Paragraph and Character Styles

Let me describe the differences between paragraph styles and character styles and then I'll explain nested styles.

Paragraph Styles cover all aspects of a paragraph of text including; alignment, indents, space before or after each paragraph, rules above or below each paragraph. Paragraphs syles can also include basic and advanced character options, such as, size, leading, styles such as bold, italic, scaling and color of text.

Character Styles have some of the same features as the Character Options found in Paragraph Styles such as size, leading, bold, italic, scaling, kerning and color of text.

Perhaps you're wondering why you should use character styles when paragraph styles offer the same and more options?

Character styles can override paragraph styles so that you can make changes to a paragraph without changing text within the paragraph that has been assigned a character style.

This powerful feature is called Nested Styles and could save untold hours in formatting of long and complex publications for designers. It can and should be used for shorter design pieces that contain repeated information within the document.

You can apply one character style to the beginning of a paragraph, and then determine where that character style stops and the next character style begins by creating a paragraph style that includes these nested character styles and you can then quickly apply the effect to multiple paragraphs.

This example may help you understand better:
A designer is creating an eight page newsletter that has several different secions.
The subheads for each section appear in bold and are red in color, while the heads and body text color for these sections are dark gray.

Suppose the designer wants to change the subheads from bold to italic and from red to green?
Changing the text style and color option within the paragraph styles won't work because that change will affect all the text.

However, if, when formatting the newsletter, the designer creates a nested character style just for subheads it would be a simple matter of changing the nested character style from bold ot italic and red to green without affecting the rest of the text in the paragraph.

Paragraph and Character Styles are powerful features when designing. They can help insure consistency throughout a document as well as save time when making formatting changes.

Practice using styles each time you design and you won't be able to design without them!
Be sure to watch the podcast video demo called nested styles.