



# 24 HOURS TO



LEARN  
SCRIVENER

ABIGAIL CARTER

# **24 Hours to Learn Scrivener**

**By Abigail Carter**

## **Copyright Page**

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# Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the fabulous folks at NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month), CL Smith of [HumbleNations.com](http://HumbleNations.com), who created a wonderful cover, and my fabulous editor, Nicole Ayers (<http://ayersedits.com>).

# Introduction

Scrivener is a great tool for writers (fiction, nonfiction, scriptwriters, and poets), but I hear many writers say they just want to stick with what they know which is perfectly understandable. Word is often the go-to program in this case. But Scrivener can really make magic happen with its ability to allow writers to move chapters and scenes around to their heart's content. Trying to do this in Word requires an excellent file naming system, a renaming system, which for me, usually resulted in a lost file, or worse, an overwritten one.

Scrivener does, however, require a certain amount of time invested in learning to understand its power. This guide is meant for writers who have either invested in Scrivener, but don't feel they are using it to its potential or who are thinking of buying Scrivener, but want to understand it better before they do to make sure it will work for them.

Scrivener doesn't need to be intimidating and is a tool that can make writing of any kind a pleasure.

NOTE: I will be writing this guide with the Mac version of Scrivener, which is slightly different than the Windows version, but where possible I will give the Windows version instructions as well.

Best,

Abigail Carter  
Chief Marketing Officer  
[Bibliocrunch.com](http://Bibliocrunch.com)

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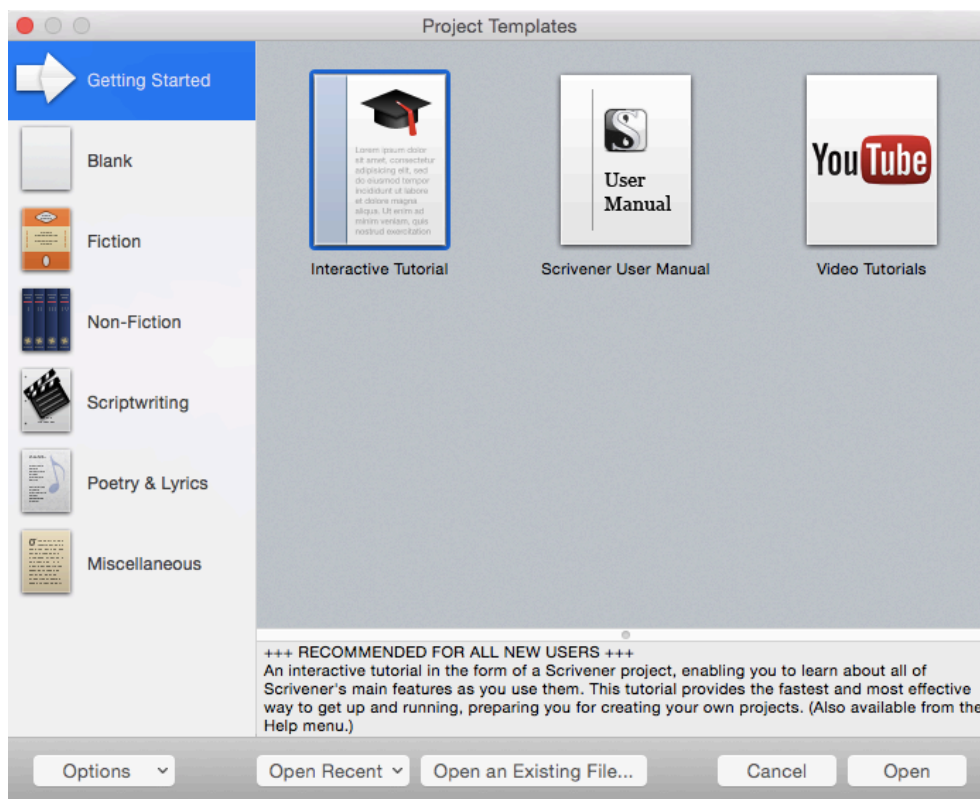
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# I. GETTING STARTED WITH SCRIVENER

## A. A QUICK TOUR

One of the first things you will need to do in Scrivener is to create a project. A project is one file that will contain all the chapters, scenes, research (even photos and notes), and everything else you need for your writing project. Think of it as a drawer in your filing cabinet in which all your individual project folders will live.

Here is the screen you will see when you first open Scrivener:



The documents that come with Scrivener are meant to help you learn and understand the program. They are useful tools. Be sure to check out the [Interactive Tutorial and the Video Tutorials](#). You don't need to spend a lot of time watching them (the videos range from a minute to thirty-five minutes), and since they are intro videos, they are suitable for both Mac and Windows users. They are especially helpful when starting with Scrivener.

## B. CREATING A PROJECT

When you open Scrivener, it will prompt you to create a new project. Then you will save it on your computer or in the cloud so that the autosave will have a place to store all the new data.

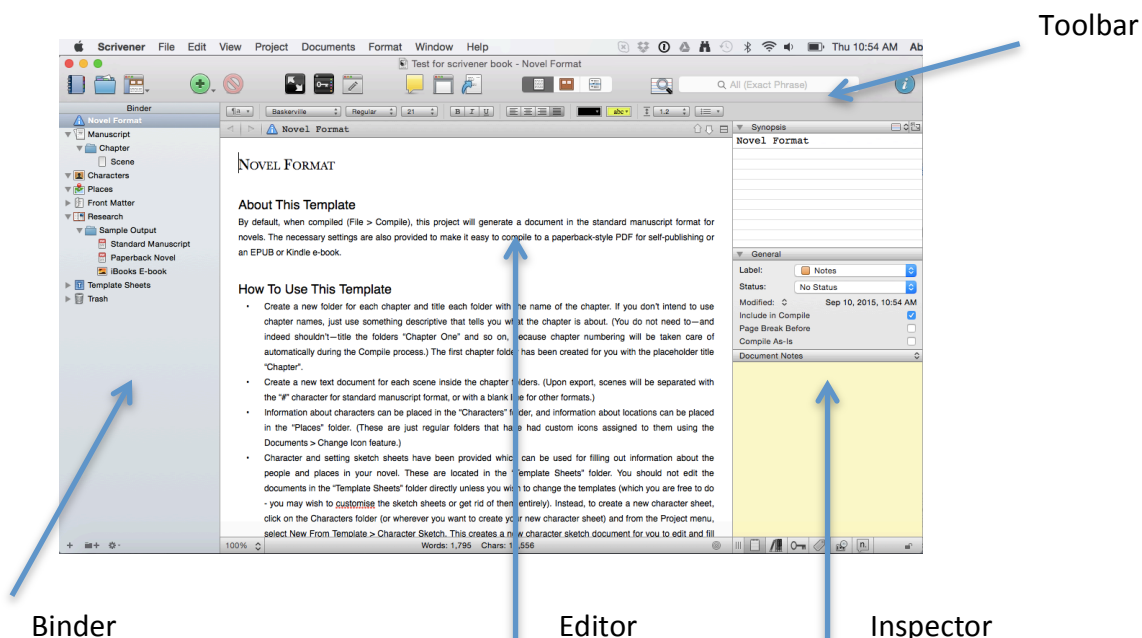
### Choose a Template

“Getting Started” will be highlighted on the left of Scrivener’s opening screen. You will see a list of the default templates that come with the program. If you click on “Fiction” you will see that it opens up to “Novel,” “Novel with Parts,” and “Short Story.”

These templates are really just meant to be an organizational starting point. No template here will perfectly match your needs, but don’t worry, you can change almost every aspect of the template if you need to.

To begin, simply select the template that you think most closely resembles your project. Then click the “Choose” button at the bottom of the box. You will be prompted to enter a file name. Scrivener will use this file name as your default project name. Choose your file name carefully because it can become the title and author of your manuscript when generating it for printing or compiling an ebook. But don’t worry too much. You will be able to change this information later using the metadata settings.

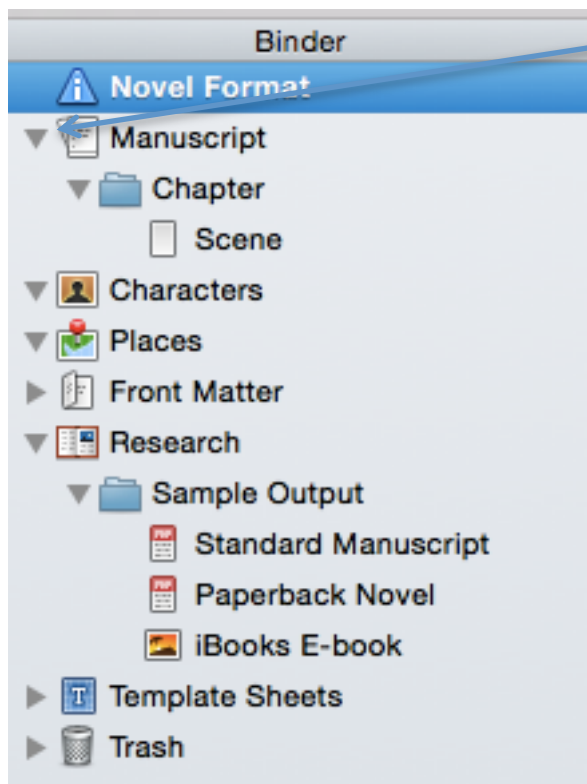
Once you have given your project a name and saved it, Scrivener will open up the template already selected, which will be prefilled with a number of elements. Below is the opening page of the Novel template:






## The Binder (the left pane)

On the left side of the screen, the Binder is the heart of your project where you will find a listing of all your chapters, scenes, research files, character sketches, preformatted pages for your book's front matter, etc.



Clicking on the arrow beside icons will open them (the arrows will point down when open) and reveal whatever is inside. Click again to close.

### Novel Format

The very top item within every template (Novel Format in this case) is a page of information about what the template that you have chosen contains. It is worth reading this information to understand a little more about the template you are using and the items it contains as each one is a little different. After you've read the information, you can delete this item by selecting it in the Binder and clicking the delete icon at the top of the screen: . Just be careful using the delete button. There is no warning popup asking if you are sure you want to delete, so whatever you have selected will be deleted. You can always retrieve it again if you click on the trash can icon at the bottom of the Binder.



## Manuscript

The “Manuscript” icon represents your entire book or project. All your chapters and scenes will need to be nested under this icon. You can change the name from “Manuscript” to whatever you like by clicking it twice. You can change any of the names of things listed in your Binder this way.







## Chapters and



## Scenes

Nested within your “Manuscript” will be your chapters and scenes. This is where you will be writing. If you click on the first chapter within your manuscript, you will see that the center pane of the page opens to a bulletin board looking page. This is a little confusing at first, but it is really just one of three views you can have of your chapter. More about views shortly.

Chapters are usually shown with a blue folder icon  and actual text (scenes) is shown with a text icon. These are shown either blank  if you haven’t written anything yet, or with text  if there is text in the document. Chapters that contain text will have this icon: 



## Characters

This is where you can keep notes, web pages, photos, etc. on all your characters in order to keep track of them.



## Places

Similarly, you can keep notes, web pages, photos, etc. on the locations that appear in your work.



## Front Matter

In this folder, you will find a series of subfolders that contain the front matter pages. These will vary depending on if you will be formatting for a manuscript (basic formatting for a version of the book you might send an agent or editor), novel, or an ebook. Each have differing front matter and so have different files within them. You can add additional front matter items into any of these folders. Each of these pages has been preformatted for you (click on each of the text icons to see the formatting), but you can change these however you want.



## Research

This is where you can keep notes, web pages, photos, etc. for the miscellaneous items that pertain to your project.



## Image

All images including your cover image will have this icon. To import an image, simply drag it from your file manager into any folder (for an ebook place the cover into the “Front Matter” -> “ebook” folder).



## PDFs or Other Documents

This icon shows other documents that you might import into your Binder. You can import Word, PDF, web pages, and a whole range of other image and document files.



## Template Sheets

Template sheets are documents that collect information about either characters or places (or whatever else you can think of). If you open the Template Sheet folder, you will see a character sketch template sheet and a setting sketch template. If you click on them, you will see a list of attributes that you can complete to flush out the details of your characters or settings. You can add to these templates and reuse them for subsequent characters and settings or other details.



## Trash

Given how dangerously easy it is to delete a file, it’s good to know that you will be able to find anything you delete here. Just drag the file back to your project to restore it.

## C. CHAPTERS AND SCENES

### Viewing Chapters and Scenes

You can change views by using these three buttons at the top of the screen:



### Document View

The first icon (left) will show a long page of text with all the text of your subdocuments (scenes in the case of the novel template) flowing into one long document. This is the view I mostly use, since I like to see my chapter as one long page.

### **Corkboard View**

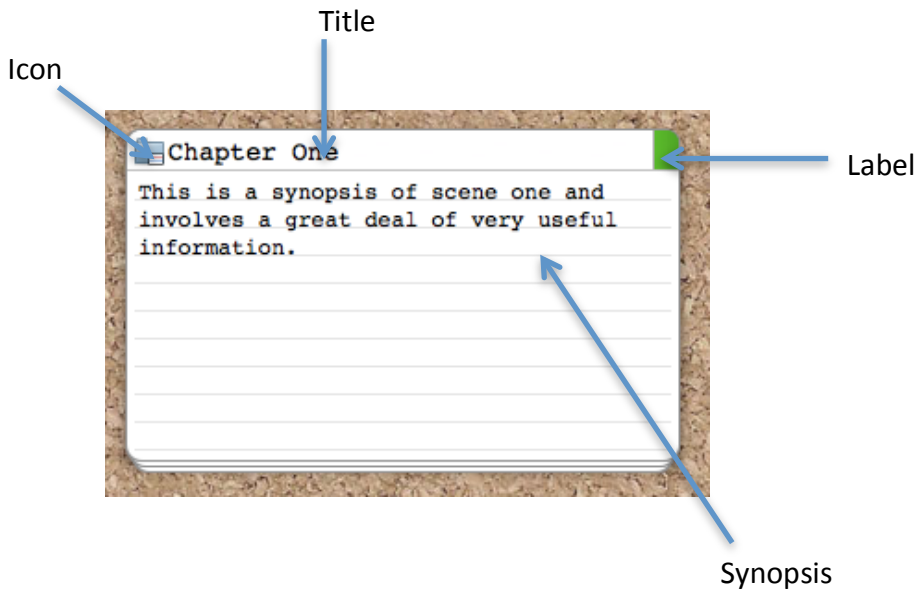
The second icon (center) is the corkboard. In this view (seen when you click on a folder with subdocuments), you can see all your subdocuments (scenes) as notecards with their synopses written on each one.

Writing a synopsis of each scene (or chapter) can be a useful way of keeping quick notes on a particular scene or chapter. This can be written directly on the Corkboard's index card or on the right side of the page (in the Inspector) of the chapter or scene you are working on.

While in Corkboard View, you can write a synopsis for a scene and you can grab these note cards and move them around to reorder your scenes. This is an easy way to play around with the order of your scenes or chapters.

### **Elements of the Index Card:**

- **Icon** shows what type of file the document is (text file or folder).
- The **Title** shows the title of the document. You can double click on it to change the title.
- A **Synopsis** is the text you write on the index card and will show up in the Inspector and in the Outliner view as well.
- A **Color Label** (You can set this in the Inspector.)

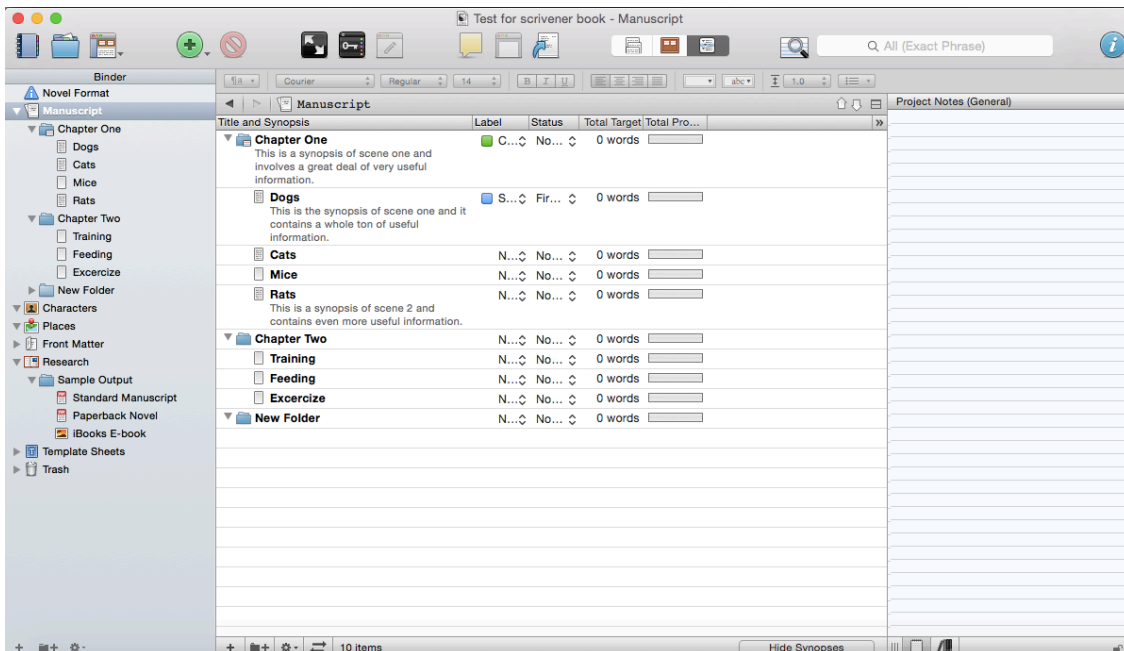


## Outliner View

The third icon (right) is an outliner view, which, if you are the type of writer who likes to outline your books, might be very useful. Again, if you have written synopses for your scenes, these will appear in the Outliner View. You can also write the synopsis in this view.

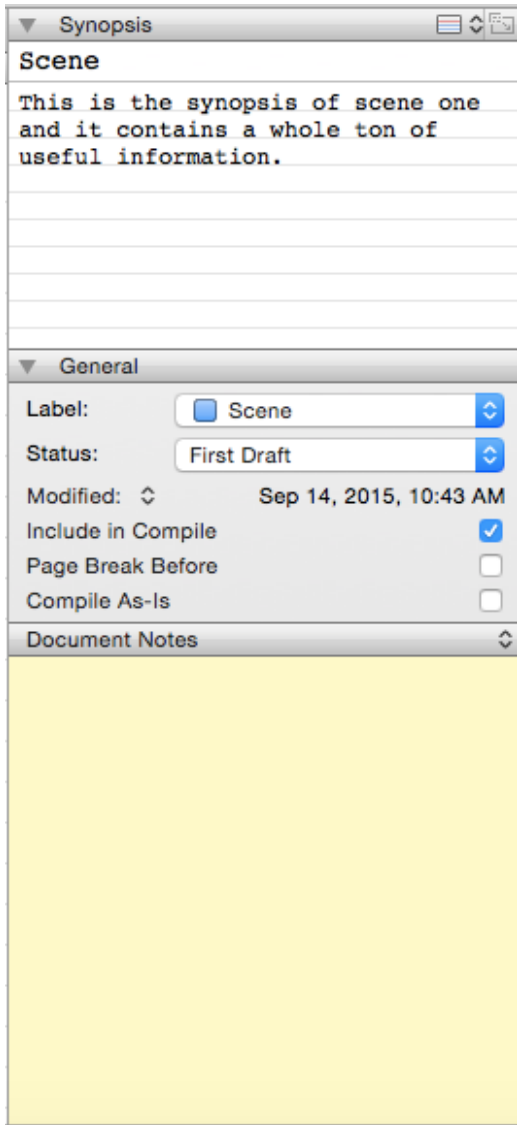
Within the Outliner View, you can also give your scenes a colored label, set a status such as “first draft” or “final draft,” set a target word count, and see your progress.

The default setup for the Outliner is to show the title and synopsis for each item in the Binder that you have selected. But you can adjust almost every element of the Outliner to suit your purposes.



## The Inspector (the right pane)

The right pane of the page is called the Inspector where you can write a synopsis for your chapter or scene, set dates for when the draft was written, determine if the scene or chapter will be included in the final “compile,” or final version of the book, and add notes (like sticky notes) to the chapter or scene.



### Note on chapters and scenes:

Some people write in scenes and Scrivener accommodates this very nicely. You can add a scene and then move it later to wherever you want. The scenes then are combined in a specific order to form a chapter. You can see the chapter/scene setup in the novel template. This can also be described as a folder/file organization, where a folder is the chapter and the file is the scene. Folders and files can be whatever you want them to

be. I personally write using only chapters (folders), so I didn't really use the scenes (files) at all. Scrivener is very flexible and allows this too. All the same options that apply for scenes (files) above also apply for chapters (folders). The significance becomes clear, however, when you compile your manuscript.

## The Toolbar



The top toolbar is where a lot of the action happens. The following is a quick explanation of each icon:



Show or hide the Binder. This icon toggles on and off the left pane (or Binder).



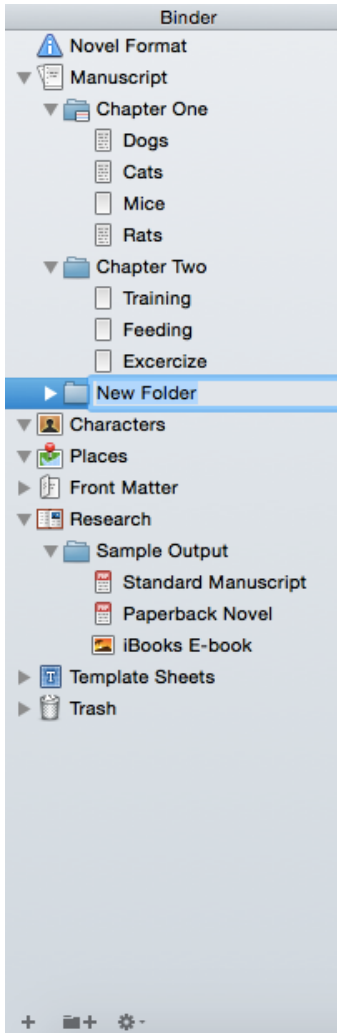
Show or hide collections. A collection is a group of related files that you can collect together. You can group of all the scenes in your book that are from one person's point of view, or you can have a collection of your first three chapters in order to easily export a partial manuscript.




Show or hide layouts. Clicking this icon will open a popup window that will allow you to save the way your screen is configured. If you want to have a layout that shows the Binder but hides the right pane, you can save this as a view and easily get to this view whenever you click the icon.




Insert. Clicking on this button will insert the type of file you have selected. If you have a chapter selected, then a new blank chapter will be added at the bottom of the list. If it's a scene you're working on, then it is a scene that will be added. If you click and hold the small arrow beside the icon, then you will be given a selection of the different types of files it is possible to insert. These include: chapter, scene, character sketch, setting sketch, and web page.



When you add a new folder, it appears all ready to be renamed.

 Delete. This will delete whatever file you have selected in the Binder. Be careful using this—there is no warning popup. It simply deletes whatever you have selected. Remember if you mistakenly delete something, you will be able to find it in the Trash folder found at the bottom of the Binder.

 Enter full screen composition mode. This is probably the most awesome aspect of Scrivener. Clicking this button will hide your entire computer desktop and replace it with a customizable screen with nothing but your document. You can choose how large you want the text to appear, the background fade, and the width of the page, which gives you a distraction-free page on which to write. To get to the controls, simply hover your mouse at the bottom of the screen. To escape out of the composition mode, press the escape button or click the icon again from the control panel at the bottom of the screen.



Using this view will block all distractions so you won't be able to see when a new email or Facebook notification arrives. You will still be able to hear the pings if your computer is set up to have sounds for these notifications.



Show/Hide keywords panel. Allows you to assign keywords to a project or file and then later search on that keyword. Keywords allow you to track various aspects of your story: time of day, characters, settings, subplot, etc. You can tag a scene or a document with a keyword, making it super easy to search for later. When you set keywords to a project, you can do a search and quickly find all the documents in your project with that keyword.



Show quick reference panel. This opens your selected chapter or scene in a popup window so that you can easily refer to it when working on another scene or chapter.



Add a comment. With some text selected, you can click this icon and add a note for yourself. This is especially handy when you are writing and just want to make a quick note to yourself so you don't forget something, but don't want to leave the page you are working on.



Toggle page layout view. This will make your center pane look like a page (with a background) rather than being integrated as one screen between the right and left panes.



Compile. This is the button to use when you are ready to print or compile your manuscript into an ebook or print book.



Document, corkboard, and outliner views as noted above.



Open the synopsis finder. This option allows you to search on all your synopses in order to find one quickly.



Search all. Use this to search your entire document for particular words or phrases.




Show/hide the Inspector pane (the right panel of the screen).

## II. BEGIN WRITING

Now, it's finally time for the fun stuff. But where do you begin? If you have selected the novel template, you can click on the "chapter" icon or the "scene" icon in the Binder (left panel) and then click in the center panel and simply begin typing.

You will have all the usual formatting options available to you for styling text: italics, bold, underline, alignment, font and size, and line spacing. You will be able to cut and paste text (Ctrl C (cut) and Ctrl V (Paste)) like you can in any word processing program. I usually choose the "Paste and match style" option (Edit -> Paste and Match Style) when pasting; otherwise the text I am pasting will contain the formatting from where it is being pasting from.

You can add more scenes or chapters as you go by clicking the insert icon (). Hold down the arrow beside the insert icon to choose to either add a folder (chapter) or a file (scene). This will insert either a folder or a file at the bottom of your Binder list of folders, or it will insert a file called "Untitled." Double click on it to rename it. You can drag it to wherever you want it in your Binder.

**Note:** Be sure that the folders and files are organized under the top "Manuscript" heading or else they won't be included in your final compiled manuscript.

### A. IMPORTING FILES

If you are new to Scrivener, you likely have a manuscript already written in another program that you now want to bring into Scrivener. Scrivener imports a wide variety of file types: RTF, DOC, DOCX, ODT, TXT, FDX, OPML, as well as most image types.

The beauty of this ability to import almost anything is that it allows you to store ALL of your research, be it images, documents, or websites, within your manuscript's Binder.

There are a few ways to import a file:

1. In the top menu bar, go to **File -> Import.**
2. Drag a file from your computer's finder right into the Binder.
3. While in the Binder, right click to open the menu and select **Add -> Existing files** or **Add -> Existing webpage.**

If you are importing a Word file that has tracking turned on with comments, the file will be imported with the comments. They will appear in the Inspector pane (right pane) as

comments and footnotes. You can click on one of the comments and it will take you to the place in the text the comment pertains to.

**NOTE:** To see the comments in the Inspector pane when you first import the file, you may have to click on a highlighted word in the text first.

## B. SPLITTING FILES

Often, you start writing without thinking about scenes, and you get to a point when you realize you have one long document. Or perhaps you imported a 50,000 word document that didn't get broken up into chapters when you imported it into Scrivener.

### Splitting a File Manually

1. Select the document to be split so that the text shows up in your Editor pane (center pane).
2. Place your cursor where you want the document to be split.
3. **Choose Documents -> Split -> At Selection.**

The new document will have the same name as the original document, amended with a number, and will contain everything AFTER the place you selected for the split.

### Import and Split

You can also choose the import and split option, but you will need to insert a character in your original file at each place you want your file to be split (similar to the ### used at the end of documents, you can add this to the end of each chapter). This character will be used by Scrivener to tell it where to split the files and create a new document for each one.

1. Select the location for the imported file in the Binder.
2. **Choose File -> Import -> Import and split** (a popup window opens).
3. Choose the file you want to import.
4. At the bottom of the popup window enter the character that the sections are separated by. (Be sure to use a character not already used in your text for another purpose.)
5. Click import.


## C. MERGING DOCUMENTS

You can also merge two documents into one.

1. From the Binder, hold down the shift button and click all the files you want to merge into one.
2. **Choose Documents -> Merge.**

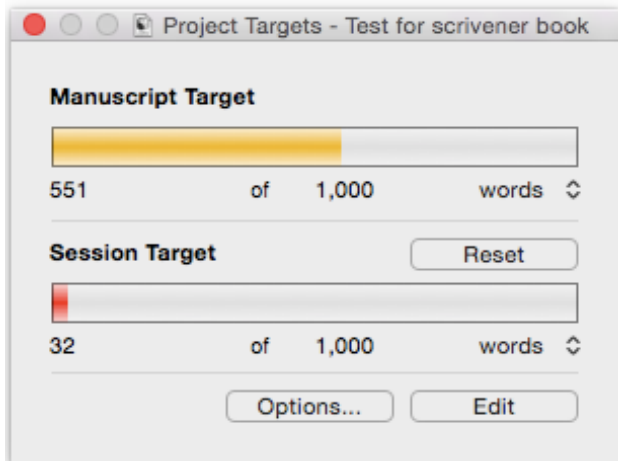
All the selected files will be merged into one document named with the name of the first file selected. Synopses, notes, keywords, and references will be retained, but the label, status, and metadata settings (your project's information such as title and author) will be those of the first file selected.

### Exporting Files

In Scrivener, this operation is called "Compiling." Compiling is a complex operation that I am not covering here, since I cover the subject in another book called *24 Hours to Format Your Book: Without InDesign* (found at Bibliocrunch's Author Academy: <http://bibliocrunch.com/author-academy/>). In a nutshell, when you have a finished manuscript, you can click the "Compile" button () and select how you want to export or "compile" your file. You can choose to compile your document as a printed manuscript, a Word file, PDF, rich text, plain text, several different flavors of ebook, and several more flavors of Multimarkdown files (a souped up version of "Markdown," a lightweight markup language (HTML is also a markup language) that enables documents to be viewed or exported in a number of different formats).

## D. TRACKING WORD COUNT

One of the fun parts of working with Scrivener is the ability to set word count targets and then track your progress. To set up your targets choose **Project -> Project Targets**.



Click the “Edit” button to set your manuscript targets (the total number of words you would like your book to be) and your session target (the number of words you would like to write in each writing session). It is very satisfying to pop into this menu from time to time and see how you’re doing (NaNoWriMo, anyone?)

## E. FORMATTING

Like Word, Scrivener has a formatting bar across the top of the Editor page (center panel). You have to have a document selected and have your cursor within your document with some text selected to be able to see/use the formatting bar. This is where you can change the font, justification, color, spacing, etc.

Bold, italics, and underline will be maintained in both the Editor and when you compile your work, but many of the other settings (bullet lists, indents, tabs, etc.) can be overridden when you compile your manuscript. Unless it makes it easier for you to see your work as you type, there is not a whole lot of need to try and make your book look perfect until it’s time to compile.

### Creating a Preset

If you find a combination of formatting choices that you like, you can create a preset for that group of formatting options so that you can easily apply them to other blocks of text as you write. These presets will then be available to all of your Scrivener projects.

1. Select a block of text and format it with the various options available from the formatting bar.
2. **Choose Format -> Formatting -> New Preset from Selection.**

3. Type a name for the preset in the popup window that appears.
4. Select “Save All Formatting” from the drop-down list at the bottom left of the window.
5. To save the font and size with the preset, select the “Include Font” and “Include Font Size” checkboxes at the bottom right.
6. Click OK.
7. Click the Presets button on the Format bar to see your new preset in the drop-down list.

### **Applying the Preset**

1. Select the desired text (it can be multiple paragraphs) that you want to apply the preset to.
2. Click the Presets button in the Format bar and then select the preset you want to apply from the drop-down.

### **Preserving Formatting**

Sometimes you format text and then the formatting is lost when you compile your manuscript. An example might be a block quote, special title, epigraph, or caption.

1. **Choose Format -> Select Formatting -> Preserve Formatting.** The preserved text will be highlighted.

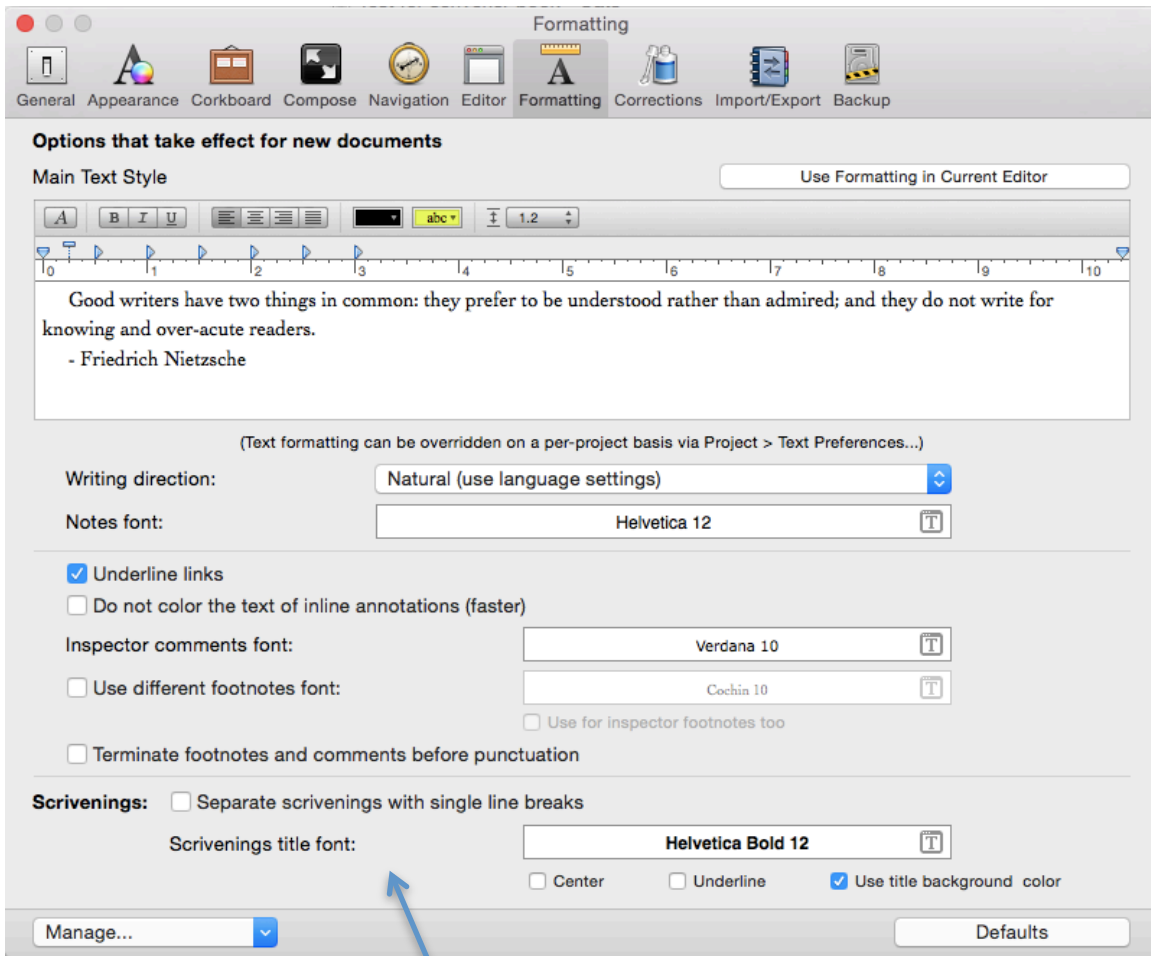
This will ensure that your formatting will be preserved when you compile your book.

To remove the preserved formatting, highlight the text and choose **Format -> Select Formatting -> Preserve Formatting to toggle the preserved formatting off.**

### **Default Document Format**

You can change the default settings for all the documents you create in Scrivener:

1. **Choose Scrivener -> Preferences** and then click the formatting icon to see all the formatting options. (Windows users: **Choose Tools -> Options** and select the Editor tab.)
2. Click in the Main Text Style box at the top of the page to activate it.
3. Use the Format bar in the window to set your preferences for all new documents in Scrivener. (These settings won't apply to documents already created.)
4. Close the Preferences window when done.



Formatting Preferences Window

To change preferences for just the project you are working on:


1. **Choose Project -> Text Preferences** to open the Project Formatting Preferences window and then check the box "Override Text Formatting for this Project." Set your formats. This will apply to just the documents in the current project.

### III. FUN THINGS ABOUT SCRIVENER

#### A. COMPOSITION MODE

One of the best things about Scrivener is the ability to hide everything on your computer's desktop and see only what you are working on to give you a distraction-free workspace.

##### Turn on Composition Mode

1. Select the item in the Binder you want to work on.
2. Choose **View -> Enter Composition mode** or click the Compose button () in the toolbar.

##### Personalize Your Workspace

1. Hover your mouse at the bottom of the screen to get access to the menu bar.
2. Adjust the font size, paper position and width, display keywords, display the Inspector panel, jump to different pages using "Go To," see your word and character count, use the slider to change the transparency of the background, and exit (you can also hit the escape key on your computer).

##### Change the Background Color

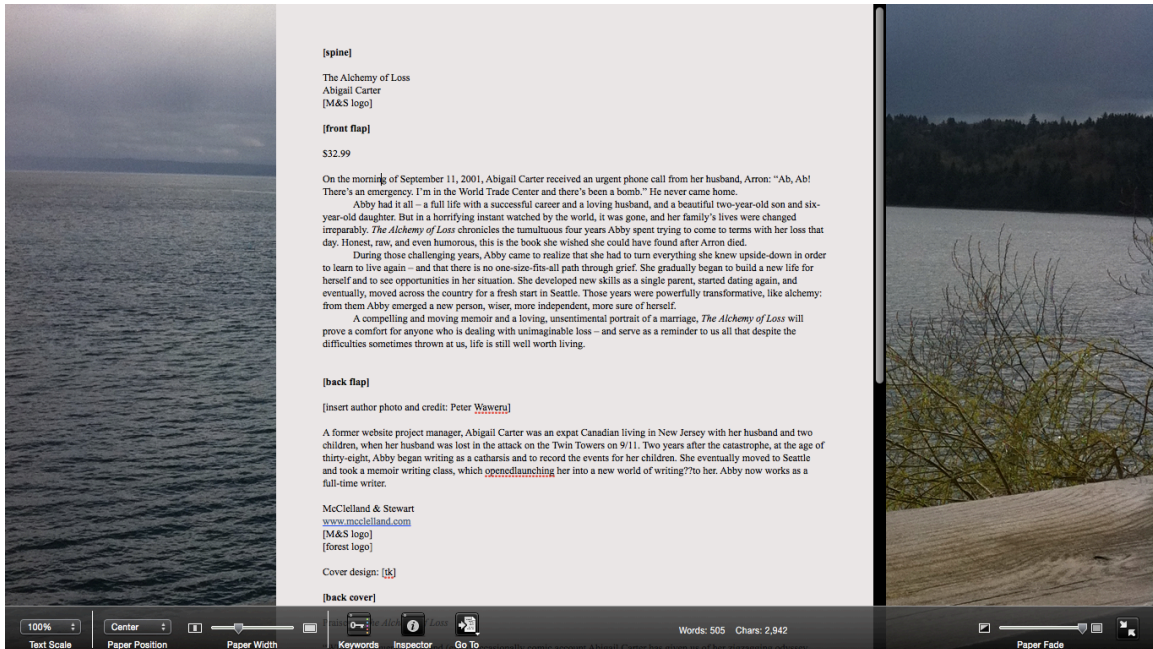
1. **Choose Scrivener -> Preferences** to open the preferences window.
2. Click the "Compose" button at the top of the window.
3. In the "Customizable Colors" section of the window, select "Background."
4. Click the background color box and choose the color you want.
5. Close the color window.
6. Close the Preferences window.

##### Add a Background Image

1. **Choose View -> Composition Backdrop -> Choose...**
2. Select an image from your files and click "Open."

The next time you are in composition mode, you will see your image as the background. A lovely beach scene or a mountain view are fun choices for a calm writing space.





Composition mode with personalize background image (Fun!)

## B. USING SCRATCH PAD

One very cool feature of Scrivener that is often overlooked is the Scratch Pad, which lets you write notes about your project, even when you are not in Scrivener (though it needs to be open). This means if you are surfing the web and come across something that might be good for your project, the Scratch Pad window will be right there ready for you to paste into.

1. **Open Scratch Pad: Choose Window -> Show Scratch Pad (Tools -> Scratch Pad in Windows).**
2. The Scratch Pad window will float above all other programs you have open so you can make notes while viewing a web page.
3. The top half of the window is a list of all the notes you have already stored. Double click on "Untitled Note" to rename it.
4. To add a new note, click the + at the bottom of the window.
5. Send the note to a particular project by clicking the drop-down menu, which will list all of your projects.

The screenshot shows the Literature & Latte website with a navigation menu (Home, Products, Forum, Blog, Support) and a header for 'New (Compiling) Videos for version 1.x'. The main content is titled 'Scrivener Tutorial Videos' and includes an introductory paragraph and a video player for 'An Introduction to Scrivener'. A 'Scrivener Scratch Pad' window is overlaid on the right side of the page.

**Scrivener Tutorial Videos**

Get up and running with Scrivener. The videos presented below are designed to support you in getting started with Scrivener (Help > Interactive Tutorial) by providing visual demonstrations of some of the procedures available on [YouTube].

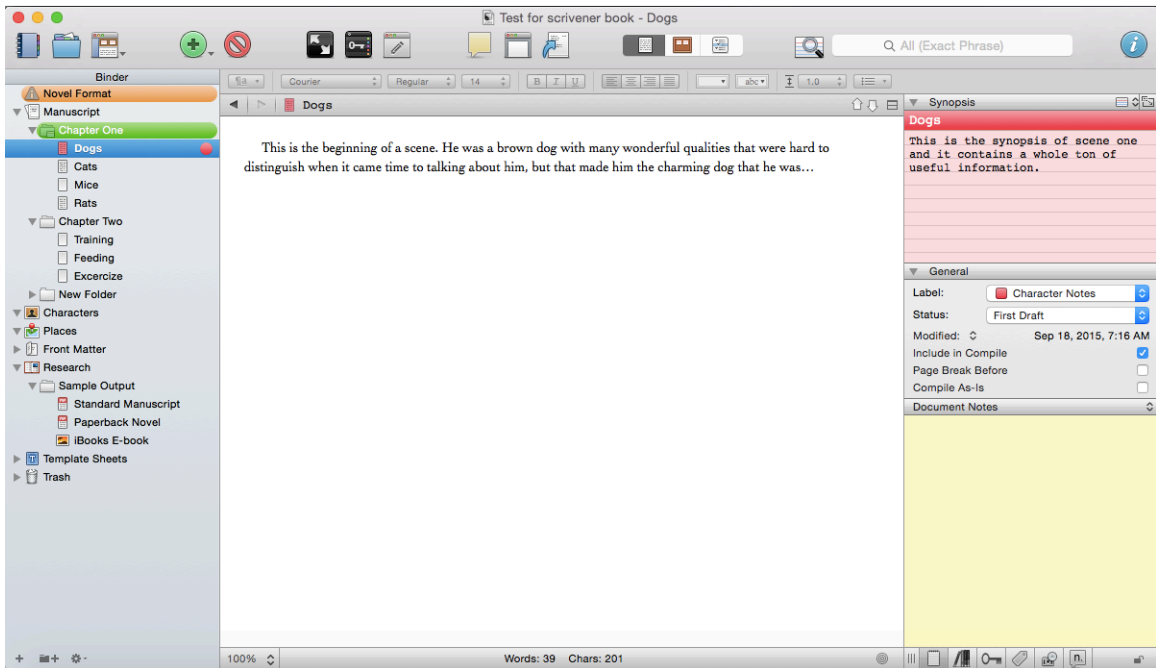
**An Introduction to Scrivener**  
 A ten-minute overview of Scrivener. Recommended for those who want to get started quickly as possible.  
 [Small] [Large] (9m 57s)

**Scrivener Scratch Pad**  
 Untitled Note

**ScreenCastsOnline - Episode 275**  
 We are pleased to sponsor a full ScreenCastsOnline episode, featuring

## C. COLOR CODING

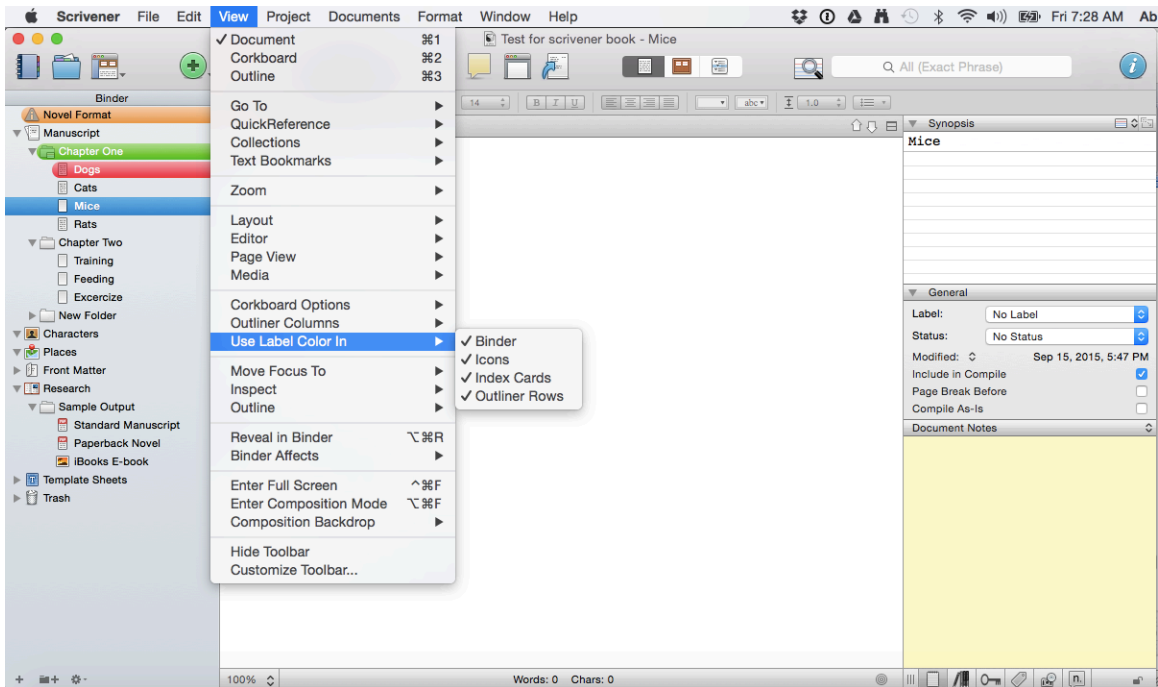
Color coding your files and scenes in Scrivener is a great way to help you see at a glance various aspects of your project. You can color code scenes to show different points of view, depict which draft a scene or a chapter is in, display special items that might make up a chapter such as “Tips,” or set up folders coded as research or parked scenes.



1. Right click (control button) on the folder you want to label.
2. Choose "Label" from the menu. Scrivener has some preset labels you can use or you can choose "Edit" and create your own.

**Note:** Your colors won't show up in your Binder until you set it up:

1. From the top menu, **Click View -> Use Label Color In -> Binder**. You can also choose to have the label colors show up in the Icons, Index cards, and Outliner rows.



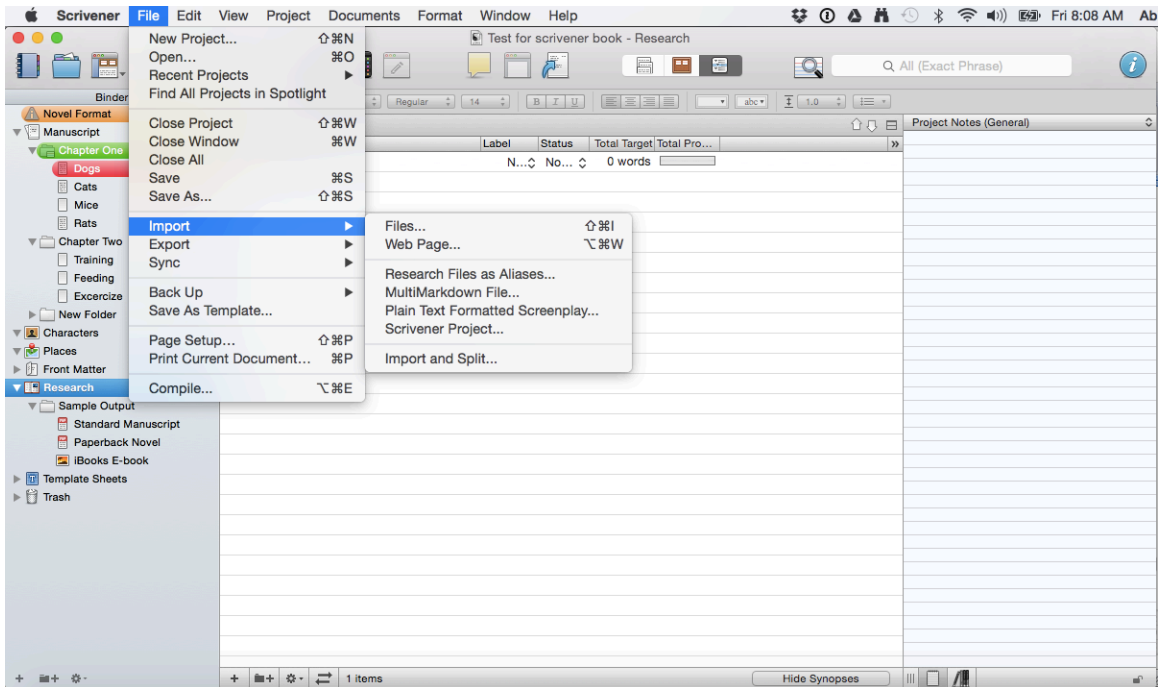
## D. RESEARCH

Another great thing about Scrivener is that you can import just about anything into your project and keep it at your fingertips. This includes web pages, photos, and documents. They will be there even when you are not online.

### Research Folder

This folder holds all your research including PDFs, photos, web pages, text files that are not part of your projects, or chapters and scenes that you need to park for a while until you find a place to put them.

You can import things into the research folder the same way you import anything into Scrivener. From the top menu, choose **File -> Import**. There you will see a selection of the types of files you can import. Choose one and, if you have the Research folder selected in the Binder when you do this, the files will be imported directly into the research folder.



## E. COMPILING MANUSCRIPT INTO EBOOK

Scrivener is a very powerful tool for being able to take your manuscript and easily compile it into an ebook in a variety of forms (PDF, EPUB, MOBI), a print book, a properly formatted manuscript, or a Word, RTF, TXT file. It will allow you to auto generate page numbers and a table of contents and you can do all this without affecting your manuscript in any way.

I won't go into too much detail about compiling in this book, since I have written another book on how to format your work into an ebook with Scrivener. It does take a fair amount of trial and error to get your ebook exactly the way you want it. So check out Volume 2 of this series, *24 Hours to Format Your Book: Without InDesign* at Bibliocrunch's Author Academy (<http://bibliocrunch.com/author-academy/>).

## IV. CONCLUSION

Hopefully this guide has given you enough information to orient yourself to Scrivener so you can use this amazing tool to begin writing your masterpiece. If you haven't already purchased Scrivener, Literature and Latte (the company who created Scrivener) are providing 20 percent off the cost of the program when you purchase it at [www.getscrivener.com](http://www.getscrivener.com). Just use the code BIBLIOCRUNCH in the coupon code field when you sign up.

Happy writing!

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Abigail Carter  
Chief Marketing Officer  
[Bibliocrunch.com](http://Bibliocrunch.com)



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 1) [Bibliocrunch.com](http://Bibliocrunch.com) to connect with trusted professionals to help guide you through the publishing process
- 2) [Learnselfpublishingfast.com](http://Learnselfpublishingfast.com) for our full video course series
- 3) Find us on [Facebook.com/Bibliocrunch](https://Facebook.com/Bibliocrunch).
- 4) Find us on Twitter [@Bibliocrunch](https://twitter.com/Bibliocrunch).
- 5) Our weekly chat for authors called [#indiechat on Twitter](https://twitter.com/indiechat)
- 6) Find us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bibliocrunch) to connect with like-minded authors
- 7) Live in NYC? We have a Meetup that gathers once a month. <http://meetup.com/selfpub>