

**CAMBRIDGE**

International Examinations



Career Award

# Information and Communications Technology

Foundation Level

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**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2003



Designed and typeset by P. K. McBride, Southampton

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*Typefaces* AGaramond, FFDax, Century Gothic *System* PageMaker®

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

ISBN 0 521 53293 0 paperback

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# How to use this book

This book is intended for students on courses leading towards the Cambridge Career Award, ICT Skills at Foundation level. The Award is designed for anyone who wishes to develop basic competencies in a variety of ICT applications, and to gain a broad, practical introduction to work-related ICT skills.

Chapter 1, *General principles and procedures*, is an introduction to the PC and covers the essential skills and concepts. It is not tested, but before you go any further you do need to understand the basics of Windows, be able to handle the mouse and keyboard confidently, and have a sound grasp of the core file and disk management techniques.

Chapters 2 to 4 cover the core modules. All students must study all of these.

- Chapter 2, *Communication*, introduces e-mail and the World Wide Web, using Internet Explorer and Outlook Express.
- Chapter 3, *Document production*, explains the basics of word processing, with examples from Word.
- Chapter 4, *Data manipulation*, introduces spreadsheets, using Excel.

Chapters 5 to 9 cover the optional modules. Students must take three of these.

- Chapter 5, *Creating Charts*, is written largely around the charting tools in Excel, but also introduces Microsoft Graph.
- Chapter 6, *Desktop publishing*, looks at DTP page layout concepts and skills, using Microsoft Publisher and Word.
- Chapter 7, *Computer graphics*, explores techniques for creating and manipulating drawn objects, using Microsoft Draw.
- Chapter 8, *Database operations*, introduces key concepts and skills for working with databases, using Access.
- Chapter 9, *Web site design*, shows how to create Web pages containing text, images and hyperlinks, using a text editor and a browser.

## The skills builders

In each of Chapters 2 to 5 you will find one or two skills builder exercises. Each has been designed to reinforce and test your understanding of the skills and concepts covered in the preceding pages. Before tackling any skills builder, make sure that you have fully understood the material leading up to it.

A full range of sample tests, and other resources for students is available from the CIE Web site at [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)

# 1

## General principles and procedures

### You should know:

- No prerequisites

### You will learn:

- How to use computer systems safely
- The basics of Windows
- How to use the mouse and the keyboard
- How to manage files and folders
- How to use floppy disks
- Key aspects of health and safety





# Computer systems

Computer systems come in all sizes, from mainframes that can fill a large room down to tiny hand-helds, but the most common type of computer is a PC (Personal Computer) running Microsoft Windows.

## The PC

PC systems typically have these components:

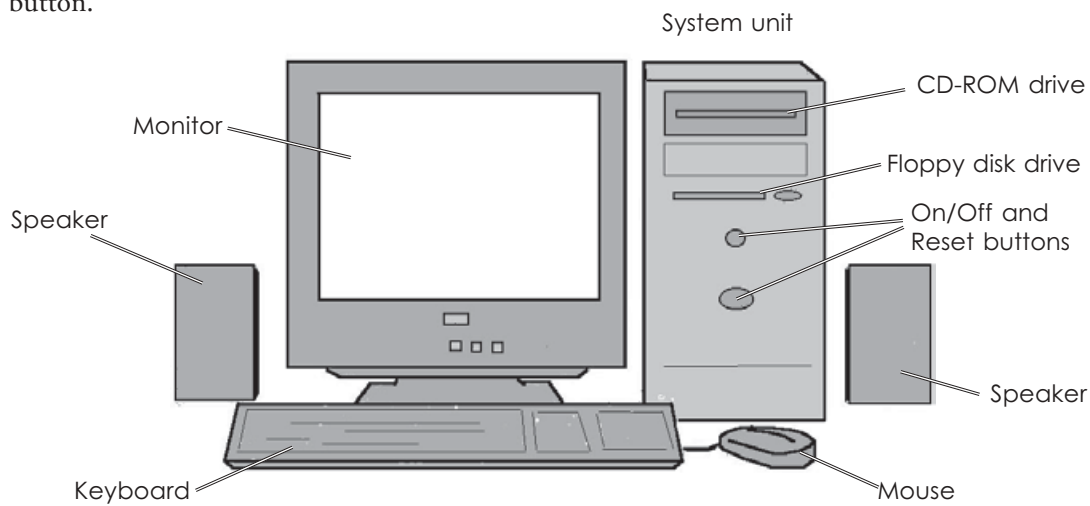
- *Monitor* or *VDU* (Visual Display Unit). On most desktop PCs this is similar to a TV, though flat LCD screens are becoming more common. Newer monitors usually have 17 inch screens, capable of resolutions up to 1600 × 1200. (The resolution is the number of *pixels* – dots of light – that make up the screen.)
- *System unit* – the box containing the ‘works’. This may act as a base for the monitor, or stand beside it, as in the illustration, or on the floor beneath.

On the front you should be able to see the front panels of a floppy disk drive and a CD-ROM drive, and two buttons – one is the on/off button, the other the reset button.

At the back you will find a number of sockets and connections, most with cables plugged into them.

Inside, and best left to the experts, are the power supply, the CD-ROM, floppy disk and hard disk drives, and the main circuit board (the *motherboard*) containing the main processor, the memory and other chips; plus a sound card, graphics card, modem and other circuit boards.

- *Keyboard* – though mainly for entering text and numbers, the keys can also be used for controlling software, as you will see.
- *Mouse* – used for controlling the cursor on screen, allowing you to select items, start programs, draw pictures, and more.
- There will also normally be *speakers* and a *printer*, and possibly a scanner, attached.



The main components of a desktop PC system

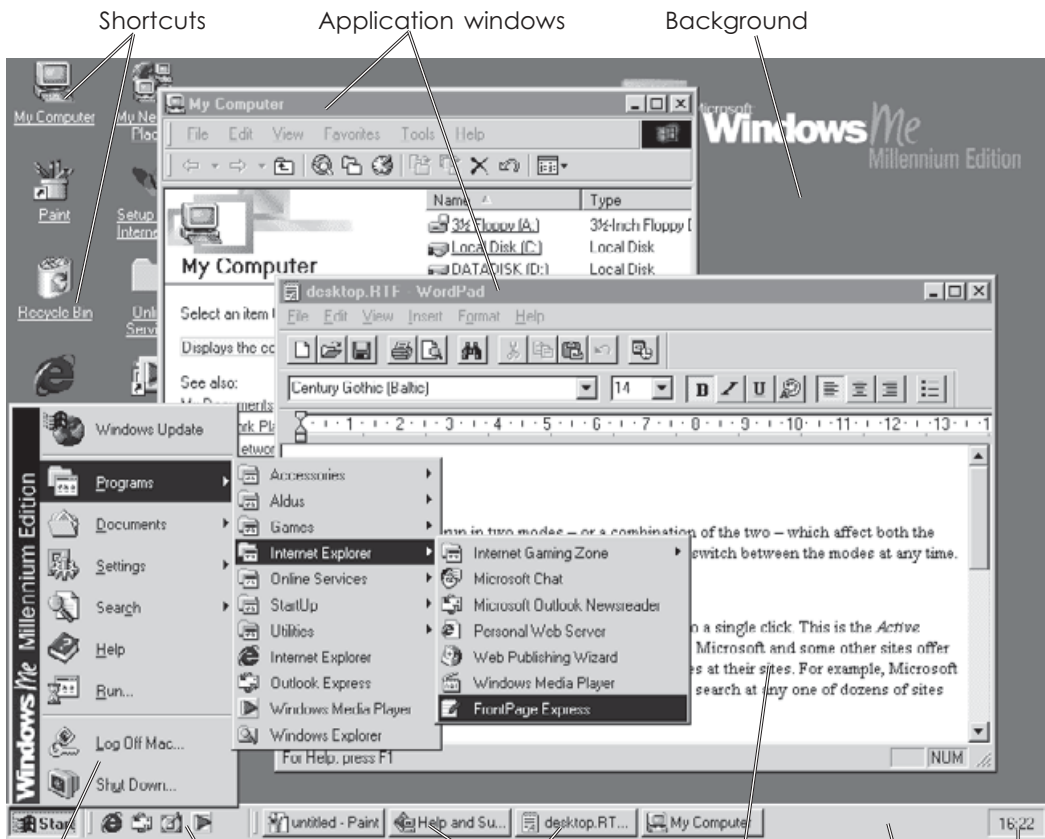
# Introducing Windows

Windows is an *operating system* – and more. An operating system handles the interaction between the processor and the screen, memory, mouse, disk drives, printer and other equipment. It is a bridge between the hardware of the computer and the *applications* – such as word processing or spreadsheet programs. Whatever hardware you are using, if it has a version of Windows, it can run any application written for that or for earlier versions of Windows. (This book assumes that you are using Windows 95, 98, Me, NT or 2000 – the differences between them are very small, and will be pointed out where it matters.)

## Starting up

Routines vary, depending upon the version of Windows and whether or not you are on a network, but will usually be like this.

- ❶ Turn on the PC.
- ❷ If the monitor has its own switch, turn it on.
  - Various messages and images will appear to let you know that things are happening.
- ❸ If you are on a network, you will need to *log on* – to enter your user name and password.
- ❹ After a few more minutes' wait while the last files are loaded and the system configured for your use, the Desktop screen will appear.



The Desktop showing the main features. This is Windows Me, but 95, 98, NT and 2000 are very similar.

## The Desktop

Desktops vary hugely, but you should see some or all of these items.

### Shortcuts

These are icons – small images – with links to programs, folders or Web sites. Clicking on the icon will run the program, open the folder or take you online. There will be some shortcuts already on your Desktop, and you can easily add your own.

### Background

This may be a flat colour, a pattern, a picture or a Web page. It can be changed at any time without affecting anything else.

### Application windows

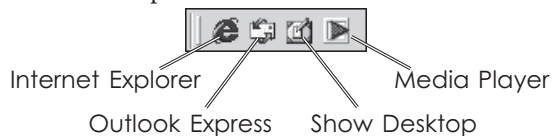
When you run an application, such as Word, it is displayed in a window. This can be set to fill the screen or to take a smaller area (see page 5).

### Taskbar

This is normally along the bottom of the screen, but can be moved elsewhere. It is the main control centre for the Desktop, carrying the tools to start and to switch between applications.

**Start** leads to the Start menu (see page 9).

The **Quick Launch toolbar** may be present. The default tools lead to Internet Explorer, Outlook Express and Media Player, and to the Show Desktop utility, which shrinks all open applications out of the way so that you have a clear view of the Desktop.



Links to other applications can be added if required.

When you run an application, a button is added to the Taskbar. Clicking on it will bring that application to the top of your Desktop.

The **Clock** can also be displayed on the Taskbar. You should find that it keeps good time – it even adjusts itself for Daylight Saving Time!

## Programs and Windows

### Starting applications

Applications can be started in several ways. Here are the three easiest:

- Click the application's desktop icon (if there is one).
- Click on its name in the Start menu (see page 9).
- Open a document that was created by or is normally handled by that application. The application will start automatically so that it can open the document.

### Switching between applications

When you have several applications running, the current one – the one that you are working on – will be on top. If its window is less than full-screen, then the windows of other applications may be partially visible underneath.

**To bring a window to the top, and make it the current one:**

- If you can see any part of the window, click on it.
- Otherwise, click on its button in the Taskbar.


# Window modes


A window is an independent part of the screen. It can be moved, resized, brought to the front or overlaid by other windows. Programs are run in windows, and documents are usually displayed in windows within their programs. You can have any number of programs running or documents open at any one time, though you can only be working actively in one window – the one on top.


A window can be in three modes:


- Maximized – filling the whole screen.
- Restore – adjustable in size and position.
- Minimized – a program window is reduced to a button on the Taskbar; a document window is reduced to its Title bar only.

## Changing the mode

The display mode can be changed using the buttons  in the top right of the frame.

To maximize a window, click .

To minimize a window, click .

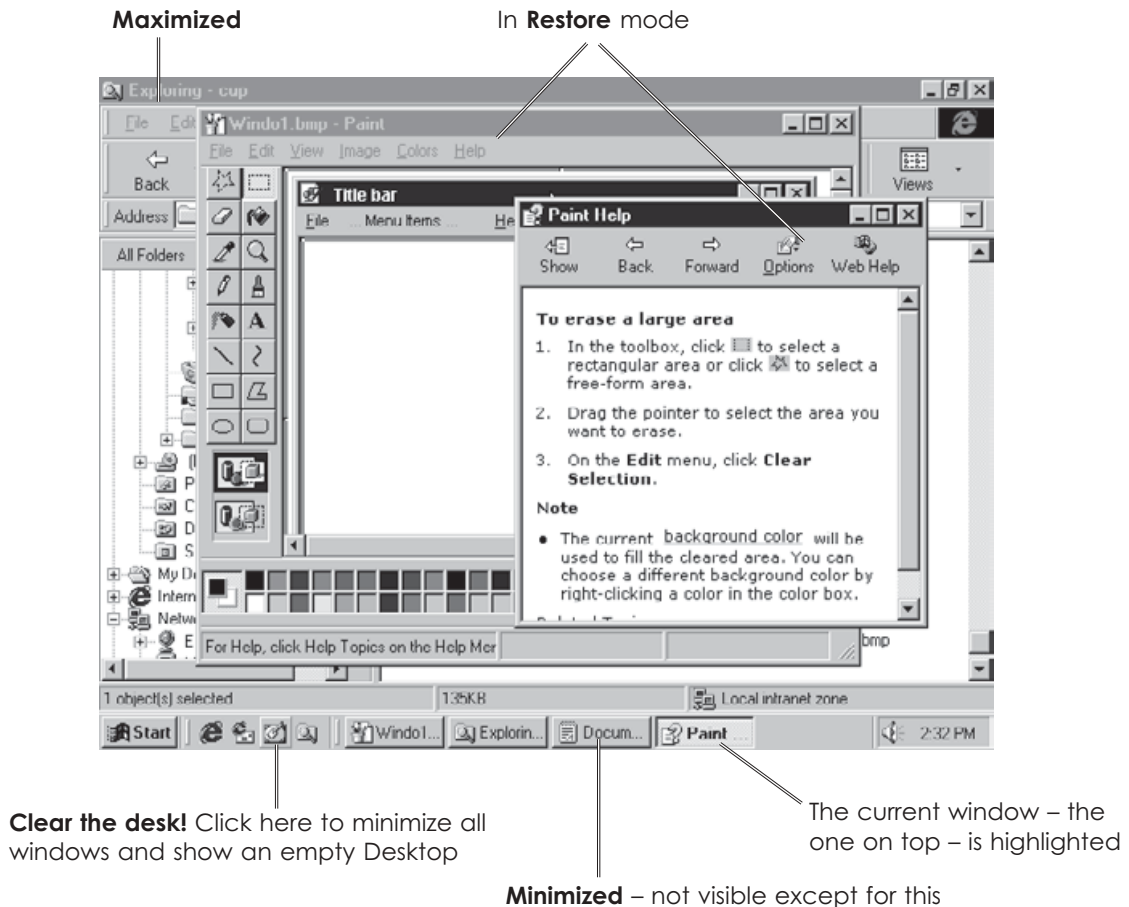
To restore a window to variable size, click .

When the window is maximized, the Restore button replaces the Maximize button:

➤ In a maximized window .

➤ In a restored window .

The  Close button is always present.



# The mouse

You can't do much in Windows until you have learned to use the mouse. It is used for locating the cursor, selecting from menus, highlighting, moving and changing the size of objects, and much more.

Most mice are built around a ball. Moving the mouse rolls the ball inside it. The ball turns the sensor rollers and these move the cursor. To control the mouse effectively you need a mouse mat or a pad of paper – mice don't move well on hard desktops.

They don't work well when they get dust and fluff inside. If you find that the cursor starts to move jerkily and becomes harder to control, take out the mouse ball and clean it and the rollers with a damp cloth. Dust inside the mouse can be removed with tweezers. You do not need to turn off the PC or disconnect the mouse before you do this.

A newer type of optical mouse works by bouncing a light off the surface of the mouse mat. A sensor notices differences in the image and changes mouse movement into cursor movement. An optical mouse will work on any surface and does not have problems with dust!

Note these points, for any type of mouse:

- If you are so close to the edge of the mat that you cannot move the cursor any further, pick up the mouse and put it back in the middle.
- You can set up the mouse so that when the mouse is moved faster, the cursor moves further. Watch out for this when working on other people's machines.

## Mouse actions

**Point** – move the cursor with your fingers *off* the buttons.

**Click** – click the left button. This action will select a file, menu item or other object.

**Right-click** – click the right button over an object on screen. This will open a menu of commands that apply to that object.

**Double-click** – click the left button twice in quick succession. This will run a program, or open a document from its icon. You can set the gap between clicks to suit yourself.

**Drag** – keep the left button down while moving the mouse. Used for resizing, drawing and similar jobs.

**Drag and drop** – drag an object and release the left button when it is in the right place. Used for moving objects.

### Tip!

If you need to practise using the mouse, play the games that come with Windows – you will find them in the **Accessories > Games** menu. Develop your point and click skills with Minesweeper, and your drag-and-drop skills with the card games.

# The keyboard

Most Windows tasks can be handled by the mouse alone, leaving the keyboard for data entry. However, if you prefer typing to using the mouse, you can do most jobs with the keys. The relevant ones are covered here.

## The function keys

These can be used in some applications to run certain operations – but they vary greatly, and so you have to learn the keystrokes. Two have the same effects in any application:

[F1] starts the Help system.

[F4] press this, while holding down [Alt], to close the application.

## The control sets

The **Arrow** keys can often be used instead of the mouse for moving the cursor. Above them are more movement keys, which will let you jump around in text. [Insert] and [Delete] are also here.

[Esc] is used to cancel operations and escape from trouble.



[Tab] moves across the page in word processing, or between objects in other displays – the current, selected object will be highlighted.

[Caps Lock] can be turned on if you want to type a lot of capitals. The **Caps Lock** light shows if it is on.

[Num Lock] should be turned on to use the number pad to type numbers, or off to use the keys for movement. The **Num Lock** light shows if it is on.

[Shift] is used to obtain capitals and the symbols on the top-row number keys.

[Control] is used with other keys to give key-stroke alternatives to mouse commands.

 is the same as clicking .

[Alt] is used, like [Ctrl], with other keys.

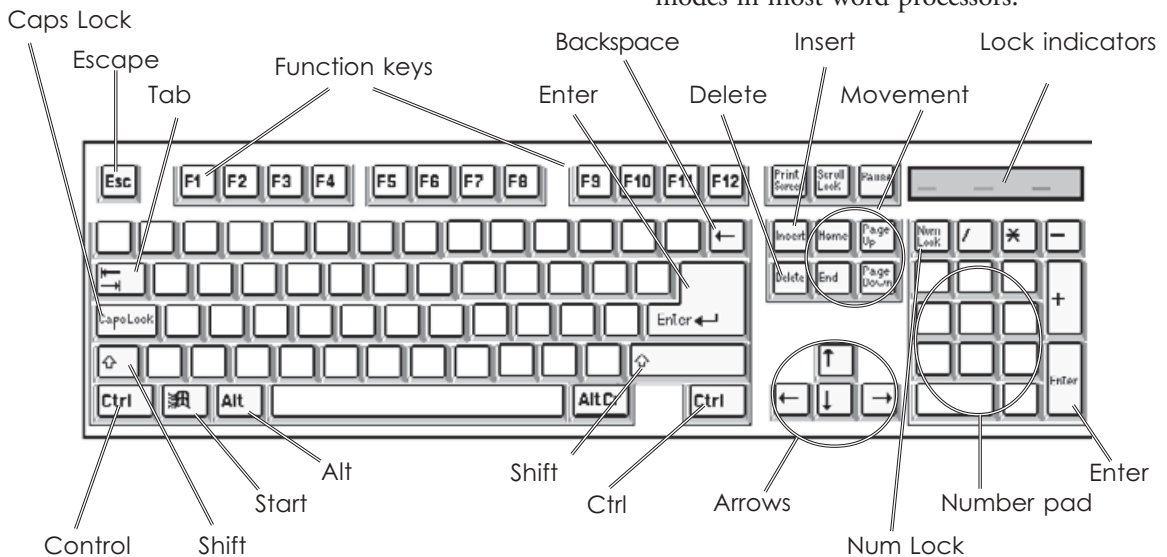
[Backspace] deletes the character to the left of the text cursor or any selected objects.

[Enter] is used at the end of a piece of text or to start an operation.

[Delete] deletes the character to the right of the text cursor or any selected objects.

[Insert] switches between Insert and Overtyping modes in most word processors.

## A typical PC keyboard



# Menus

Menus give you easy access to sets of commands and options.

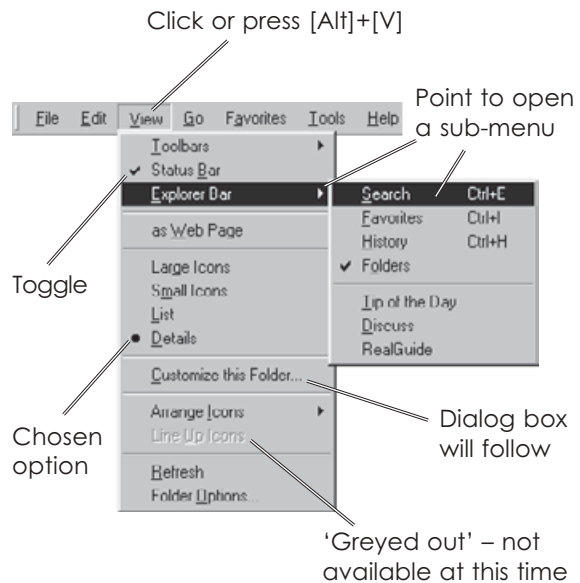
There are three types of menus:

- All programs have a *menu bar*, containing all of the program's commands and options. To open a menu, click on it, or press [Alt] and the underlined letter – usually the initial – e.g. press [Alt] and [F] for the File menu.
- For many objects on screen, e.g. icons, blocks of text or drawn figures, you can open a *shortcut* or *context menu*, containing a set of commands and options that may be used with that object. Right-click over an object to do this.
- Windows has its own special *Start menu* (see page 9).

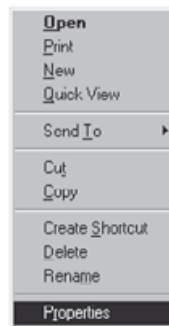
All menus are used in the same way:

- To select an item from a menu, click on it or type its underlined letter.
- Some items are *toggles*. Selecting them turns an option on or off. ✓ beside the name shows that the option is on.
- You sometimes get a set of options, of which only one can be selected at a time. ● beside the name indicates the chosen option.
- ▶ after an item shows that another menu leads from it. Click on or point to the item to open its menu.
- ... after an item shows that a dialog box will open to get more information from you.
- If an item is 'greyed out' – written in grey with a white shadow – it is not available at that time. You may need to set other options, or select different types of objects, before the command can be used.

## A menu opened from the menu bar




## The context menu for a file



Files can be opened, printed and deleted – amongst other things. The dividing lines are normally just decorative – they separate the commands into groups of related ones.

# The Start menu

Click  to open the Windows menu system.

From here you can run any application on your PC, open documents, get Help, find files, customise your system and close down at the end of a session.

There are eight main options on the first level menu:



**Programs** is the main route to your applications. All the programs on the PC should have an entry here, either directly on the Programs menu or in a submenu leading from it.

**Favorites** holds links to selected places on the Internet.

**Documents** holds a list of recently used document files. Selecting one from this list will run the relevant application and open the file for you to work on.

**Settings** is used to customise the Desktop and other aspects of the system and to set up printers.

**Find (Search in Windows Me)** will find files and folders on your computer, your network and the Internet, and help you to find people on the Internet.

**Help** is one way into the Windows Help system.

**Run** lets you run a named application. This is mainly used to run the setup program to install new software.

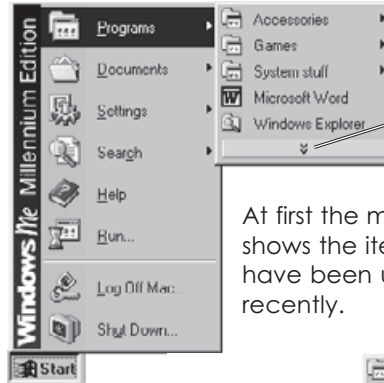
**Shut down** is the safe way to end a session on a stand-alone PC. If you simply switch off, you may lose work in documents that have not been saved recently.

If you are on a network, you will also have a **Log Off** option. Use this at the end of a session to close down your part of the network and leave the PC ready for someone else to use.

## Smart menus

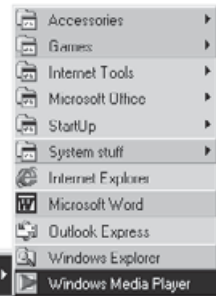
In Windows Me and in Office 2000, menus are 'smart'. When they first open, they display only the core items and those that you use regularly. The rest are hidden, but will be shown if you wait a few moments or if you click on the double-arrow bar at the bottom of the menu.

If you use a program, it will be added to the menu and become part of the displayed set in future. If you don't use a program for several days, it will be dropped from the menu. As smart menus are normally much shorter, it makes selection simpler and faster.

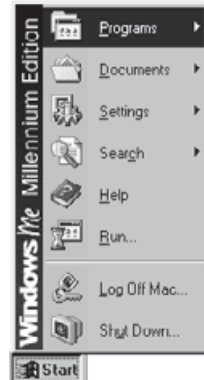


At first the menu only shows the items that have been used recently.

The full menu can be opened to reach the less-used programs, if needed.



Smart menus in action – it takes a few days for them to learn your use of programs.





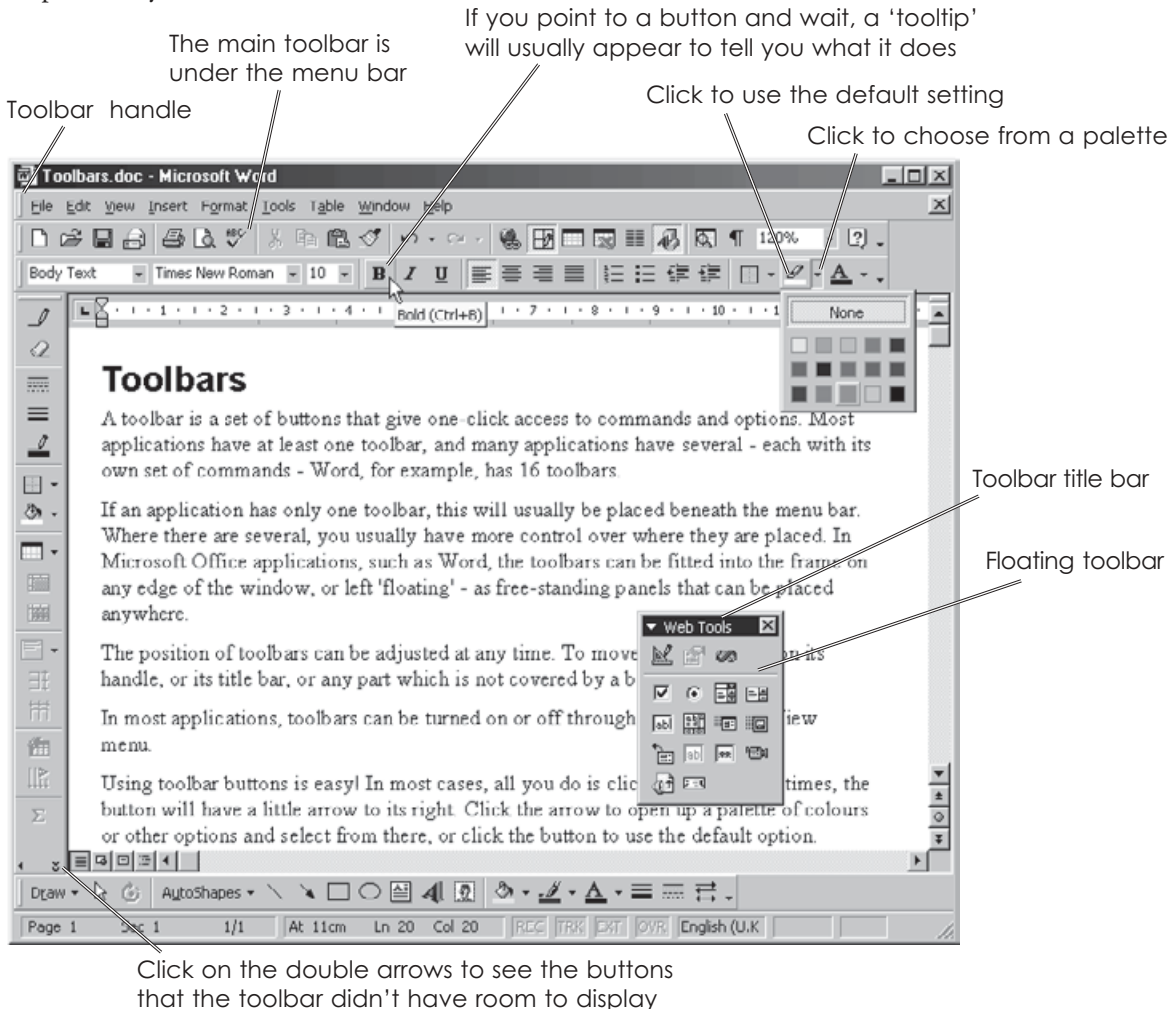
# Toolbars

A toolbar is a set of buttons that give one-click access to commands and options. Most applications have at least one toolbar, and many applications have several – each with its own set of commands – Word, for example, has 16 toolbars. If an application has only one toolbar, this will usually be placed beneath the menu bar. Where there are several, you usually have more control over where they are placed. In Microsoft Office applications, such as Word, the toolbars can be fitted into the frame on any edge of the window, or left ‘floating’ – as free-standing panels that can be placed anywhere.

The position of toolbars can be adjusted at any time. To move a toolbar, drag on its handle, or its title bar, or any part which is not covered by a button.

In most applications, toolbars can be turned on or off through options on the View menu.

Using toolbar buttons is easy! In most cases, all you do is click on them. Sometimes, the button will have a little arrow to its right. Click the arrow to open up a palette of colours or other options and select from there, or click the button to use the default option.



# Dialog boxes

These are used for setting options and collecting information. They vary greatly, but look out for these features.

## Tabs and panels

Some dialog boxes have several sets of options, each on a separate panel. These are identified by tabs at the top. Click on a tab to bring its panel to the front.

## Check boxes

These are used where there are several options in a set, and you can use as many as you like at the same time.

✓ in the box shows that the option has been selected.

If the box is greyed out, the option is not available for the selected item.

## Radio buttons

These are used for either/or options. Only one of the set can be selected – this is indicated by a black blob in the middle of the button.

## Drop-down lists

If a slot has a down arrow button ▾ on its right, click the button to drop down a list.

Click on an item in the list to select.

## When you have done ...

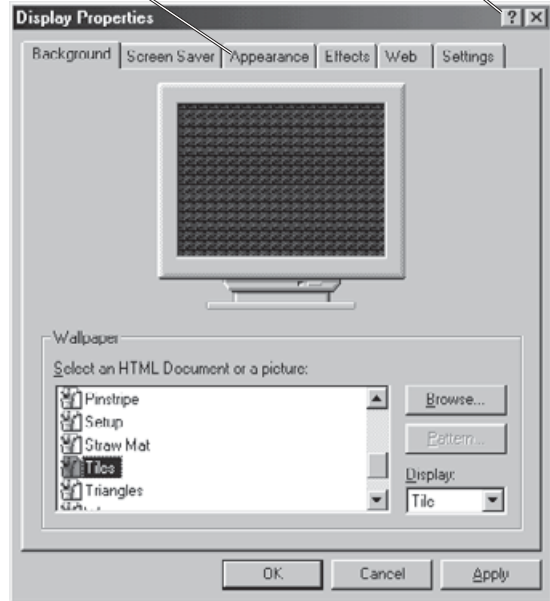
At the bottom of the dialog box you will see:

**OK** – click when you have set the options, selected the file or whatever, and want to close the dialog box;

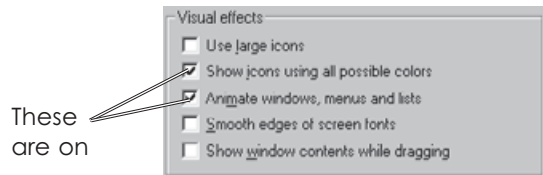
**Apply** – click to fix the options selected so far, but keep the dialog box open;

**Cancel** – click to abandon any selections you may have made and close the dialog box.

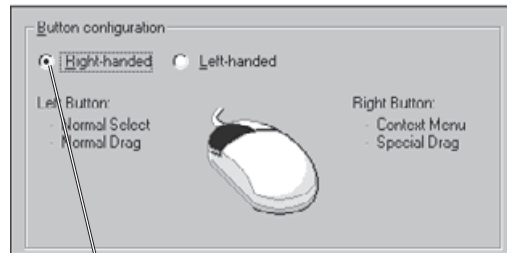
Click, then click on an item for help on it  
Click a tab to display its panel



Check boxes turn options on or off



Radio buttons pick one option from a set



Click here ...  
Drop-down lists are used where there are many choices  
... to get the list



# Window controls

The window frame contains all the controls you need for adjusting the display.

## Frame edge

When a window is in Restore mode – i.e. smaller than full-screen – you can drag on the edge to make it larger or smaller (see page 13).

## Title bar

This identifies the window and can be used to move it (see page 13).

## Control menu

This gives keyboard control over the window. Press [Alt] and [Space bar] to open it. You only need this if you cannot use the mouse.

## Maximize, Minimize and Restore

These change the display mode (see page 5).

## Close

This is one of several ways to close a window and the program that was running in it (see page 14).

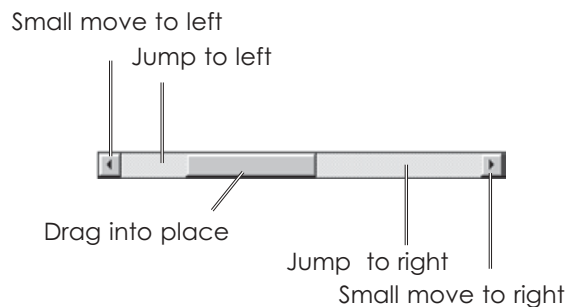
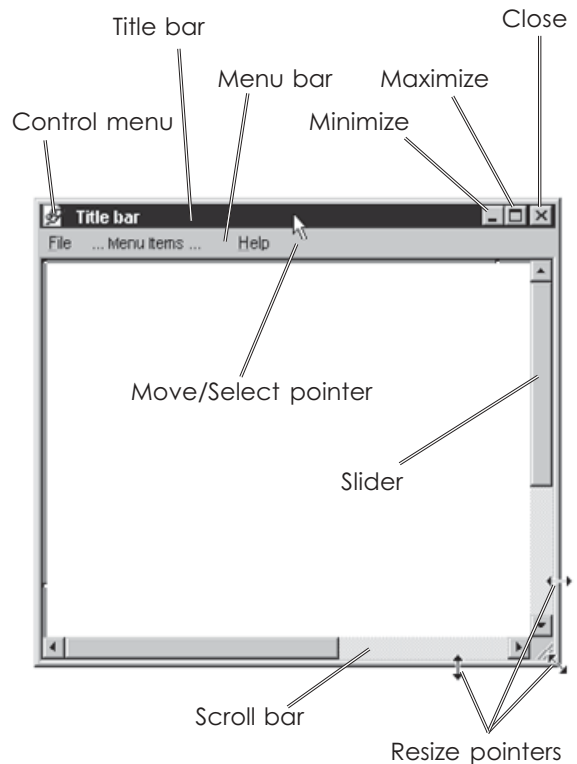
## Menu bar

Immediately below the Title bar in an application window is a bar holding the names of its menus. Click on a name to open its menu.

## Scroll bars

These appear on the right and at the bottom of the frame if the contents are too big to fit within the window. The sliders in the scroll bars show you where your view is, relative to the overall document. Move the slider to view a different part of the document. Either:

- click an end arrow to move the display a little in the direction of the arrow;
- click on the bar beside the slider to jump – typically a screen width or height – in that direction;
- drag the slider as required.

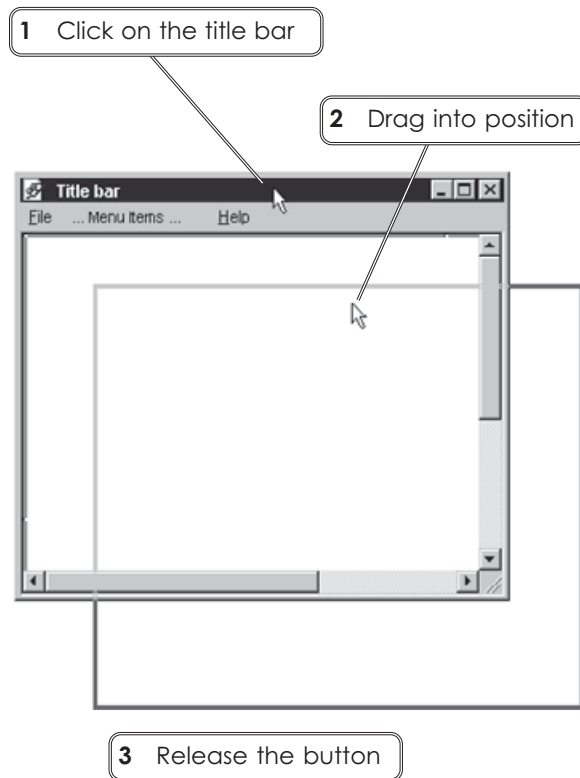


# Moving windows

When a window is in Restore mode – open but not full-screen – it can be moved anywhere on the screen.

To move the window, drag on its title bar.

- ❶ Click on the title bar and hold the left button down.
- ❷ Drag the window to its new position.
- ❸ Release the mouse button.



## Tip!

When the window is being moved, it may just show as a grey outline if **Show windows contents while dragging** is turned off. This is one of the many Display Properties options – explore these in Display settings in the Control Panel if you are interested.

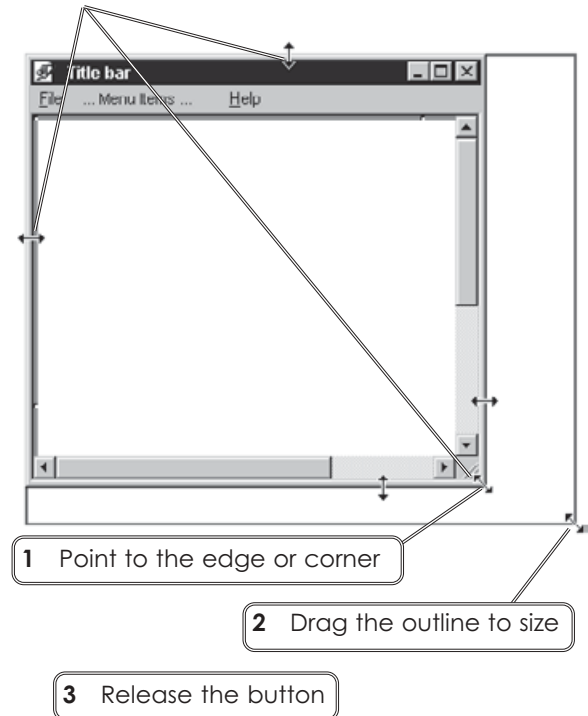
# Resizing windows

When a window is in Restore mode, you can change its size and shape by dragging the edges of the frame to new positions.

Combined with the moving facility, this lets you arrange your Desktop exactly the way you like it.

- ❶ Point to the edge or corner that you want to pull in or out.
- ❷ When you get the  $\leftrightarrow$  cursor, drag the outline to size.
- ❸ Release the mouse button.

You can drag any edge or corner



## Tip!


The resize pointers only appear when the pointer is on an edge, and they disappear again if you go too far.

# Closing windows

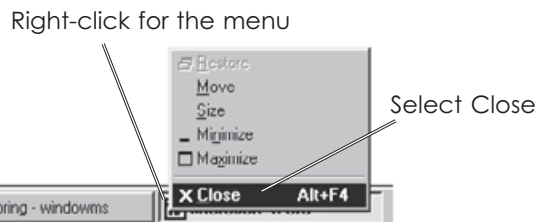
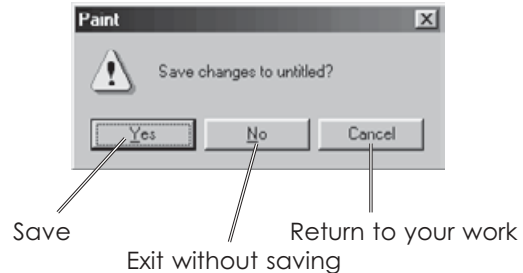
When you exit from a program, you close its window. And when you close a window, you close the program that was running inside it.

If you haven't saved your work, most programs will point this out and give you a chance to save the document before closing.

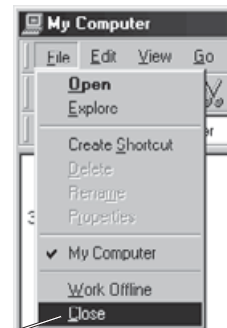
There are several different ways of closing. Here are the simplest four:

- If the window is in Maximized or Restore mode, click , the Close icon, at the top right of the title bar.
- If the window has been Minimized onto the Taskbar, right-click on its button to open its context menu and use **Close**.
- Open the program's **File** menu and select **Exit** or **Close**.
- Hold down [Alt] and press [F4].

You will normally be prompted to save your work before closing.




**Tip!**  
If you want to close down a lot of windows at the end of a session, it's simplest to use the [Alt]+[F4] method – just keep pressing until they have all gone.

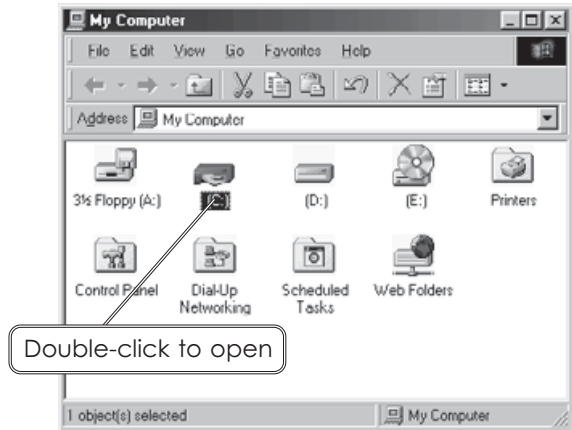



All **File** menus have an item called either **Exit** or **Close**

# My Computer

My Computer is the tool that we will use for managing files. Start it from its Desktop icon (the icon image varies – this is mine). 

The main part of the window shows the contents of the current drive or folder. At first it shows the drives and main folders on your computer.

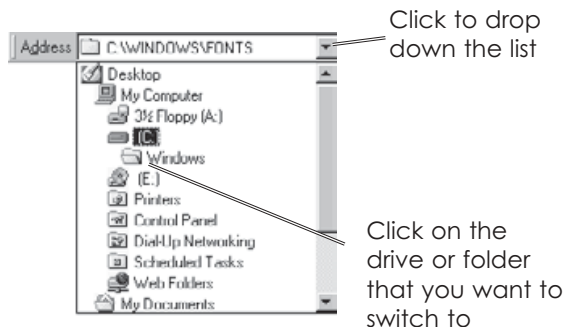


- To see what is in a drive or folder, double-click on its icon. A new window will open to display its contents.
- When you have finished with a window, click  to close it.

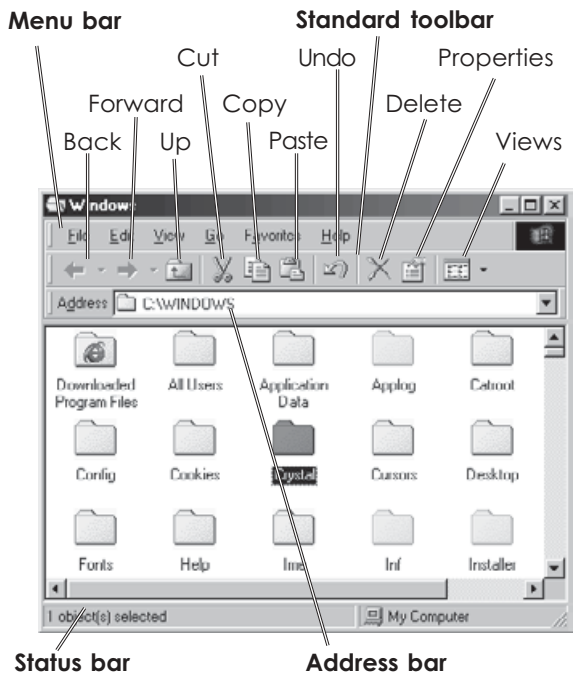
All the commands can be reached through the **Menu bar**, but those that are used most often can also be reached through toolbar buttons.

There are three toolbars for exploring your PC:

- The **Address bar** shows the current folder and can be used to move around the system.



- The **Status bar** shows information about the objects in the folder or any selected ones.
- The **Standard toolbar** contains buttons for all the essential jobs:
  - ◆ **Back** and **Forward** take you to folders opened earlier.
  - ◆ **Up** takes you up to the next level folder, or from a folder to the drive.
  - ◆ **Cut** deletes the selected file(s) but keeps a copy in the Clipboard (see page 45).
  - ◆ **Copy** copies the file(s) to the Clipboard.
  - ◆ **Paste** copies the file from the Clipboard into the current folder.
  - ◆ **Undo** undoes the previous action, if it can.
  - ◆ **Delete** deletes selected items.
  - ◆ **Properties** opens the Properties panel for the selected item.
  - ◆ **Views** leads to a drop-down list holding the main options from the View menu.



In Windows Me, **Cut**, **Copy** and **Paste** are replaced by:

- **Move To** which moves the selected file to a folder picked from a list at the next stage.
- **Copy To** copies the selected file to another folder.


## Tip!




The toolbars and Status bar can be turned on or off through the options on the View menu.

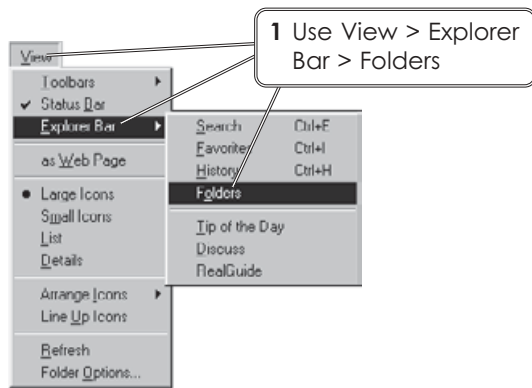
## Explorer Bar

You can open the Explorer Bar on the left of the window to display the folder list. (It can also be used for Search, Favorites and History which are mainly used when exploring the Internet.) The **Folders** list is useful.

- 1 Open the **View** menu, point to **Explorer Bar** and select **Folders**.

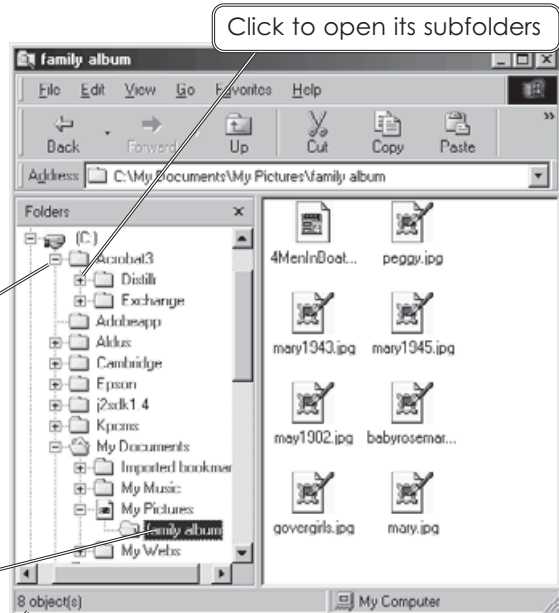
In the **Folders** list,  to the left shows that a drive or folder contains a lower level of folders.

- Click  to bring the next level of folders into view. The icon changes to .
- Click  when you want to hide the lower level of folders again.
- Click on a folder name to select it and to list its files and folders in the main part of the display.



Click to close the subfolders

Click to display its contents



The Status bar shows how many files are in the folder, or how many are selected and their total size

# Examining your files

Files and folders can be shown as **Large Icons**, **Small Icons**, **List**, **Details** or **Thumbnails**.



**Large Icons** are easier to see, but you don't get many at a time unless you have a large window.

**Small Icons** and **List** both show a small icon and the name. **Small Icons** lists them across the screen, **List** arranges them in columns.

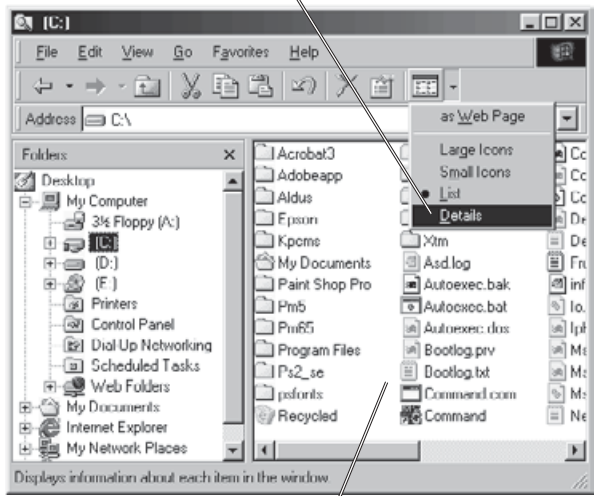
**Details** shows the name, size, type and last modified date of each file.

The **Thumbnails** view is only available in Windows Me. It shows – if one is available – a miniature image or preview of each file.

The best way to look closely at your files is with the **Details** view. Change to it now.

- ❶ Click the arrow by the **View** button  to drop down the list, and select **Details**.
- ❷ Click  to open the drives and folders down to a level where there are a reasonable number of files.
- ❸ Click on the **Name** heading to sort the files in ascending order of name. Click it again to sort them in descending order.
- ❹ Click the **Modified** heading to sort the files by date last modified. This display is useful for tracking down files that you were working on at a certain date (but have forgotten the names).

1 Switch to Details view

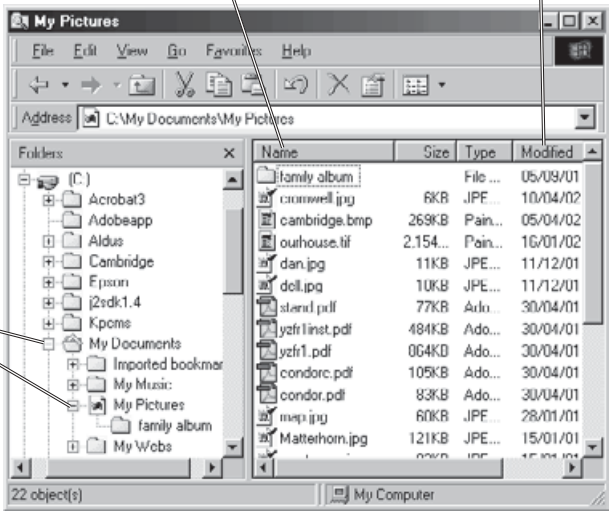


This is List view

3 Click the Name heading

4 Click the Modified heading

2 Open the folders



**Tip!**  
In any View, you can sort the icons using Arrange Icons on the View menu. They can be listed by name, type, size or date.



# Opening files

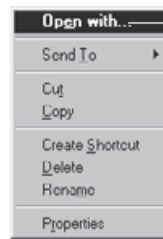
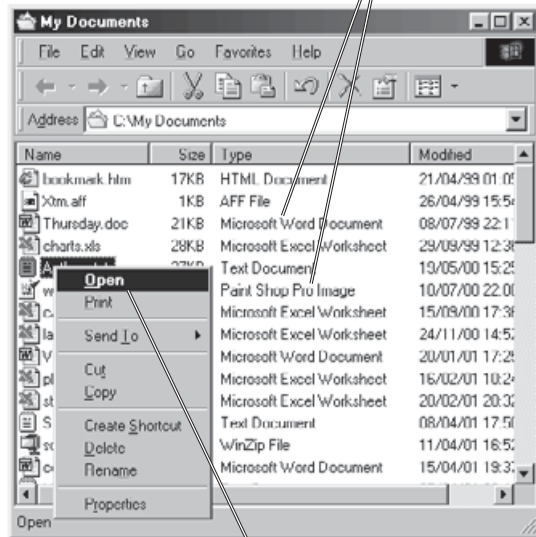
Look at the contents of any folder in **Details** view, and read what is in the **Type** column. You will see that most document files have a linked application – the one that will be run when the file is opened.

Windows identifies a file's type by its extension – the three letters after the filename – and it knows about most types. Sometimes you will meet a new type of file, and you will have to tell Windows which program to use.

## To open a file:

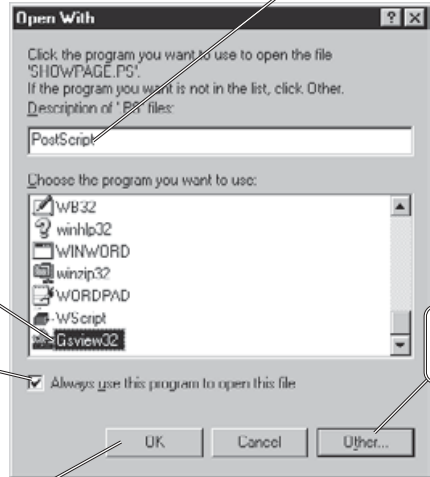
- ❶ Double-click on the file, or right-click and select **Open** or **Open with...**
- If Windows knows the type, it will run the linked application and open the file. If not, the **Open With...** dialog box will appear:
- ❷ Enter a **Description** – this will be shown in the Type column in Details displays.
- ❸ Scroll through the list of programs and pick the one to use with this file.
- ❹ If the program isn't in the list, click **Other** and browse through your folders for it.
- ❺ Tick the **Always use this program** box, if relevant – sometimes you may want to use different programs with the same file.
- ❻ Click **OK**.

The Type column often shows the linked applications



❶ Right-click and select **Open** or **Open with...**

❷ Enter a description



❸ Pick the program

❺ Always use that program?

❹ Find the program on your hard disk

❻ Click **OK**

# Creating a folder

Windows automatically sets up a folder called *My Documents* as a place for you to save your files. This is unlikely to be enough for very long. You will need more folders if you will be storing more than 50 or so documents – it is hard to find files in crowded folders.

Ideally, you should have a folder for each aspect of your work on the PC, e.g. private and business letters, reports, memos and notes, or a folder for each subject studied, with subfolders for individual projects.

How you organise your folders is your decision, but aim for a simple structure.

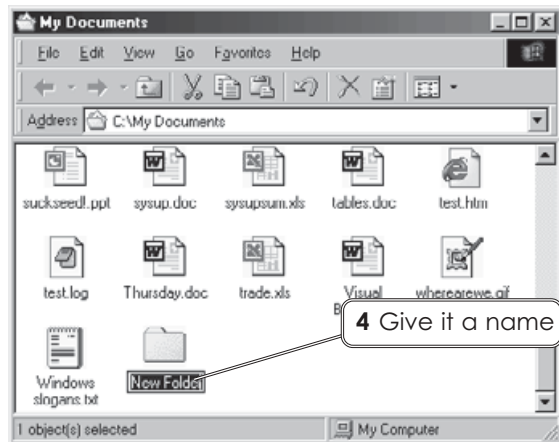
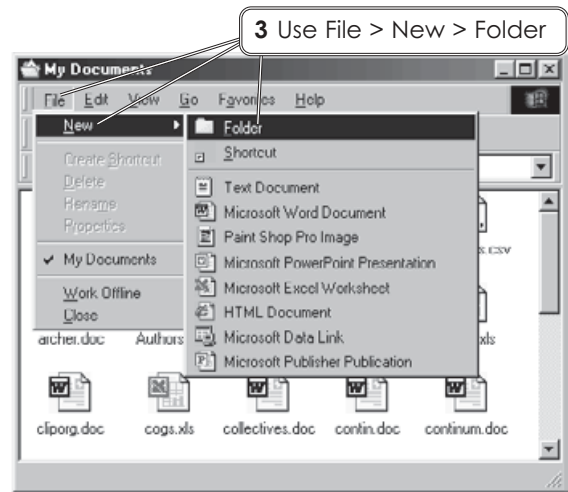
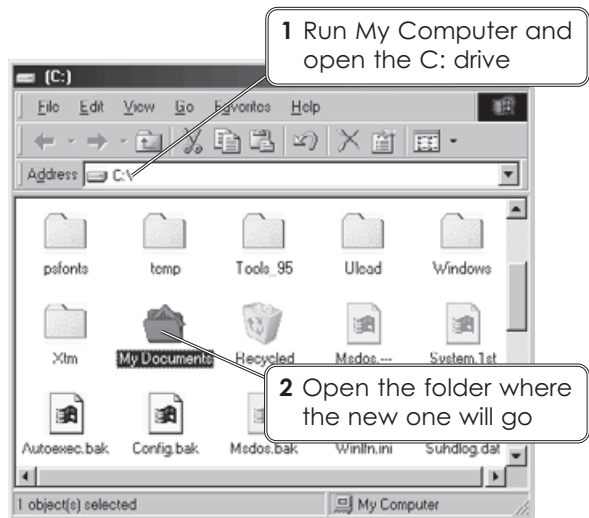
Do not have too many levels of folders – it can get confusing. Create your main folders at the C: drive or in *My Documents*, and do not have more than two levels of subfolders within these.

A new folder can be created at any time, and at any point in the folder structure.

- 1 Run My Computer and open the C: drive.
- 2 You need to be in the drive or folder which will contain the new folder. Work down through the folders to reach your target.
- 3 Open the **File** menu, point to **New**, then select **Folder**.
- 4 A new folder will appear, called *New Folder*. The name will be highlighted, ready for editing. Replace it with one that identifies the folder's purpose. You could call it 'ICT Skills' and use it for the files you will create on this course.



**Tip!**  
If you later decide that the folder is in the wrong place, select it and drag it into place in the Folders list.



# Disks and drives

*Before you work through the next two pages, find an empty floppy disk or one where the files are no longer wanted.*

- 1 Put the disk in the floppy disk drive.
- 2 Click the My Computer icon on the Desktop.



The drives and main folders on your PC will be listed. Setups vary, but look for these two:

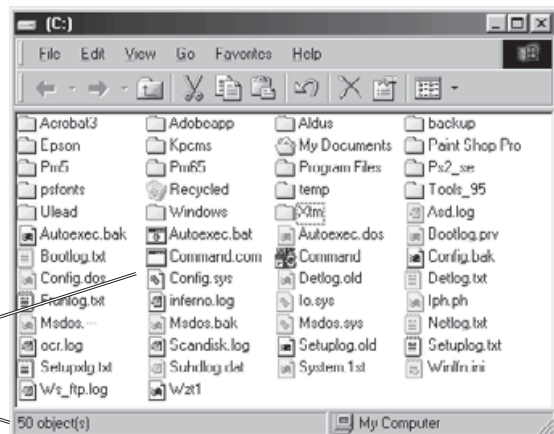
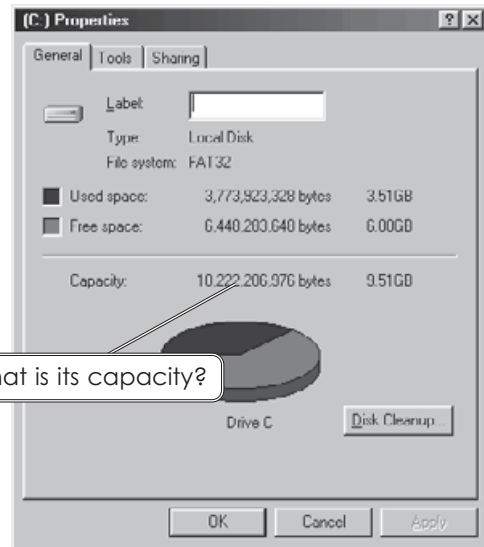
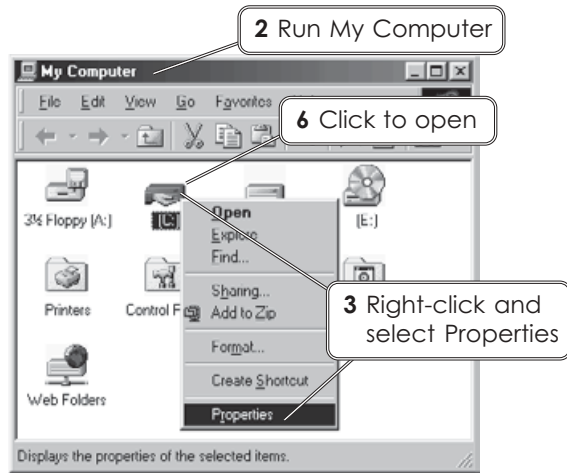
- 3½ Floppy (A:) – the floppy disk drive;
- (C:) – the main hard disk drive.

The A: and C: drives are both used to store files, but there are two big differences between them:

- Floppy disks are removable – they can be taken away or used in another PC – and so can be used for backups or for transferring files between machines. The disk in the C: drive is fixed into place.
- The hard disk in the C: drive can hold *much* more than a floppy disk.

Compare the C: drive and a floppy disk.

- 3 Right-click on the C: drive to open its context menu and select **Properties**.
- 4 Make a note of the **Capacity** value, then click **OK** to close the panel.
- 5 Repeat 3 and 4 with the A: drive, and compare the two.
- 6 Go back to **My Computer** and click on the C: drive to display the drive's contents.
- 7 You should see a number of folders and files. Note the **objects** value in the bottom left of the Status bar.
- 8 Repeat 6 and 7 for A:. What is on the disk?



# Formatting a floppy

Before you can use a floppy disk, it must be **formatted**. This marks out magnetic tracks on the disk surface, dividing the area into numbered blocks to provide organised storage space.

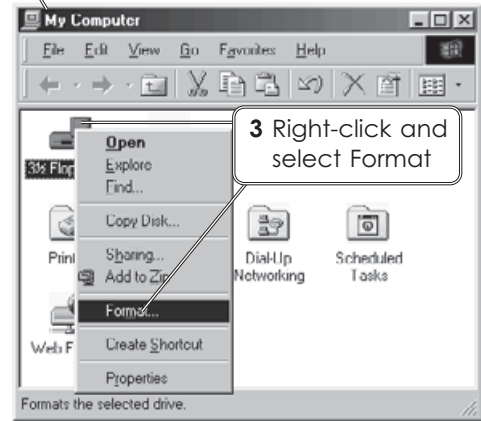
Floppy disks are usually supplied pre-formatted, so this routine may not be needed on new disks. It is, however, useful for cleaning up old disks as it can be faster to use Quick Format than to delete a lot of files.

- ❶ Insert the disk into the drive.
- ❷ Run **My Computer**.
- ❸ Right-click on the A: drive and select **Format**.
- ❹ Make sure that it is set for the right capacity. PC disks are almost always High-Density 1.44Mb (3.5").
- ❺ Select **Full** for a new disk, or **Quick** (erase) to tidy up an old disk.
- ❻ Type in a label if you like – though writing on its paper label is more useful!
- ❼ Turn on **Display summary**.
- ❽ Click **Start**. Formatting takes only a few moments.
- ❾ Read the summary at the end, and if there are 'bad sectors' on the disk, throw it away – the disk is unreliable. Click **Close** to shut the Summary panel.
- ❿ Click **Close** to exit from Format.

## Disk care

- Label disks so that you know what is on them.
- Protect them from physical damage, heat, damp and sources of magnetism, including electric cables and electrical machinery.

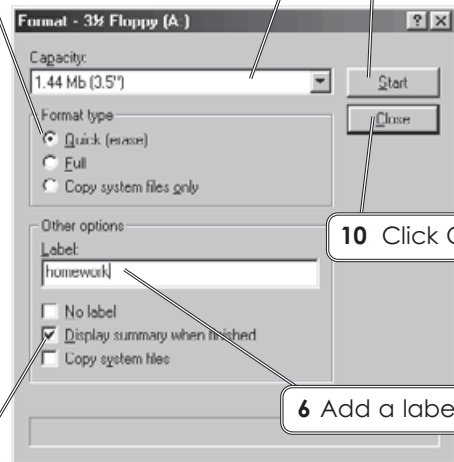
2 Run My Computer



4 Check the Capacity

5 Full or Quick format?

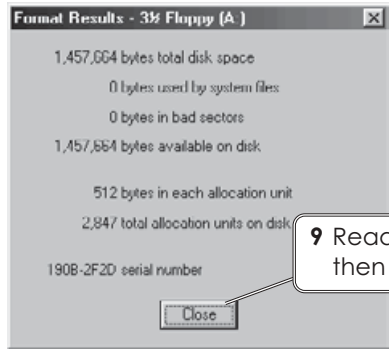
8 Click Start



10 Click Close

6 Add a label?

7 Display the summary



9 Read the summary then close it