

ICT Word Processing Essentials

Lesson 1: Introduction to Word Processing

LESSON SKILLS

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the benefits of using a word processor.
- Explain the differences of storing documents in the cloud versus in a physical location.
- Identify the common tools in a word-processing application.
- Use various mouse, menu and keyboarding techniques for word processing.

KEY TERMS

accessibility	templates
cloud computing	toolbar
document	tools
file	word processor

Points to Ponder

These Points to Ponder are designed to help you focus on key elements in this lesson. They are also suitable for use to spark discussions or individual research.

- Define the term "word processor."
- What does the term "cloud computing" mean?
- List some benefits of using a word processor.
- List all the places in which you can store a file.
- Distinguish between saving a file on the computer and saving a file in the cloud.
- Describe some of the features and functions that the Google Docs or Microsoft Word application provides.

Overview

In this lesson, you will explore the various benefits of using a word-processing application, and learn how to use the basic tools available in most word-processing applications, including drop-down menus and toolbar options. You will also review how to create a new document, save, close and reopen documents.

Note: *References for tutorials are located throughout the course for Google Docs and Microsoft Word.*

What Is a Word Processor?

Objectives

7.1.1: Describe the general functions of word-processing software, including benefits for document creation, commonly used word-processing applications.

We use our phones, laptops and tablets to communicate our thoughts every day. We do not often think about how communication worked before technology.

Letters and books were created by hand using pencils, inks and paints on different kinds of paper from the time of ancient Rome (approximately 600 BC) through 1440 AD when the first printing press was introduced. It would be another 428 years before the typewriter was invented – giving every person the chance to use a machine in their homes to create any kind of document. Typewriters went through several rounds of improvements that resulted in the arrangement of the keys on the keyboards we use today.

Although typewriters were considered “high tech” for many years, they had their fair share of problems. For example, most typewriters did not have the ability to automatically correct spelling errors. When a mistake was made, you could erase the error if it was small and retype a single letter or number. If the mistake was an entire word or sentence, you could use a correcting white paint or white tape to cover the incorrect words and retype the correct words. But if you incorrectly typed a whole paragraph, you needed to throw away the whole page of paper and start over.

It was not until the 1970's that world was introduced to a word processor! The term “word processor” originally referred to a machine that recorded keystrokes on a keyboard in one-step and then printed out those keystrokes on paper in a second step. In the 1980s, that definition was changed to represent programs that required several other machines – keyboards, monitors, disks, computers, and printers – to create documents.

Today, we still use many of these items to create documents but through the use of the Internet and the Web, we print much less than we did. We also have several kinds of word processing software to choose from – like Microsoft Word and Google Docs. Each of these programs give us the ability to:

- Correct your work before printing.
- Check for spelling and grammar errors.
- Verify the meanings of words and synonyms by using the thesaurus.
- Transfer text between documents.
- Format text with various fonts, sizes and styles.
- Format pages instantly with structural styles, such as lists, tables, paragraphs, and headings

Most word-processing programs resemble each other in appearance, and some are practically identical. But not every program will have the same menu options and tools.

Creating documents in a word processor has become even easier with pre-made documents called **templates**. A **template** provides a page design layout into which you can place your content. If you use a template, all you have to do is enter your own text and images. But be reassured, you can always begin with a blank document and let your creativity define the rest!

Links to Learn More

Read more about the history of the printing press, typewriters and word processors using the links below:

- [The Printing Press](#)
- [History of the Typewriter](#)
- [History of Word Processing](#)

Storing Your Documents

Objectives

7.1.2: Define the term "cloud computing," and explain the differences of creating and storing word-processing documents online versus a physical location.

A word processing document can be stored in many different places. It really depends on what you want to do with the document once you have created it. Ask yourself the following questions to help define your document needs to determine where you could or should store your file:

- Do I need access to this document when I am away from my computer?
- Will I need to use my phone or a tablet to access this document to make changes?
- Do I need to share this document with others?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, you may want to store your files in the **cloud** for **accessibility**. Do not let this term fool you – you are not storing your documents in a fluffy white cloud floating in the sky. The **cloud** is a wide network of data centers (made up of large storage computers called **file servers**) throughout the world that can store your information and retrieve it for you from anywhere you can obtain an Internet connection. To gain access to this storage space, you will need to set up an account with a vendor – like Google or Microsoft.

Your vendor will reserve and secure a space for just your documents. The vendor will require you to use their tools to access your files. This is known as **cloud computing** because the tools being used are accessed exclusively over the Internet rather than installed on a single computer. Google has a program/application called **Google Drive** that you will need to install or connect to via a web browser to access your files. Microsoft has a similar program called **OneDrive**. You can connect to these cloud storage spaces from your computer, phone or tablet. For phones and tablets, you will need to download the application while your computer only requires you to open a web browser like Chrome for Google or Internet Explorer for Microsoft.