

Beginning Word Processing

Introduction:

There are many reasons for using computers today. Word processing is one area that has demonstrated how powerful computers can be. There are many different names of word processors, and many can be quite complicated. In fact today it is difficult to buy a computer without word processing software included somehow. Although there are many different kinds of software, most share the same basic functions, and do not require advanced computer or typing skills to use. These basic functions include:

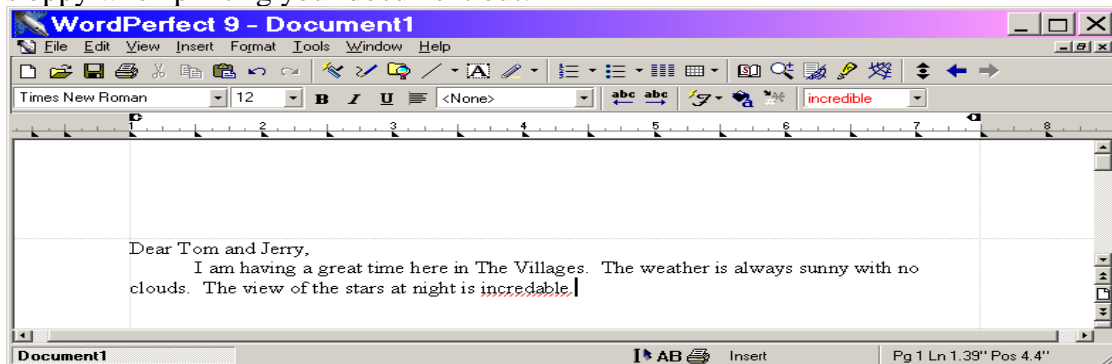
- typing
- saving documents
- opening documents
- copying
- pasting
- cutting
- printing
- checking spelling

Starting Up

As mentioned above there are many different names of software for both the Macintosh and Windows computer. These include Microsoft Word, ClarisWorks, Word Perfect, WordPad, AppleWorks, etc. Typing skills make using all of them easier, of course, but not necessary. Even somebody who *'hunts and pecks'* all of their keys will still actually type faster than writing by hand. Therefore you need not worry about being able to type faster than your boss can talk.

To start, open up your word processor. This is usually done by single or double clicking on the icon of the software.

When the software has loaded, it already has opened a blank document to start with. You can now start typing right away. To indent at the start of a paragraph, use the **tab** key instead of the space bar. The space bar may look alright on the screen, but will look sloppy when printing your document out.



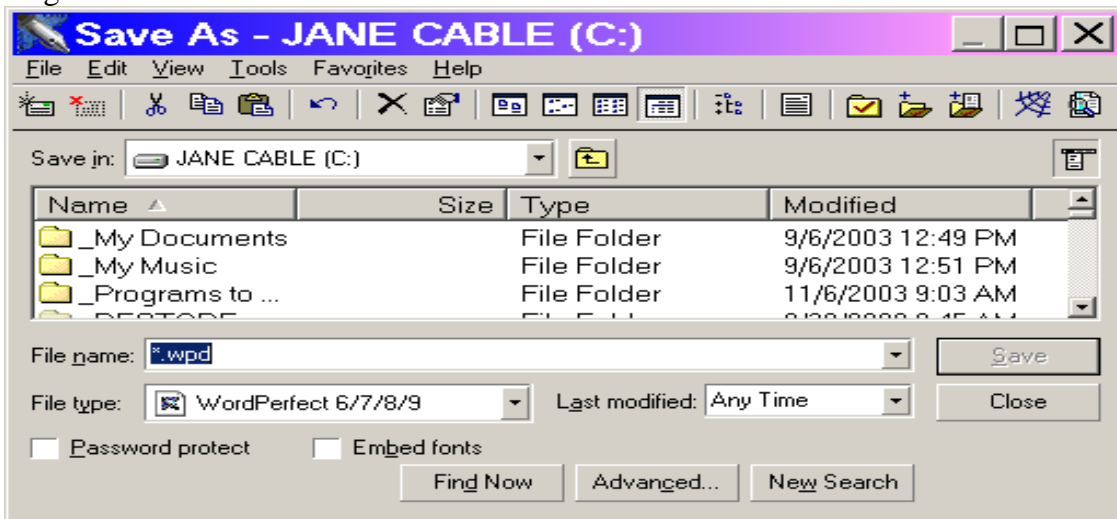
Since this letter is being typed using WordPerfect 9 from WPOffice 2000, it will underline in red any words that the software does not recognize and include a suggested correct spelling. This feature can be turned off, or you can ignore it. The red lines will not appear when printing on paper. Later in this handout you will be shown how to use the spell checking tools.

You should also notice that the text that you are typing automatically scrolls to the next line. You do not have to hit **Return** or **Enter** at the end of each line. The only time you should hit **Enter** or **Return** is at the end of a paragraph.

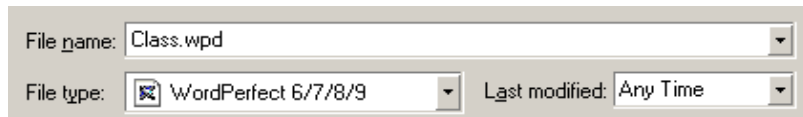
Continue to type your paragraph and hit enter or return at the end. Hit tab to indent your next paragraph and continue to type.

Saving

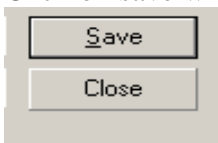
By now it is a good idea to save your document. This is easy. Since it is the first time to save this document, click with your mouse and hold the button down on the word **File** at the top left hand corner of the screen. This pops up a menu. Slide down to **Save as...** and let go of the mouse button.



A window pops up, and you have to choose where you will save the document. You can do this by clicking with your mouse. I am choosing to save to my **My Documents** folder. Give your document a name.



Click on save when done.



It is always a good idea to save every ten or fifteen minutes. Computers are known to *freeze* or *crash*. If this happens and you have not saved, you could lose all of your work. From now on you only need to click on **File** and slide down to **Save**.

If you wish to quit and work on your document later, click on **File** and slide down to **Exit** or **Quit**. This is usually at the bottom of the File menu.

Opening Your Document

Open your word processing software the same way you did in step one. Now click on the File menu again and slide down to **Open**. A list will appear with your letter in it. Double click on the filename and your document should appear before you on the screen.

Copying and Pasting

If you wish to copy any part of your document to paste to another part, you first have to select the text that you want copied. This is done by *clicking and dragging* over top the text to copy. Click and hold the mouse button at the beginning of the text, then carefully *drag* it to the end of the text. All of the text you selected will appear highlighted. If you highlight too much, or not enough, do not worry, just try again.

Click on the **Edit** menu and slide down to copy. This copies what you selected to a *virtual* clipboard which you can not see.

Click your mouse at the end of your document, or wherever you want to paste to. Click on the **Edit** menu and slide down to **Paste**.

The text that you copied to the *virtual* clipboard then appears right where you clicked.

Cutting and Pasting

If you wish to move some text from one place to another, you might want to cut the text instead of copying it. Cutting and copying are the same, except that cutting removes the text but still puts it on the *virtual* clipboard. To do so click and drag over the text that you want cut.

Click on **Edit** and slide down to **Cut**. This removes the text and places it on to the invisible *virtual* clipboard.

Click where you want to paste the text to.

Click on **Edit** and choose **Paste**.

The text that you copied to the *virtual* clipboard then appears right where you clicked.

Spell Checking

The spell checker is a great tool to have on a word processor, but it is not perfect. It only looks at every word that you typed, one at a time, and checks it with a dictionary. It does not look at each word in its context. Therefore if you typed *their* when you really wanted the word *there*, it will not correct the mistake. This means that you will still have to proof read your document yourself.

Unlike all of the features explained before, the spell checking tool is not in the same place for all software. It is often found in the Edit menu or the Tools menu. So we click on the Tools menu and slide down to Spelling and Grammar....

A spell check window pops up. Depending upon your software, you may have to click on a button that says Start. When it finds a word that it does not recognize, it will show you and also give some alternative suggestions. If the word is spelled correctly (spell checking does not usually recognize names as an example) then click on Ignore, or Ignore All. If it is misspelled, click on the correct word in the suggestions, and then click on Change. Only click on the Add button, or in some cases the Learn button, to add an 'unknown' (such as a surname) word to the computer's dictionary.

When it has finished checking all of the words you have typed, it will usually let you know. Click on OK, or in some cases Done.

Printing

When you have finished everything and have checked it all over, you will probably want to print your document; to do this click on the **File** menu and slide down to **Print...**

A printing window pops up. There is a lot of information here, and you probably do not need to worry about most of it. You can change the number of copies you wish to print, but otherwise just click **OK** or **Print**.

That's it! Although there are many more things to do on word processors, these are the basics. Go ahead and practice and get used to your word processor. Once you have the hang of it, there is no going back. Do not be afraid to experiment a little with the other functions when you are ready.

If you ever make a mistake, do not worry, just click on **Edit** and slide down to **Undo**.

When you are finished and want to leave, save and click on **File** and slide down to **Quit** or **Exit** at the bottom of the menu.

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