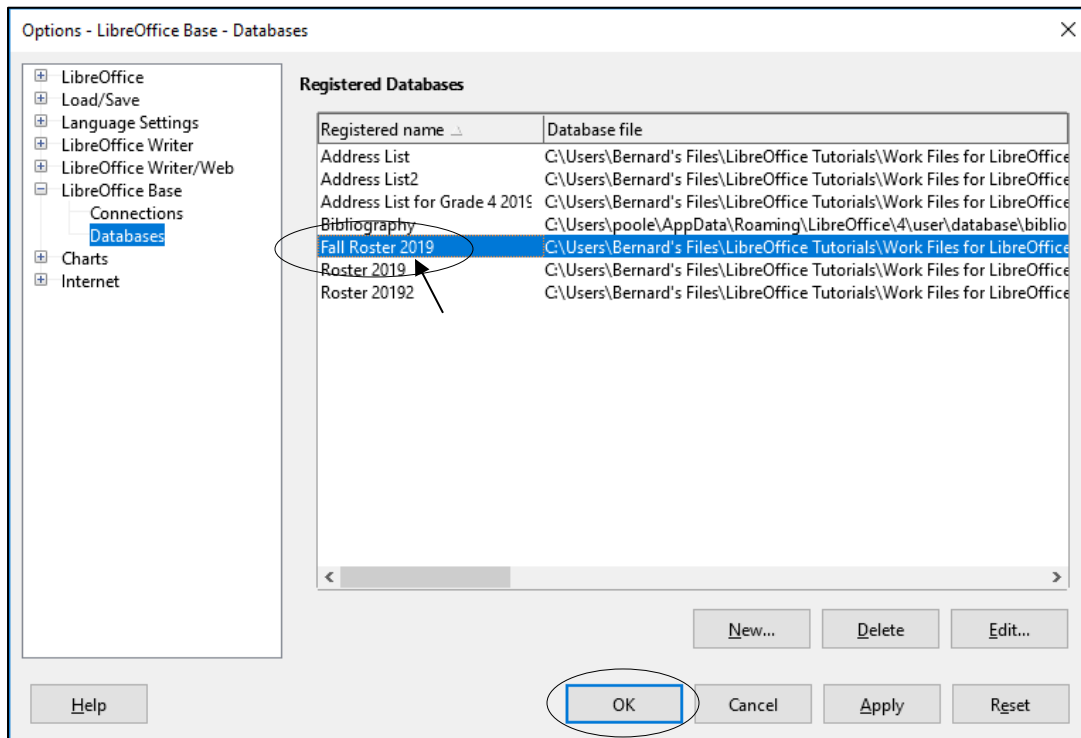

Fig. 7.29 Adding *Roster 2019* to the list of registered databases

> Click on **OK** to complete the **registration** of the **Fall Roster 2019** database

The *Fall Roster 2019* 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.

250

In the **View** menu select **Data Sources**, then in the list of databases at **top-left** of the **Letters** window, scroll down if necessary till you see **Fall Roster 2019**

Now click on the **+ (plus sign)** next to **Fall Roster 2019** and again scroll down if necessary, click on the **+ (plus sign)** next to **Tables** to bring up the **Roster 2019 Table** and click **once** on **Fall Roster 2019 Table**, then wait while the data from the **Fall Roster 2019 database** is displayed in the **top-right pane** of the Letters window (Fig. 7.30)

Fig. 7.30 The Roster 2019 data displayed top right of the Letters window

Creating the Mid Term Report form letter

Next you are going to use the *Letters* document, which came with the *Work Files for LibreOffice*, to create a *Mid Term Report* which will go out to the parents of your students. The report is illustrated in Fig. 7.31 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.

Go to **File** > **Save As**, navigate to your **disk drive** > **Work Files for LibreOffice** > **Data Files** > **Writer Documents folder**

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 again to your **disk 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 2019* class. As you can see, the form letter illustrated in Fig. 7.31 on the next page reports to parents on how well their child is doing half-way through the semester.

You already told *Writer* that you want to merge the form letter with the data stored in the *Roster 2019* database. The placeholders in Fig. 7.31 above (where the field names are enclosed by the <…> brackets) indicate the location in the form letter where data from the *Roster 2019* 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 234.

First Name	Address Line 1	City	State	Postal Code	Home Contact	Grade	ATD	Comment
Jerome	36 Summers Lane	Johnstown	PA	15904	Mr. and Mrs. Brown	B	1	very good
Amanda	163 Windber Gardens	Johnstown	PA	15905	Ms. Myers	A	0	excellent
Courtney	1 Main St.	Johnstown	PA	15904	Mr. and Mrs. Johnston	C	2	satisfactory
Melissa	146 Hermitage Circle	Windber	PA	15907	Mr. and Mrs. Kline	A	2	satisfactory
Jessica	219 Holly Crescent	Richland	PA	15904	Mr. and Mrs. Keirn	C	4	cause for concern
Jessica	45 Brindle Lane	Johnstown	PA	15905	Mr. Hershberger	A	1	very good

Hodge Road Elementary School
123 Mingo Bluff Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15905

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

Monday, May 21, 2019

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 <ATD> 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 dhendry@keystone.k12.pa.us.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours very sincerely,

Donna Hendry
1st Grade Teacher

Fig. 7.31 The Mid Term Report form letter
(Placeholder locations highlighted in RED)

All that remains is for you to create the Mid Term Report form letter as illustrated in Fig. 7.31.

Be sure to use the **Date format** illustrated in Fig. 7.31—**Insert** > **Fields** > **Date**, **right click** on the default **numeric Date**, in the pop-up **context menu** of **Edit Fields… Options**, in the **Select** column click on the **Date** option—NOT Date(fixed)—then in the **Format** column select the **Wednesday, December 31, 1999** style, and click on **OK**

> Now continue entering the remaining contents of the letter as illustrated in Fig. 7.31 on the previous page

This involves creating *placeholders* for the various data items that must be gathered from the 25 student records in the *Roster 2019* database. If you need help completing this task, refer back to the section on page 237 of this tutorial titled **Inserting fields (placeholders) into your form letter**. Fig. 7.14 is especially useful as a guide to what you need to do.

> Start with the **placeholders** for the **full recipients' address** (**Home Contact**, **Address Line 1**, **City**, **State** and **Postal code**) and for the various other **placeholders** indicated in the form letter in Fig. 7.31 above (**First Name**, **Grade** and **Comment**)—when you're filling out the **recipient's address** be sure to hit **Enter** where necessary to start a new line, and **add commas** and **spaces** as required in any address

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

Pasting a chart into the Mid Term Report form 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 in this *LibreOffice* book (Lessons 4 and 5).

> Go to **File** > **Open…**, navigate to **disk 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** > **Chart…** (Fig. 7.32)
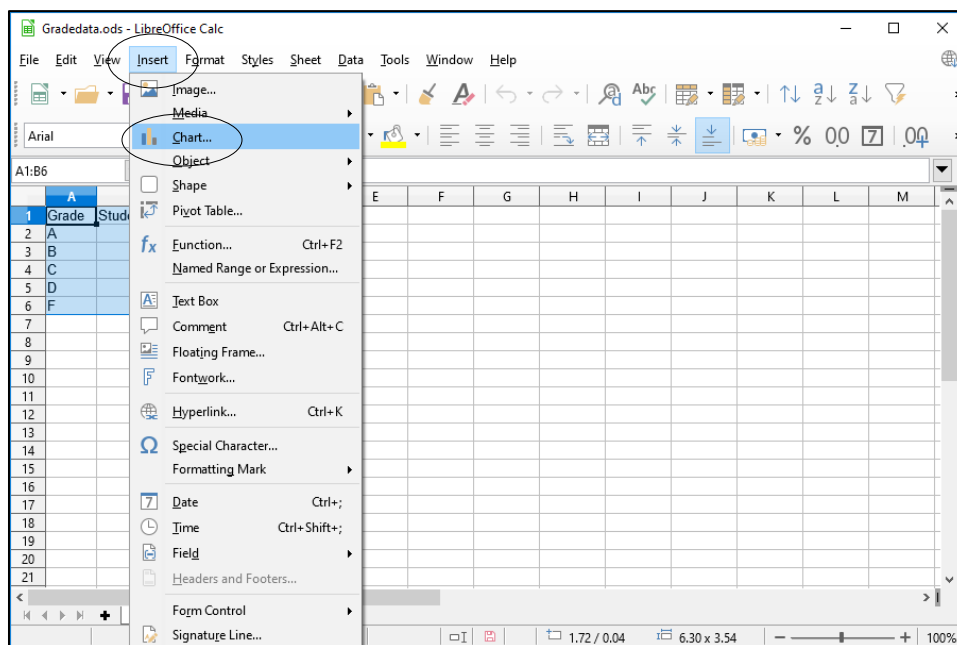

Fig. 7.32 Selecting the Chart option in Calc

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. 7.33) to help you create a more interesting or, more to the point, more *meaningful* chart.
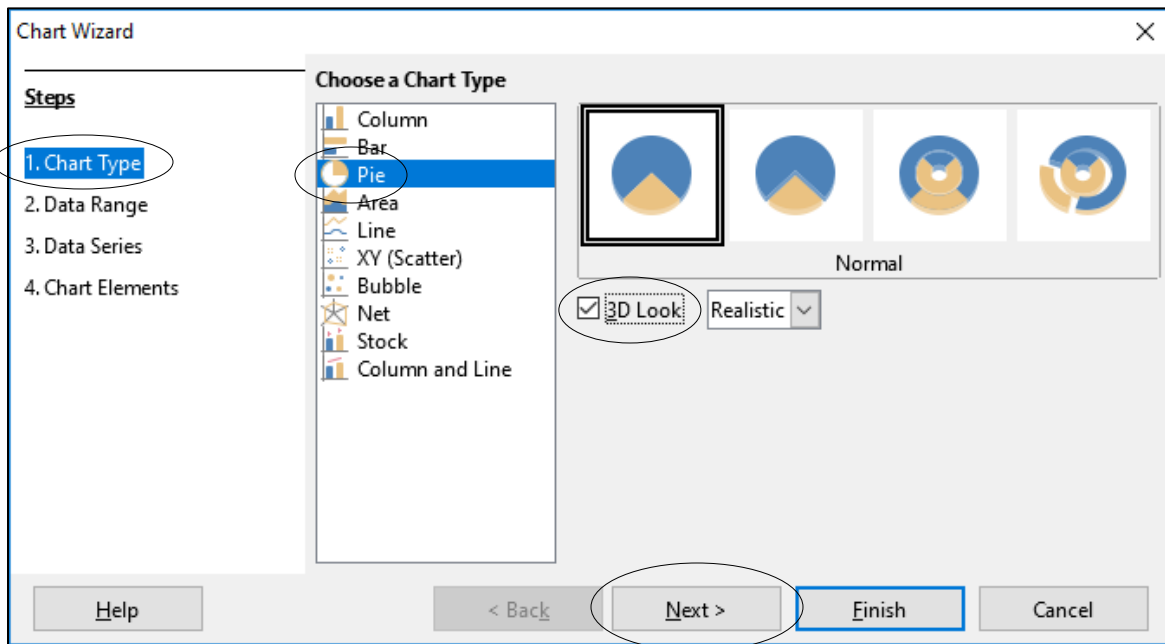

Fig. 7.33 The Chart Wizard dialog box

Start, in **Step 1**, by selecting the **Pie** chart option, then click to put a **check/tick** in the **check box** next to **3D Look** and click on **Next** (Fig. 7.33 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. 7.34.
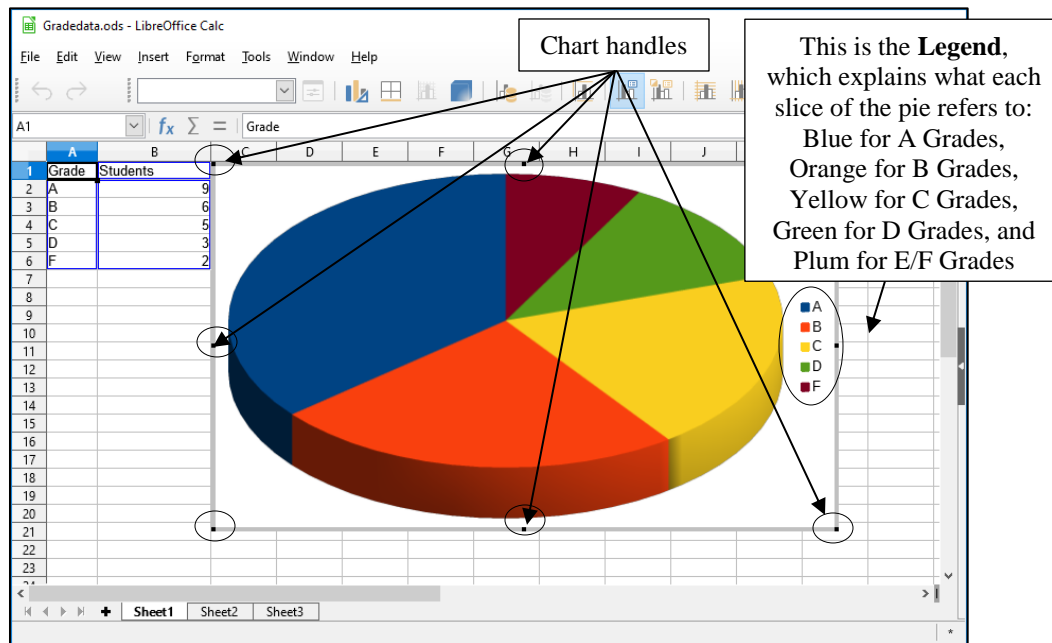

Fig. 7.34 The Grade 4 Reporting Period basic 3D Pie chart

254

As charts go, it's pretty plain at this stage, and not too meaningful. The chart needs a title and subtitle, and each of the slices need numerical values associated with them. Fig. 7.35 illustrates what we're looking for in the final version of the chart.
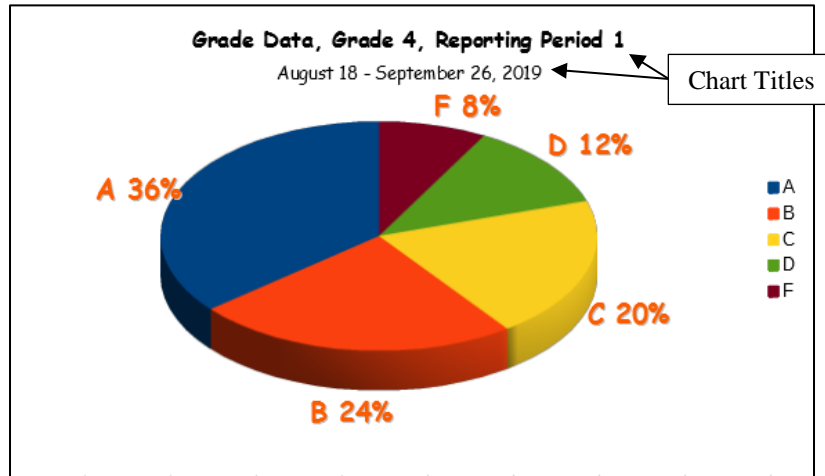

Fig. 7.35 Final version of the Grade 4 grading period data chart

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. 7.35 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. 7.36)
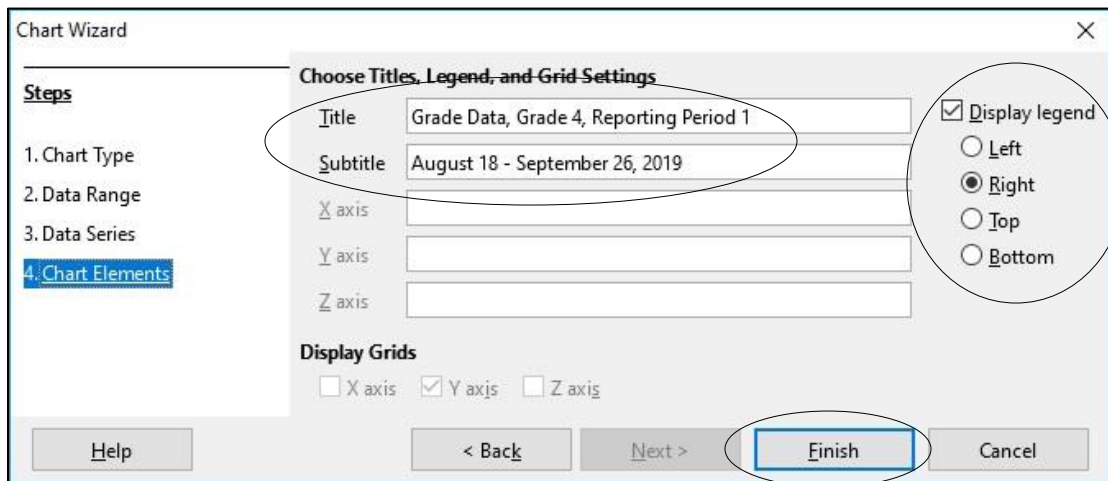

Fig. 7.36 The Chart Wizard > Chart Elements dialog

> Go ahead and type in the *Title*: **Grade Data Grade 4, Reporting Period 1**, then type in the *Subtitle*: **August 18 – September 26, 2016** 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 clic**k on the **Title text** to select the **whole of the title text** (Fig. 7.37)
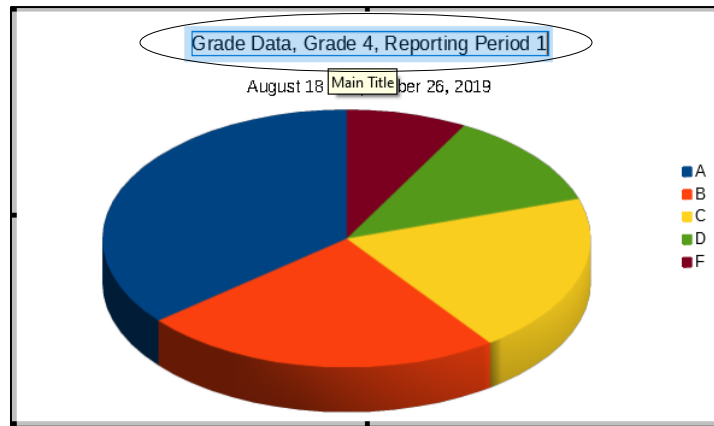

Fig. 7.37 Selected Title text

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. 7.38)
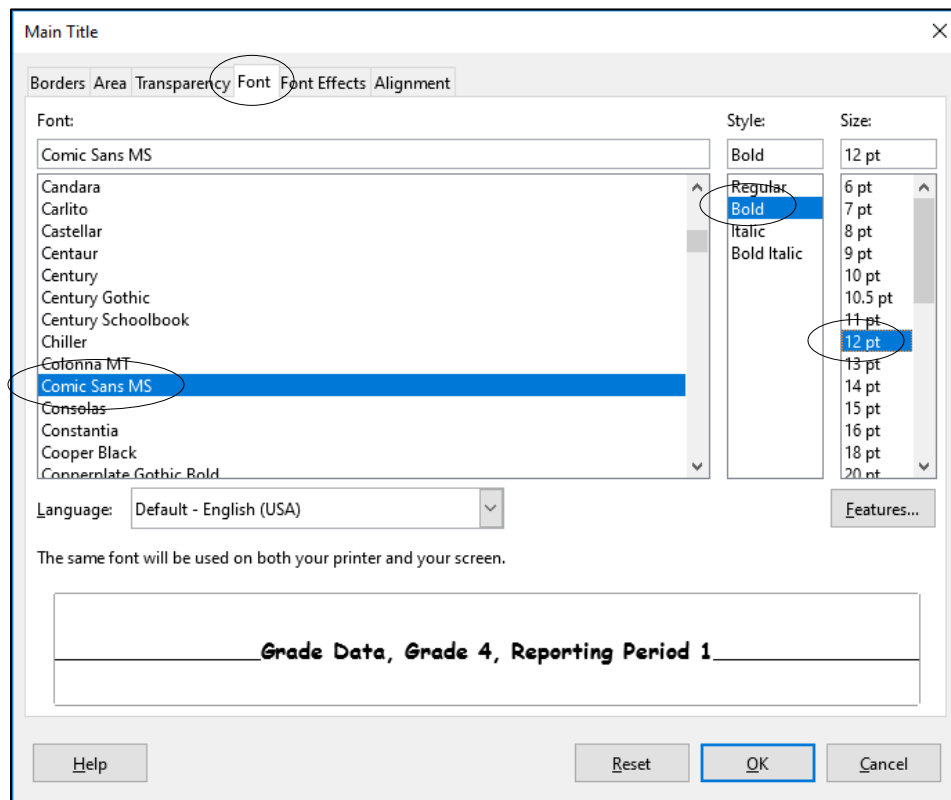

Fig. 7.38 Formatting the Chart Title

In the **Main Title** dialog box (see Fig. 7.38 previous page), 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 click **once** on the **blue border** of the **Main Title** dialog box to show it with the **handles** around it, hit the **up-arrow key** on the keyboard to slide the box up to the top of the Chart window, then click outside the box

You need to do the same for the *Subtitle* text: *August 18 – September 26, 2016*.

Double click anywhere on the **Subtitle** text to put a **blue box** around it, then **triple clic**k on the **Subtitle text** to select **ALL 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 (similar to Fig. 7.34 previous page)

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**

Now click **once** again on the blue border of the **Subtitle** dialog box to show it with the **handles** around it, then hit the **up-arrow key** on the keyboard to slide the box up till it's just **below** the **Main Title box**, then click outside the box

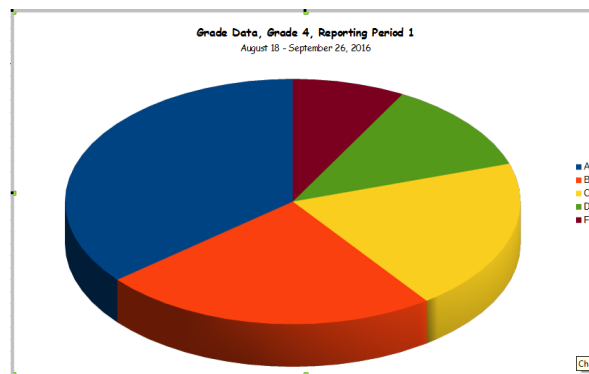Your chart should now look like Fig. 7.39.

Fig. 7.39 Pie chart with Titles formatted

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*** (on one of the slices in the pie) and, in the **context menu** that pops us, select **Insert Data Labels** (Fig. 7.40)
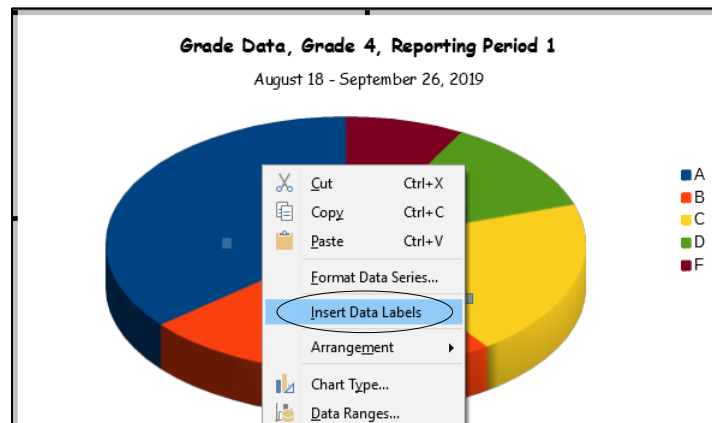

Fig. 7.40 Right click on the Pie in the chart box

257

Notice that *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/F (Fig. 7.41).
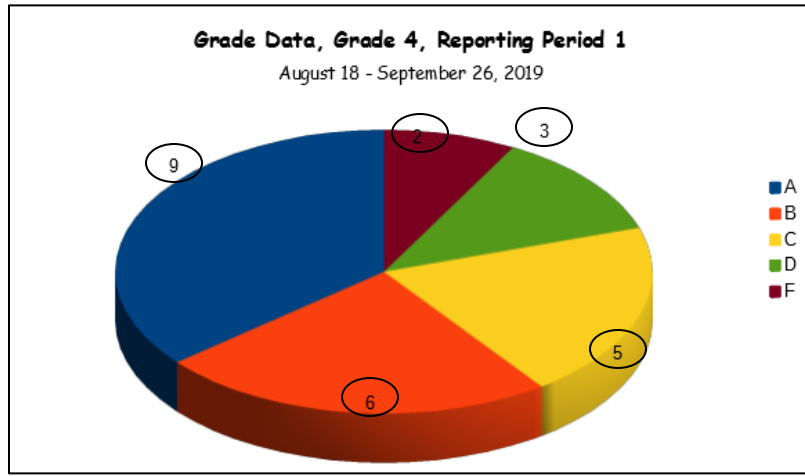

Fig. 7.41 Updated slices of the Pie Chart

If you look at your chart (Fig.7.41 above) you'll no doubt think those labels (numbers) are not exactly helpful. They're small and are placed oddly in relation to the slices of the pie. So your last task is to format those numbers in relation to 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** (on one of the slices) 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. 7.42)
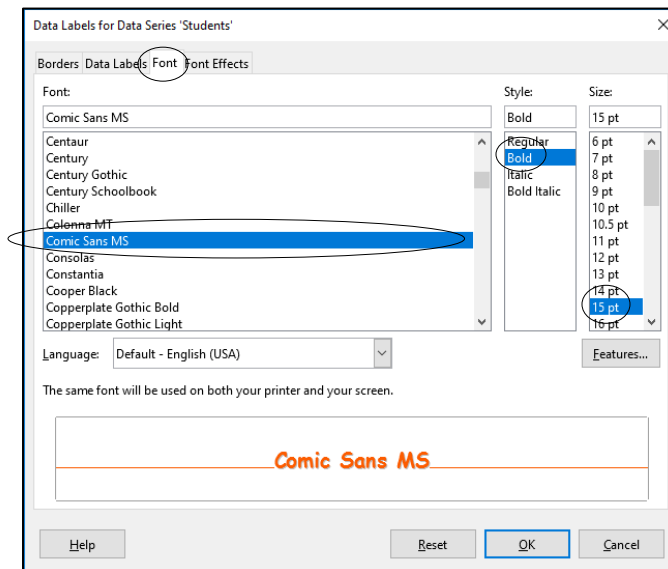

Fig. 7.42 Choosing Font Effects in the Data Labels dialog box

> First, click on the **Font tab** and select **Comic Sans MS** for the **Font**, **Bold** for the **Style**, and **15** for the **Size** of the font (Fig. 7.42)

258

Next, click on the **Font Effects tab** and, for the **Font Color**, select **Orange Accent** (or any color you like that's **dark**, not light) and, for the **Relief** select **Embossed** (Fig. 7.43)
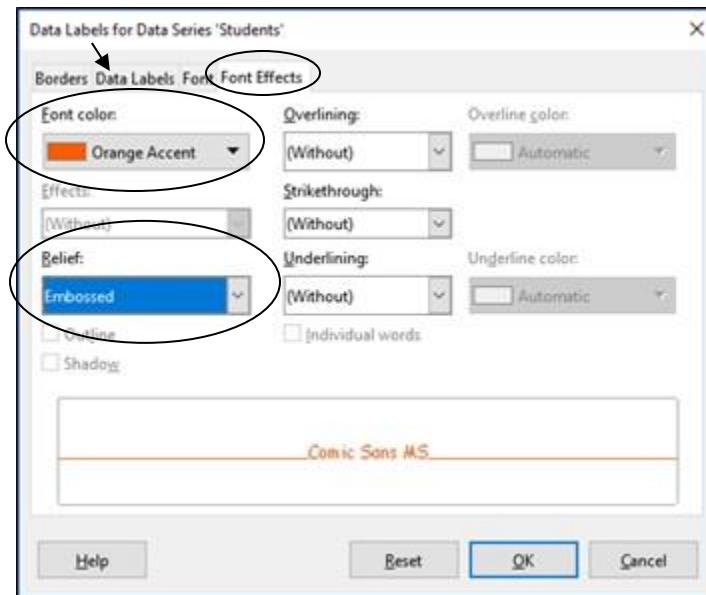

Fig. 7.43 Selecting Font Effects for the Chart Labels.

Click on the **Data Labels tab** (Fig. 7.43 above) and **remove** the **check mark/tick** in the box next to **Show value as number**, then click to put a **check mark/tick** in the **box** next to **Show value as percentage** (the default format will use the % symbol), then click to put a **check mark/tick** in the **box** next to **Show category**; finally, click on the **down arrow** in the **Placement box** and select the menu item **Outside**

Now click on **OK**
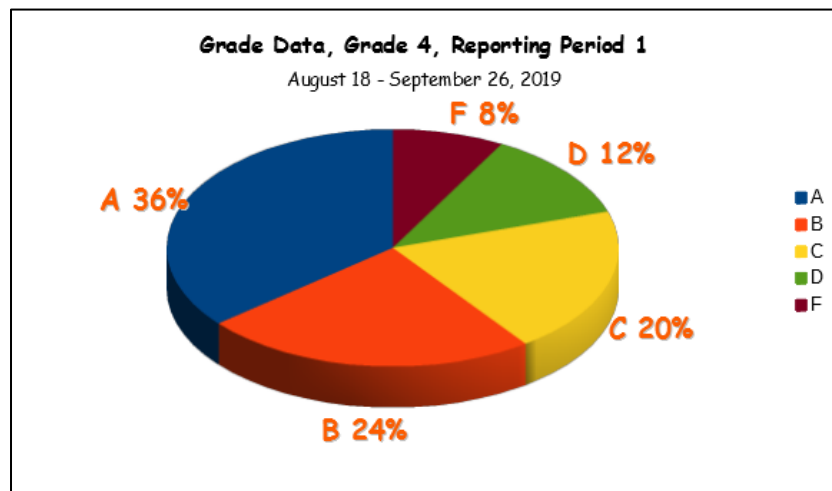
Your chart should now look something like Fig. 7.44.

Fig. 7.44 Finished chart ready to be copied and pasted

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

Copying and Pasting the chart into the Mid Term Report

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

> Click on **any cell** in the spreadsheet **outside** the **border** of the pie chart in order to **deselect** it; then click **once** on the **Pie Chart** to **re-select it** (you'll see a **set of 8 blue handles** around the **border** of the chart

> **Right click** on the chart and, in the context menu, select **Copy** to **copy** the chart to the clipboard

> 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…."** and hit the **Enter key** to **space down one line**, then hit the **up-arrow key** on the keyboard to move the **cursor** back **up one line**

> Now, in the **Formatting toolbar**, click on the **Center** icon (or hit **Ctrl+e**)

> Press **Ctrl+v** to paste the chart into the **Mid Term Report** document, use the mouse to **drag the chart** into position **immediately above** the paragraph that begins "**Please feel free…**", then **right click** on the **Chart** and, in the **context menu**, select **Properties**

> In the **Properties dialog box** click on the **Borders Tab** and, in the **Line Arrangement section** click on the icon to **Set All Four Borders** (Fig. 7.45) and click on OK
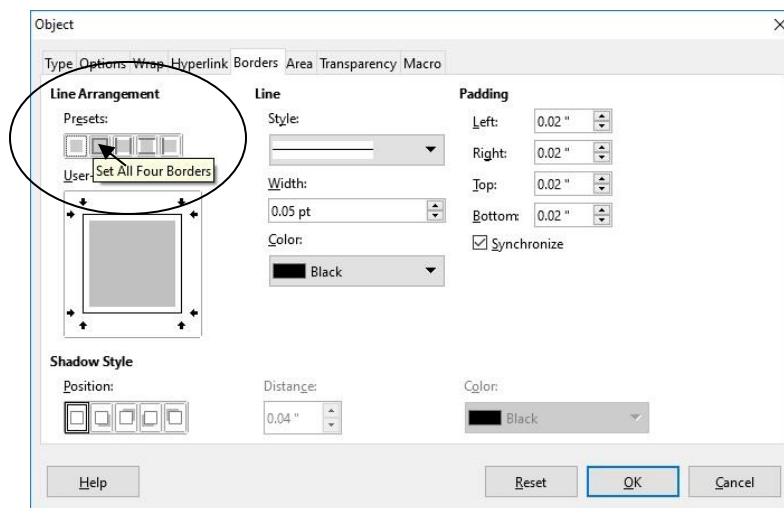

Fig. 7.45 Selecting a border for the Chart in the Properties dialog box

As is, the letter now spills over onto a second page because of the chart. This is no problem if it cannot be avoided. Anyway, you're going to add a paragraph to the letter in order to explain the purpose of the chart, so it's inevitable that you'll need a two-page document.

> Click to position the cursor immediately before the word "**Please…**" at the beginning of the paragraph following the chart, hit the **Enter key** to space down one line before you start typing in the following text:

> The chart above will help you see where your child stands with regard to the class as a whole. At Hodge Road Elementary we are all committed to helping every child achieve to the very best of her or his ability. To this end we strive to create a learning environment where each student can succeed. We cannot do this without the help of the parents and guardians of the children. So, I invite you all to meet with me so that we can further discuss your child's academic performance.

After you have typed in the above paragraph, hit the Enter key **Twice** to space down **two lines** (if some of the paragraph you just typed is out of line, you may also need to position the cursor at the beginning of the new paragraph and hit the **Enter** key as many times as necessary until the whole paragraph is correctly aligned below the chart)

Save (**Ctrl+s**) the **Mid Term Report** once again

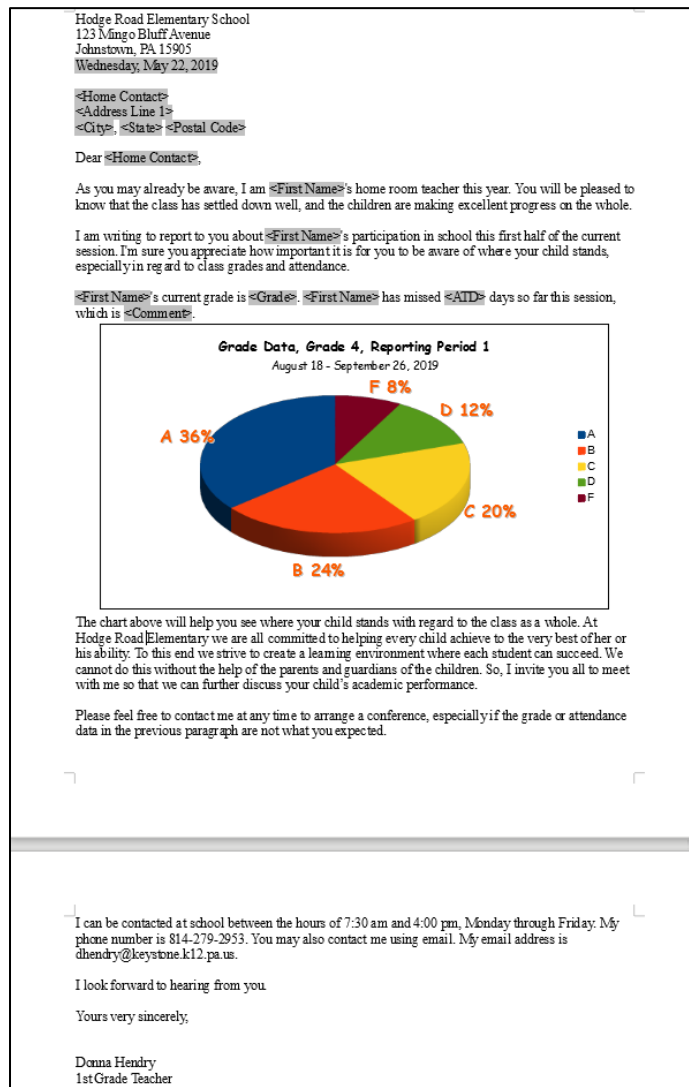The final version of your Mid Term Report should look something like Fig. 7.46.

Fig. 7.46 Final version of the Mid Term Report

261

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

Saving and Printing the set of Mail Merged Mid Term Reports as a single document
First you need to complete the merge of the Mid Term Report with the Roster 2019 database.

> In the **File** menu 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**, name the file **Mid Term Report Merged Document**, and **Save** it again

If you wanted to print all the reports 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 2019 database that accompanies this tutorial).