

Creating Greeting Cards

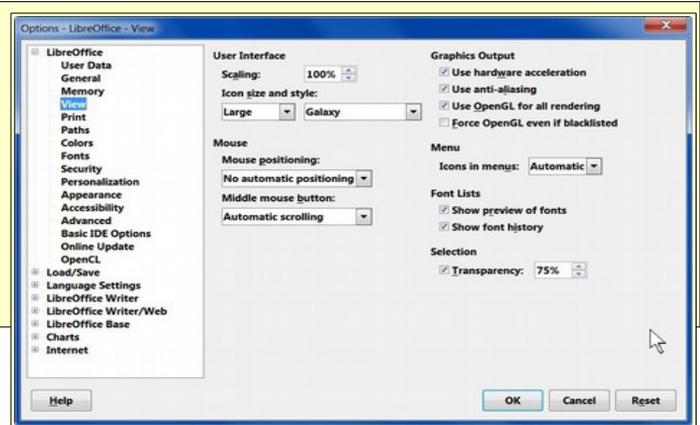


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If you want to create your own greeting cards, but you do not want to spend money on special software, you are in luck. It turns out that with just a little effort you can use the **Drawing** program that is part of the **free LibreOffice** suite.

To download **LibreOffice**, go to www.libreoffice.org.

Installation Notes: The illustrations in this article were created using LibreOffice Draw 5 running on a Windows 7 computer. The **Galaxy** tool icons were used. To have your screen look similar to the illustrations, select **Tools, Options, View, Large, Galaxy** icons. Also, from the **Menu Bar**, select **View, Toolbars**, and toggle **Drawing on**.



The following instructions are for creating a four page greeting card by folding an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper in half twice. Most office supply stores in the USA carry envelopes that are designed to fit this size card. Look for envelopes that are 4 3/8 by 5 3/4 inches. (If you are outside the USA, adjust measurements as required.)

Plan Ahead

The first step is to determine the relative orientation of the four pages of your greeting card. (This example uses a portrait layout card. Landscape layout could also be used.) Take a piece of paper and fold it twice. For the vertical portrait format book fold card in this project, the sheet must be folded in half twice as shown.

- ✓ First fold the sheet in half along a horizontal line (with the sheet in portrait mode). Then fold the sheet a second time.
- ✓ When you have folded the sheet, write the names of the four pages of the final card on each page (see Fig. 1).

When you unfold the sheet you will see how the four pages have to be arranged.

- ✓ Open the **LibreOffice Drawing** program.

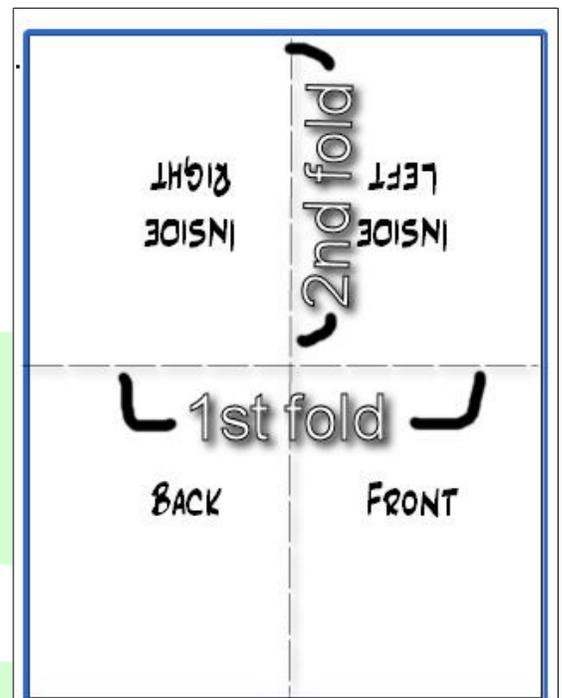


Fig.1, Greeting card page layout.



The **LibreOffice Drawing** program display is shown in Fig.3. The left side of the display shows a **Page Pane**. This is handy if you have a number of pages to organize, however, in this project we will have only one page. So, the **Page Pane** will be turned off.

- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **View, Page Pane** to toggle the **Page Pane** off.

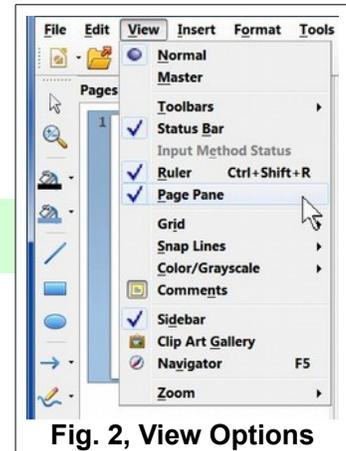


Fig. 2, View Options

Adding Text

Next, you will see how to add text to your card.

If the Drawing tools are not on your display, from the **Menu Bar** select **View, Toolbars, Drawing**. Note that the drawing toolbar may appear in different locations on the display.

- ✓ From the **Toolbar** (see Fig. 3), select the **Text** tool.
- ✓ With the **Text** tool selected, click in the lower right quadrant of the page and enter A card from me! in the text box. (Feel free to substitute your own name or text).

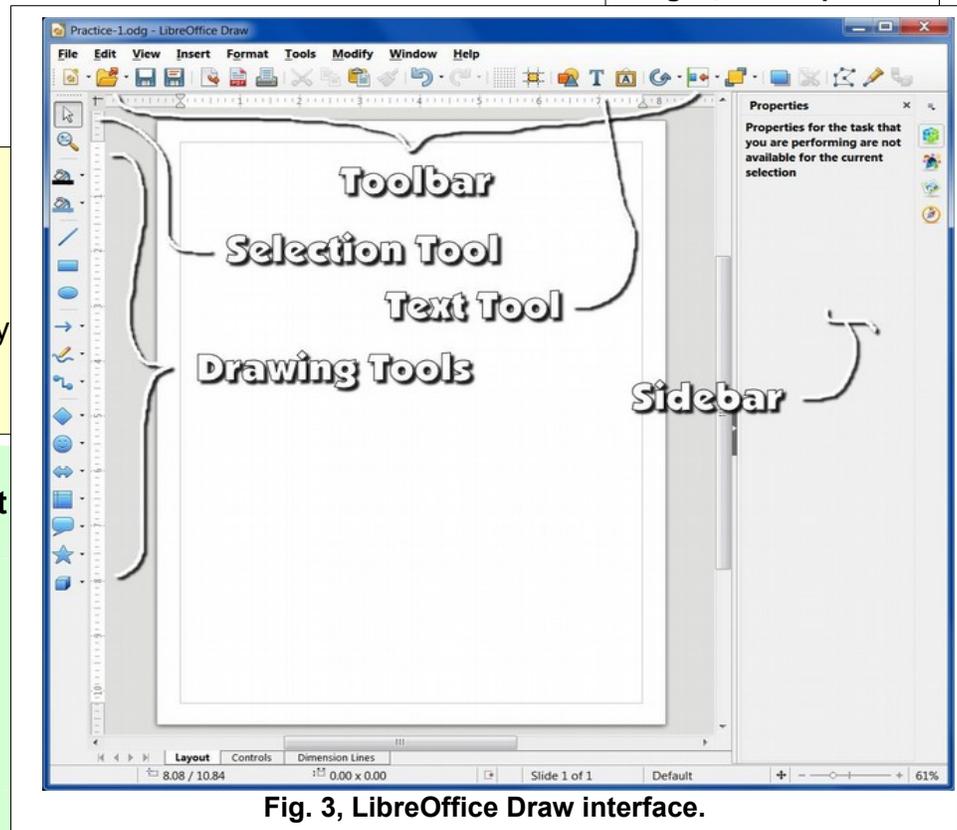


Fig. 3, LibreOffice Draw interface.

After entering your text, select a point outside the text window to deselect it. When you hover the mouse pointer over a text object, the pointer will change to the text cursor. When the text cursor appears, you can do the following:

- Single click to insert the text cursor. Use the **Backspace**, **Delete**, and **cursor control arrows** to edit the text.
- **Double click** to select a word.
- **Triple click** to select a line of text.
- Press **Ctrl+A** to select all text.



When text is selected, the **Properties Sidebar** will appear (see Fig.4).

- ✓ Select your text and then use the **Properties Sidebar** to adjust the text characteristics.

Moving Text Objects

To move a text object you first have to select it. (Not the text contents, but the text object.) This requires careful selecting.

- ✓ From the **Drawing** toolbar, pick the **Select** tool.
- ✓ Select a point on the boundary line of the text. (If the text cursor appears, your cursor is in the text area rather than on the text boundary.)

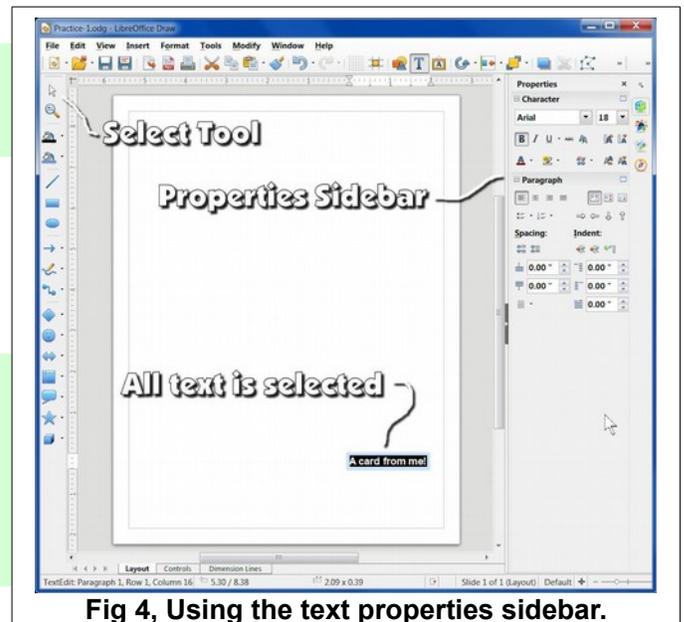
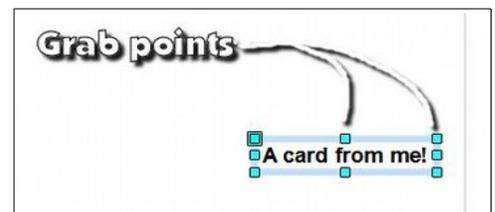


Fig 4, Using the text properties sidebar.

When the text **boundary** is selected, a boundary line will appear around the text object. This boundary has **grab points** for changing the size of the text object (but not the font size). If you hover the mouse pointer on the boundary, but not on a grab point, the mouse pointer will change to a **double arrow**. When the double arrow appears, you can **drag** the text object to a new location. (**Drag** means hold the left mouse button down while moving the mouse.)



- ✓ **Drag** the text object to a new location.

Now that you know how to manipulate text, it is time to add and rotate text for the inside right card page.

Rotating objects

Next, some text will be added to the **inside right** card page. After the text is added, it will be rotated so that it will be properly oriented after the sheet is folded.

- ✓ Select the **Text** tool.
- ✓ Click in the **upper left** section of the sheet. (This will end up in the inside right page of the card after it has been folded. See Fig.1.)
- ✓ Enter the following text pressing the **Enter** key at the end of each line. (Or, enter your own preferred text.)

Although this text is inside of the card
The proper placement is very hard.
And if I miss the center exact,



I will never escape a critic's attack.

- ✓ Format the text as desired. (The example shown in Fig. 5 is center aligned with bold 12 point text.)
- ✓ Pick the **Select** tool from the drawing toolbar.
- ✓ Right click on the text box boundary and select the **Position and Size** option from the context menu.
- ✓ Select the **Rotation** tab in the **Position and Size** dialog box and enter a **Rotation angle** of **180**.

Your text for the **inside right** card page should now have the proper orientation. However, the default font and style might not be as classy as you might like. You can use the **Properties Sidebar** to adjust the text characteristics. Just remember that the **Properties Sidebar** controls only text that is currently selected.

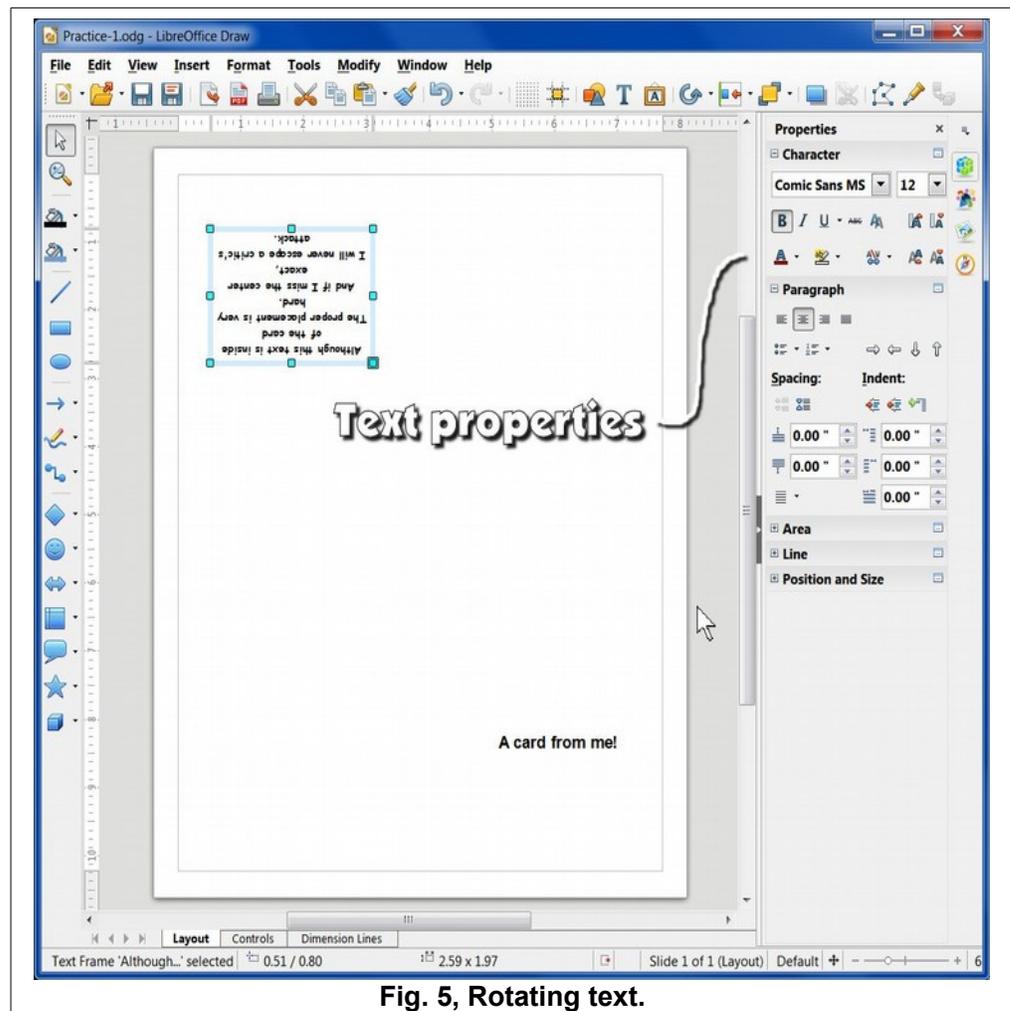


Fig. 5, Rotating text.



Adding a Symbol Shape

Next, we will add a graphic for the back of the card.

- ✓ From the **Drawing** toolbar, select the **happy face** from the **Symbol Shapes** tool (see Fig. 6).
- ✓ **Drag** out a symbol in the lower left quadrant of the page (this will end up on the back of the card).

Observe that when a graphic object is selected little grab points will be shown at the corners and mid points of the object. You can click and drag these points and change the size of the object.

NOTE: To preserve the aspect ratio of an object that you are resizing, hold the shift key down while you grab and drag a corner point.

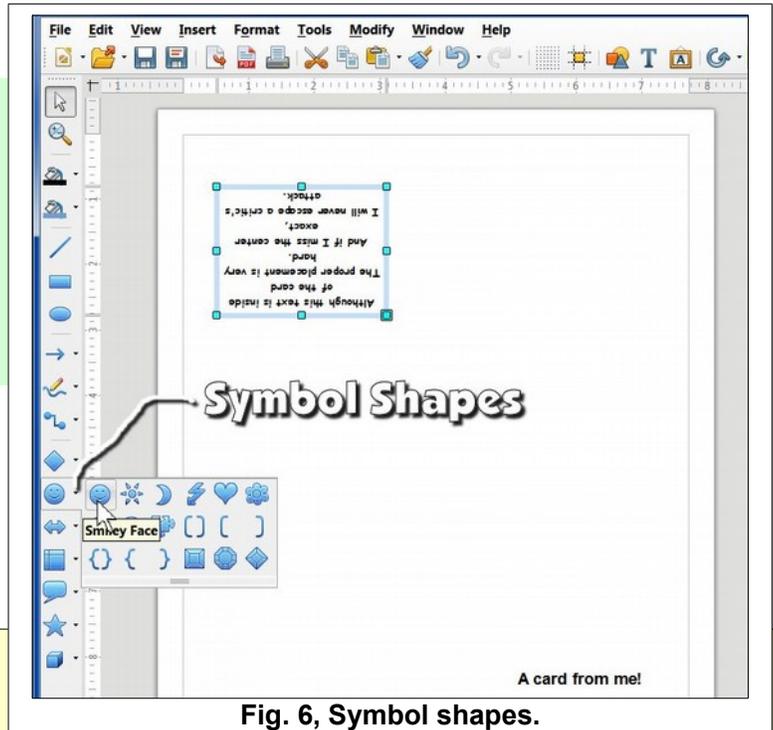


Fig. 6, Symbol shapes.

When you move the mouse cursor over a selected graphic object the cursor will change to crossed arrows. With the crossed arrows cursor you can **drag** the object to a new position.

- ✓ Move the happy face to the lower center of the back of the card section (see Fig. 7).
- ✓ With the happy face symbol selected, use the **Graphics Properties Sidebar** to select a new color for the happy face. (See Fig. 7.)

Observe that the **Graphics Properties Sidebar** appears whenever a graphics object is selected.

Adding Pictures

Next, a picture will be added to the front page of the card. This is located in the lower right corner of the full sheet.

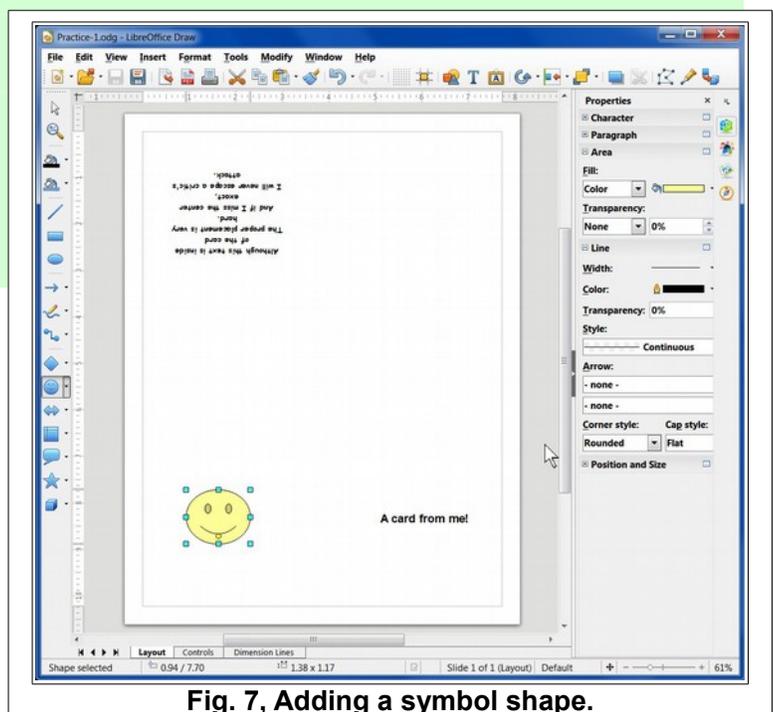


Fig. 7, Adding a symbol shape.



- ✓ Make sure that no object is selected (use the **Select** tool and click in an empty area).
- ✓ Select the **Image** tool from the **Toolbar**, then use the **Insert Image** dialog box to select a picture of your choice.

Fig.8 shows that a picture has been inserted and moved to the lower right area of the sheet.

To adjust the size of the picture, right click on the picture and select **Position and Size** from the context menu. You can also **drag** the picture to the desired location.

The **Position and Size** dialog box provides options for choosing a base point for locating the picture. It also provides text boxes for entering the **Width** and **Height** dimensions of the picture.

- ✓ Adjust the size of your picture as desired.

Fig. 8 shows that a picture has been added and that it is selected. When a graphic object is selected there will be grab points at the corners and mid points of the object. When the mouse cursor is moved over a grab point, the cursor will change to arrow and you can drag the grab point. Be careful. It is possible to change the aspect ratio of the graphic. In this example, you could make the squirrels look fat or skinny.

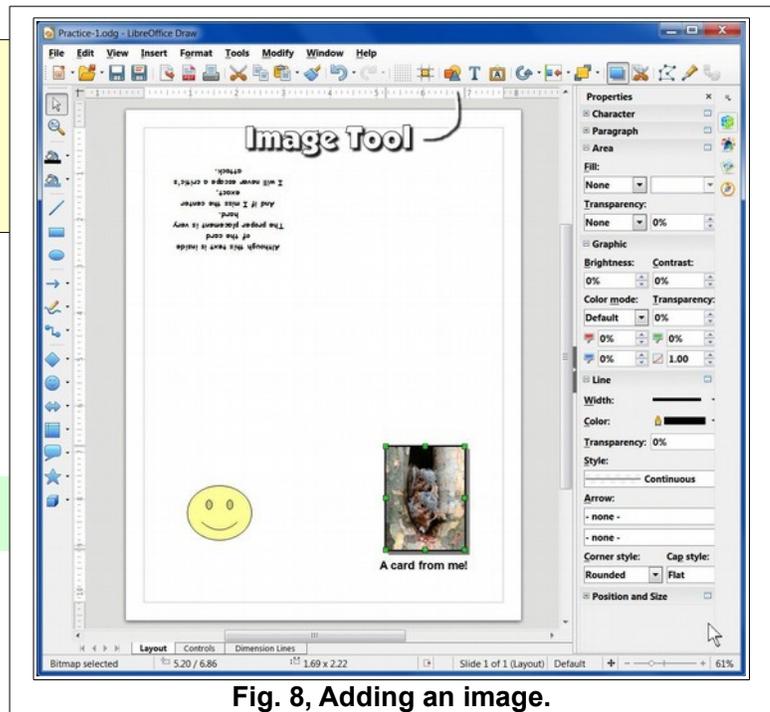


Fig. 8, Adding an image.

To change the aspect ratio while using a corner grab point to resize the graphic, hold the Shift key down while dragging the grab point.

Also observe that when a graphic object is selected, the **Graphics Properties Sidebar** provides options for adjusting image properties.

Adding a frame around a picture.

Sometimes pictures look better with a frame. Here is how to add a frame to a picture.

- ✓ Select the picture and select the **Line** tool from the **Graphics Properties Sidebar**.
- ✓ Set the **Line Width** to **2.3pt**.
- ✓ Choose a line **Color**.



- ✓ Set the **Style** to **Continuous**.
- ✓ If you want to add a drop shadow to the picture, select the **Shadow** tool, from the **Toolbar**

You should explore other options on the **Graphics Properties Sidebar**. Also review the options in the context menus when you right click on objects.

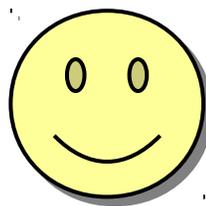
After you print your card, you will probably want to go back and fine tune the position of the different objects so that they are spaced nicely after folding. For those that are mathematically inclined, you can adjust the page margins and positions with precision. Otherwise, move things around by trial and error.

You now have enough information to create your own custom greeting cards. And, with LibreOffice, it doesn't cost a thing!

Hints

Positioning things so that they will end up where you want them in the folded card can be done either by trial and error, or by doing some careful calculations and positioning. Here are some hints you may find useful.

- From the **Menu Bar**, select **Format, Page** and set the margins (in the USA) to **0.50** inches (Or some even units).
 - From the **Menu Bar**, select **View, Grid**. Turn on the **grid display** and **snap** options.
 - Right click on an object and use the **Position and Size** options to precisely locate the object.
- ✓ Start a **new** Drawing file and go through the steps in this lesson again. This time, use your own words, pictures, and styles.





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