

# Creating Greeting Cards with LibreOffice Writer



## Introduction

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 LibreOffice Writer to create custom greeting cards.

The instructions in this document were created using LibreOffice Writer 7.2.

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 Figure-1).

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

- ✓ Open a new LibreOffice Writer document.
- ✓ Select **File, Save As**, adjust the **Save As** folder as required, and enter a file **Name** for your greeting card.

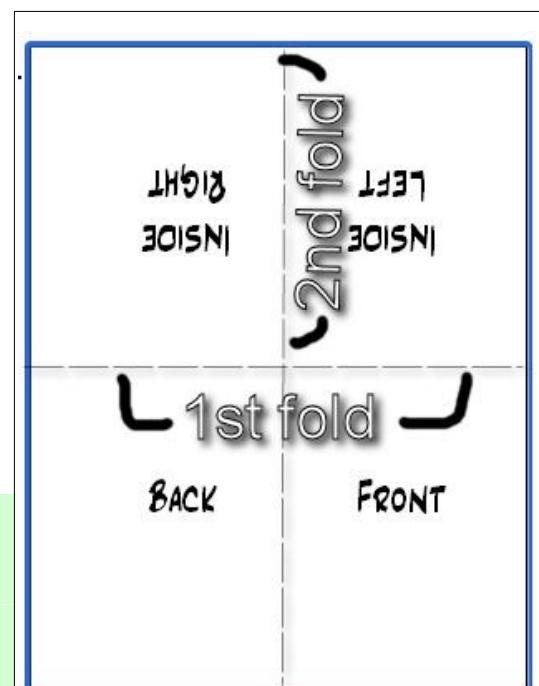


Figure-1, A greeting card layout page.

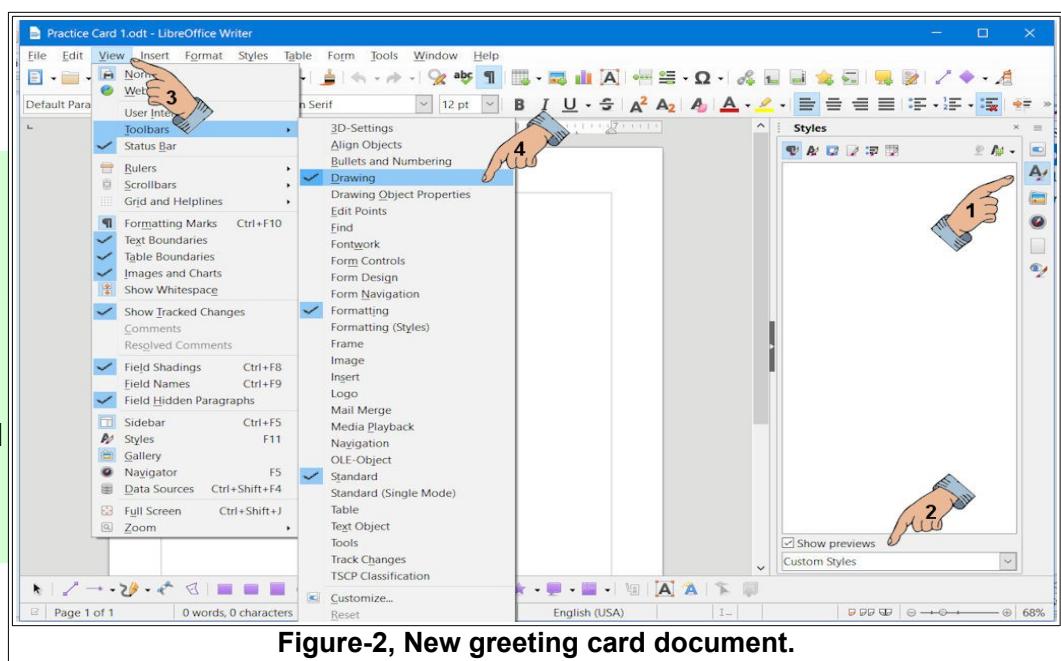


Figure-2, New greeting card document.





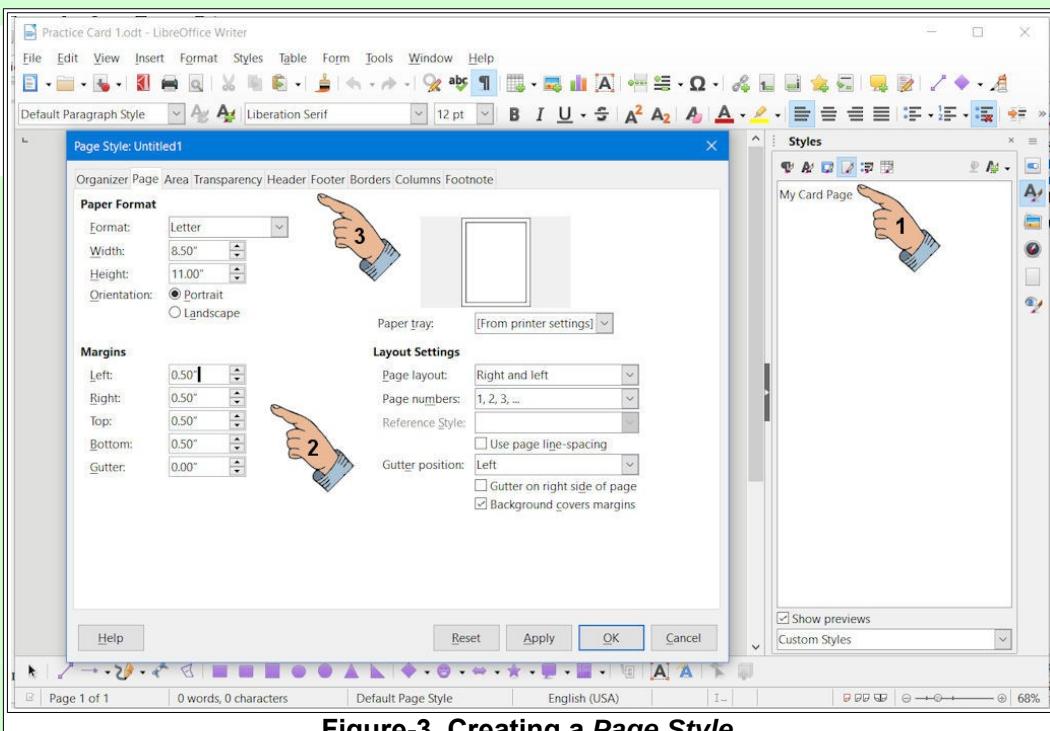
The LibreOffice Writer display is shown in **Figure-2**.

- ✓ If the **Sidebar** is not shown, from the **Menubar** select **View, Sidebar**.
- ✓ In the **Sidebar**, select the **Styles** option (1).
- ✓ If there are any Custom Paragraph or Page Styles shown in the **Custom Styles** list, delete them (2).
- ✓ If the **Drawing Toolbar** is not shown, from the **Menubar** select **View, Toolbars, Drawing** (3,4).

We will create a custom **Page Style** for our cards.

- ✓ In the **Sidebar Styles and Formatting** option, select the **Page Styles** option(1).
- ✓ With the **Custom** list on the display, **right click** in the styles list and select **New**.
- ✓ In the **Page Style** dialog box **Organizer TAB**, enter **My Card Page** for the **Name** and **Next style**.
- ✓ In the **Page TAB**, enter **0.50** for all four margins (2).
- ✓ Make sure **Headers** and **Footers** are **off**(3). Then, select **OK** to close the dialog box.
- ✓ In the Styles, Page Styles sidebar, **double click** on the **My Card Page** entry.

Setting the card page margins to **0.5** will make it easier to calculate precise locations for the different objects placed in the front and back areas of the card.



**Figure-3, Creating a Page Style.**





## Creating A Card Layout

Making the four sections of the card fit the page nicely after it is printed and folded is a bit tricky. In the next section, we will create a card layout document with rectangles that can be used as guides to properly locate objects on the different parts of the card. These rectangles can easily be deleted when the card design is finished.

**Drag** a drawing object means click at the corner of the object, hold the left mouse button down and drag the mouse cursor to the opposite corner of the object. The Drag function works the same on any Drawing object.

- ✓ From the **Drawing Tool Bar**, select the **Rectangle** tool.
- ✓ Drag a rectangle from the upper left margin down and to the right a couple of inches.

Don't worry about the size. We will set it precisely in the next step.



Figure 3, Greeting a card layout.

- ✓ **Right click** on the rectangle and select the **Position and Size** option from the context menu.
- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, enter a width of **3.25**, and a **Height** of **4.5**.
- ✓ Set the **Anchor** to **To Page**.
- ✓ Set the **Horizontal** and **Vertical** positions to **0.50** from the left and top of the page; then select **OK** to close the dialog box.
- ✓ In the **Sidebar**, Select the **Properties** option, then adjust the **Transparency** to **90%**.

Increasing the Transparency will save printer ink or toner. Now we need three more rectangle. The copy and paste trick will help.

- ✓ **Right click** on the **rectangle**, then select **Copy**.
- ✓ Click away from the rectangle, **right click**, and select **Paste**.

You should memorize the short-cuts for Copy [**Ctrl+C**] and Paste [**Ctrl+V**].

The copy of the rectangle will be superimposed on the original. **You can right click on the copy, select the position and size option, and adjust the position of the copy.**

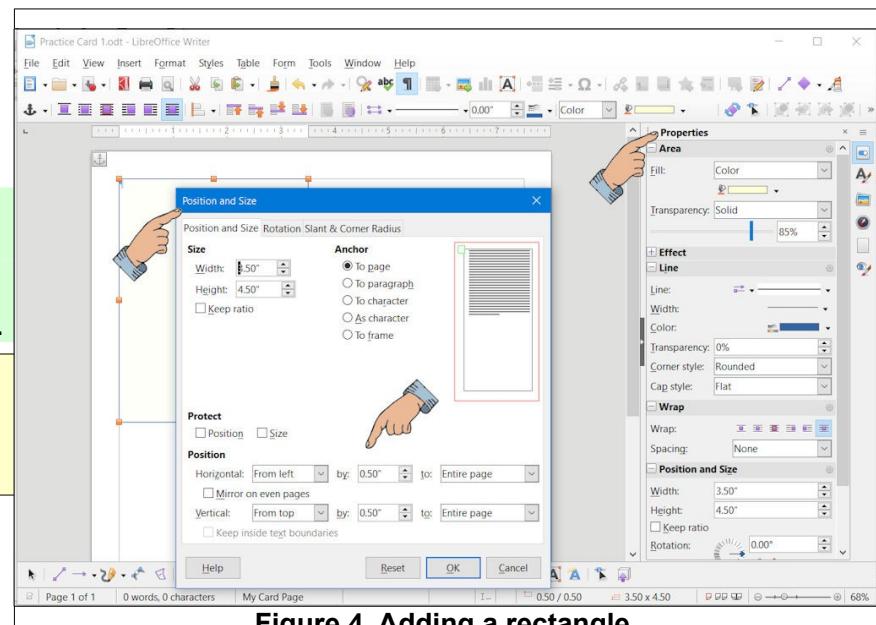
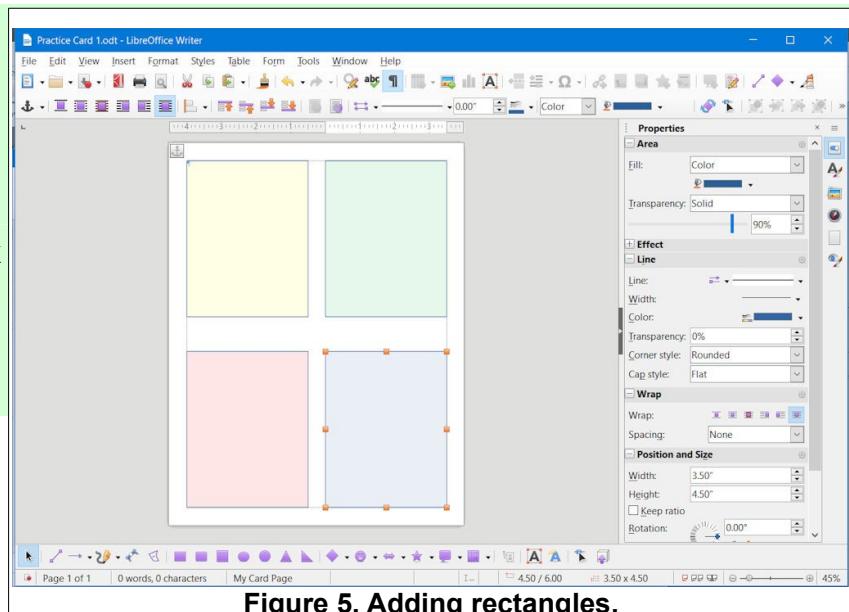


Figure 4, Adding a rectangle.





- ✓ Right click on the new rectangle, select the **Position and Size** option from the context menu, and adjust the **Horizontal** position to be **4.5** from the left.
- ✓ Repeat the Copy and Paste trick two more times. The Vertical position of the lower two rectangles should be **6.0** from the top.



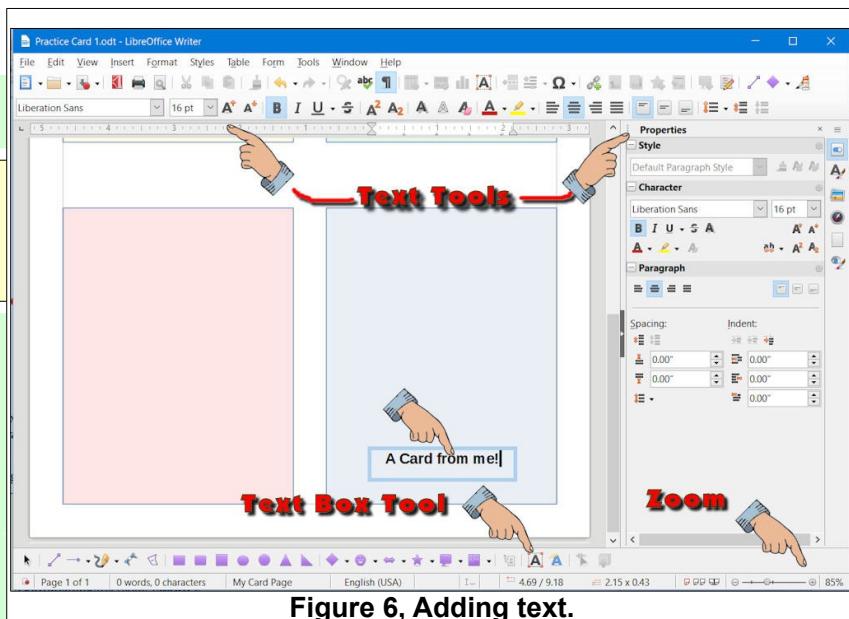
## Adding Text:

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

- ✓ From the **Drawing Tool Bar**, select the **Text Box** tool.

Figure 6 shows the Zoom tool was used to zoom in on the lower right part of the page.

- ✓ In the **lower right** quadrant of the page, drag a text box and enter **A card from me!** in the text box. (Feel free to substitute your own name or text).
- ✓ After entering your text, select a point outside the text box to deselect it.
- ✓ Click on a point in the text to select the text box.



When the text box is selected, there will be an outline of the box that has grab points at the corners and mid points of the box.

When a text box is selected, you can **double click** in the box to place the text cursor in the box for editing.

Here are some text editing selection tricks.



- **Single click** to select the text box.
- **Double click** on the text to place the text cursor in the text box.
- 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, text formatting options will appear in the **Toolbar** and in the **Properties Sidebar** (see Figure-6). The **Toolbar** and the **Properties Sidebar** are **context sensitive**. This means that they automatically change depending on what kind of object is selected.

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

## Moving Text Objects

To move a text object you first have to select the text object.

- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, pick the **Select tool**; then select the text box.

When the text box 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. When a text object is selected, the **Sidebar** provides options for positioning the text object.

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 Box** tool.

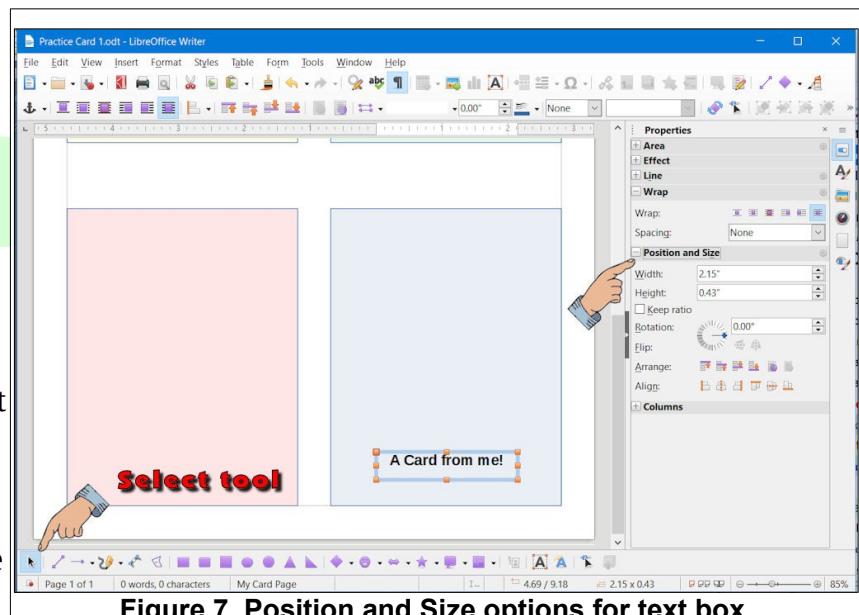


Figure 7, Position and Size options for text box.



- ✓ Drag a text box 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 Figure-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.
- ✓ With the text box selected, use the **Rotation** option in the **Position and Size Sidebar** and enter a Rotation angle of **180**.

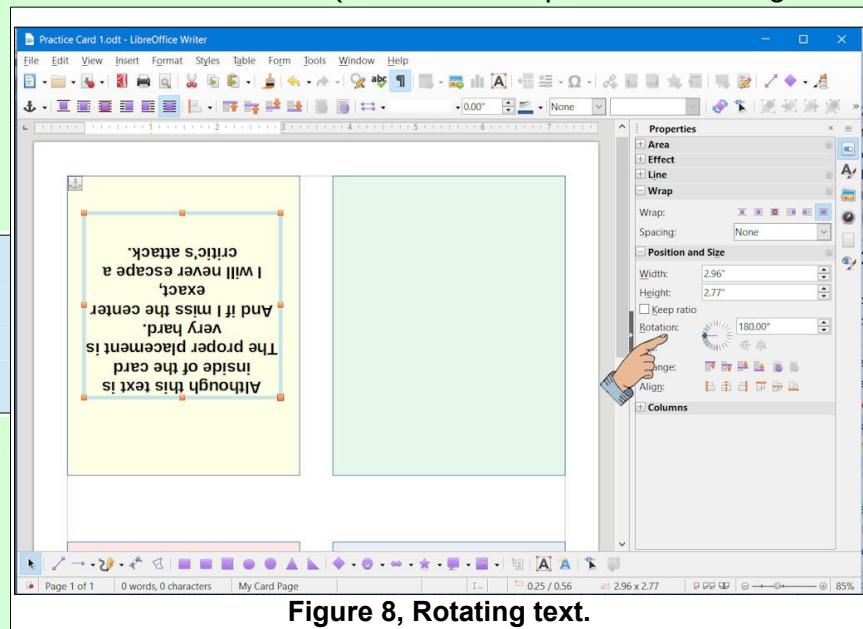


Figure 8, Rotating text.

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 **Toolbar** or **Sidebar** to adjust the text characteristics. Just remember that the Sidebar **properties options** control only text that is currently **selected**.

## Adding a Symbol Shape

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

- ✓ From the **Drawing Tool Bar**, select the smiley face from the **Symbol Shapes** tool (see Figure-9).
- ✓ 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.

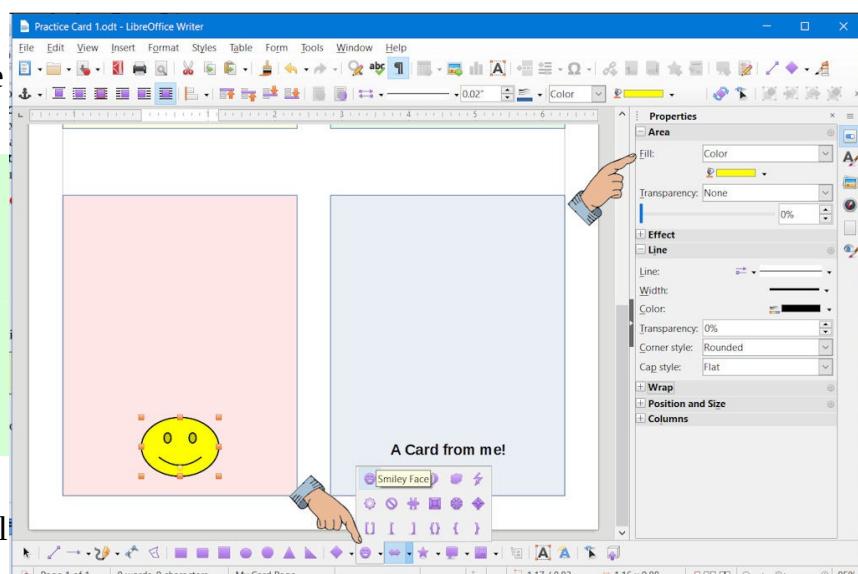


Figure 9, Adding a symbol.

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





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.
- ✓ With the happy face symbol selected, use either the **Toolbar** or **Sidebar Properties** options to select a new **Fill color** for the happy face and the happy face line.

## Adding Pictures:

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

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

Figure-10 shows that a picture has been inserted and moved to the lower right area of the sheet.

When the image is selected, you can drag the image to the desired location. You can also use the grab points to resize the image. The **Position and Size** options from the **Sidebar** also provides options for adjusting image properties.

- ✓ Adjust the size and location of your image as desired.

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.

- ✓ Select your picture and then **double click** on it to open the **Image** dialog box.
- ✓ Review the options of each TAB in the Image dialog box.

Let's add an image to the inside left panel of the card.

- ✓ Click away from any object to make sure that nothing is selected.

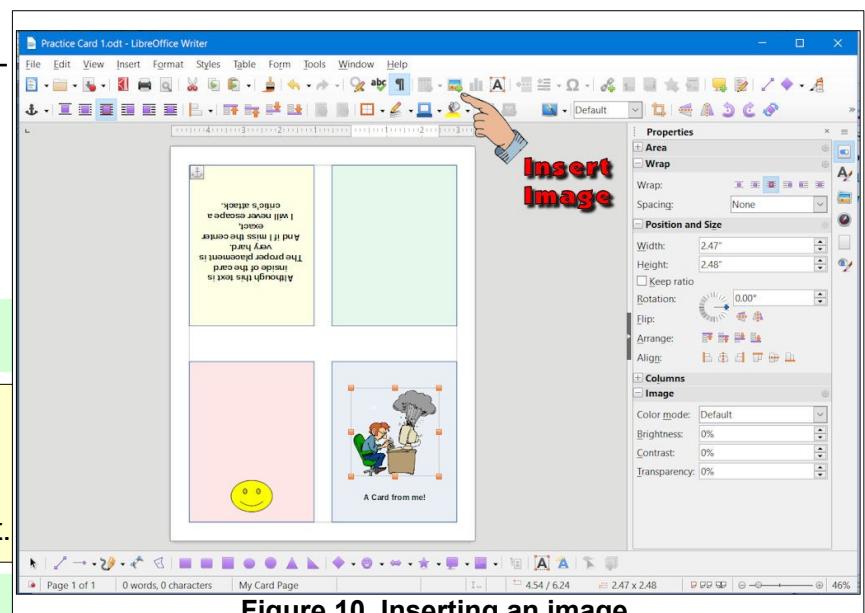


Figure 10, Inserting an image.





**NOTE:** If an image is selected when you insert a new image, the new image will replace the selected image.

- ✓ Select the **Insert Image** tool from the **TAB Bar**, then use the **Insert Image** dialog box to select a picture of your choice.
- ✓ Resize the image and drag it to the left inside panel of the card.
- ✓ Select the new image and use the **Sidebar** to rotate the image 180 degrees.
- ✓ Add or edit your card as desired.
- ✓ Select **File, Save As** and enter a new file name.

The four colored panels were created to help position objects on the four pages of the card. To remove these panels, select a panel and press the **Delete** key on your keyboard.

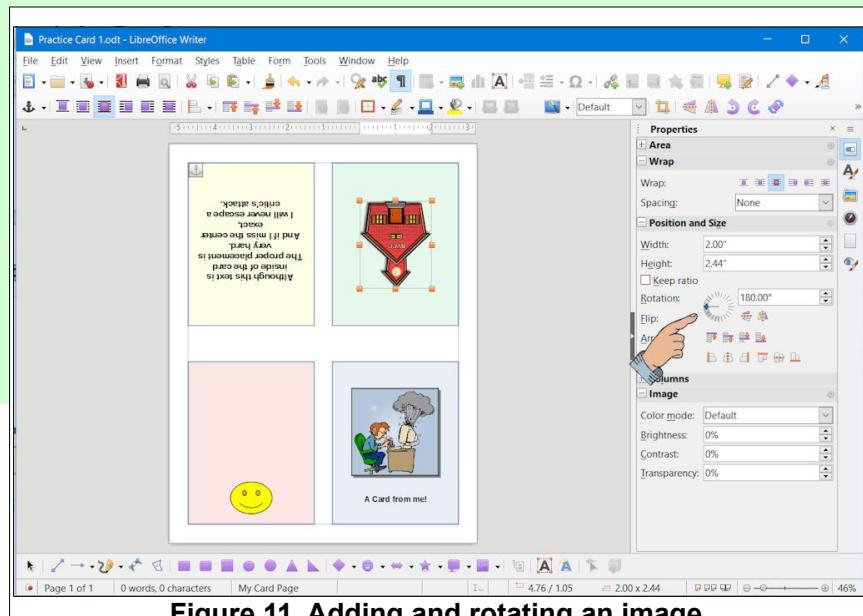
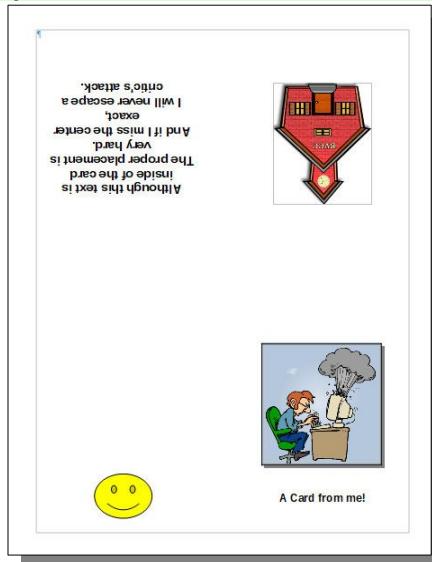


Figure 11, Adding and rotating an image.

Don't forget the **Undo** option on the Toolbar.

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

- ✓ Start a **new** document file and go through the steps in this lesson again. This time, use your own words, pictures, and styles.



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