

Word Processing Terminology

Alignment: Alignment refers to the way text is arranged in the document between the margins. In horizontal alignment, paragraphs of text can be left aligned (flush against the left margin), right aligned (flush against the right margin), or centered (each line within the paragraph centered between the margins). There is a fourth alignment option known as "justified". Text in a justified paragraph will be spread evenly across the page and appear as a block with text lining up on both the left and right margins.

Application: Another word for a software program. In word processing, the application is a Word Processor such as Microsoft Word.

AutoCorrect: This feature is used to correct typos and misspelled words. When AutoCorrect is turned on, common mistakes are automatically replaced using a default a list of words that are stored in the word processing application. The user can also typically modify the list to include their own common

Clipboard: The clipboard is a temporary holding area the computer uses for any item that has been copied or cut. When an item such as text is placed on the clipboard, it can then be pasted elsewhere in the document. Items will stay on the clipboard until they are deleted or erased. The manner in which the clipboard is cleared depends on the application being used. Quite often, the clipboard is cleared when another item is cut or copied or if the application is closed.

Copying: The process of copying will take an existing item in a document and creates a duplicate in a new location in the document (or even in another document). When an item is copied, it is stored temporarily on the clipboard waiting to be pasted elsewhere.

Cursor/ Insertion Point: The cursor (also known as the insertion point) is a flashing vertical bar on the screen that indicates where entered text or objects will be placed in the document. To place the cursor to a new location in your document, you would move your mouse pointer to the new location and click the left mouse button once. The flashing cursor should now appear in the new location and any text typed or object inserted will be placed there.

Cutting: The process of cutting is used to move text or objects in a document. Cutting takes an existing item in a document, removes it from its current location and stores it on the clipboard. The item can then be pasted elsewhere in the document (or even in another document) as long as it remains on the clipboard.

Document: A document is the file that is created using a word processor. Documents can contain many different types of items such as text, images, tables, charts, borders and clip art.

Editing: Editing is the process of making changes or corrections in a document. It includes alterations to the text itself, moving or copying items to other locations and applying formatting options to the document itself and items within it.

Footer: The footer is an area that appears at the bottom of every page in a document that can contain one or more lines of text. One common use of the footer is to insert the current page number on every page in the document.

Font: A font is a set of letters and numbers of one particular typeface. The font includes not only the typeface, but other characteristics such as size, spacing and emphasis. An example of a font would be Arial, 12 point, italic.

Formatting: The process of formatting a document involves specifying how the document will look in its final form on the screen and when printed. Common formatting options include the font, font size, color, alignment, spacing, margins and other properties.

Header: The header is an area that appears at the top of every page in a document that can contain one or more lines of text. One common use of the header is to include information about the document (such as the title) on every page in the document.

Highlighting / Selecting: Highlighting (or Selecting) an object or area of text is typically the first step to making a change to that item. When an item is highlighted (or selected) the next action (whether it be formatting, deleting, copying, or cutting) will typically only affect that item. Items are usually highlighted (selected) using the mouse by clicking in the starting position (and holding down the mouse button) and dragging to the end of the area that you want to select.

Indent: The space between the margin of the page and the text. Most word processors allow for both left and right indentation. One other common use of indentation is what is known as a "first line indent" where only the first line of a paragraph is indented and the remaining lines of text lie directly against the left margin of the page.

Insertion Point/ Cursor: The insertion point (also known as the cursor) is a flashing vertical bar on the screen that indicates where entered text or objects will be placed in the document. To place the insertion point to a new location in your document, you would move your mouse pointer to the new location and click the left mouse button once. The flashing insertion point should now appear in the new location and any text typed or object inserted will be placed there.

Landscape: Page orientation refers to the way the rectangular page is turned or positioned for viewing or printing. The two types of orientation in word processing are portrait and landscape. Portrait orientation is where the height of the page is greater than the width. Landscape orientation, on the other hand, has a greater width than height (the page is turned on its side).

Legal Size: The term "Legal" in the page layout area of a word processing application refers to the size of the paper being used to print the document. The dimensions of legal sized paper are 8.5 X 14 inches.

Letter Size: The term "Letter" in the page layout area of a word processing application refers to the size of the paper being used to print the document. The dimensions of letter sized paper are 8.5 X 11 inches.

Line Spacing: Line spacing refers to the amount of white space between lines of text in a paragraph. Commonly used line spacing settings are single spaced and double spaced.

Margin: The margin is the white space between the edge of the page and where text or other items can be placed in your document. Margin settings can be adjusted to include more or less space around the edge of the page and left, right, top and bottom margins can be changed independently of one another.

Menu Bar: The menu bar typically appears at the top of the word processing application's window and contains a listing of the main commands in the form of text. Menu items that are common among multiple applications include File, Edit, View and Help. When you click on one of these items, additional options appear in a drop-down menu on the screen.

Paragraph: In a word processing document, a new paragraph is created each time the enter key on the keyboard is pressed. A paragraph can be made up of several lines of text, a single item, or nothing at all. Microsoft Word has a view that will show you where each paragraph in a document begins or ends.

Paragraph Spacing: Paragraph spacing refers to the amount of white space that is left between paragraphs when the enter key is hit. Unlike line spacing, paragraph spacing does not affect the amount of space between lines of text, but instead, between one paragraph and the next.

Pasting: After text or another item is cut or copied it is placed on the clipboard. The process of pasting takes the item on the keyboard and places it in current location of the insertion point.

Portrait: If the page layout indicates Portrait page orientation, the vertical edge of the paper is larger than the horizontal edge. Portrait orientation is the most common orientation in word processing. Landscape (where the horizontal edge is larger than the vertical edge) is the other option.

Print Preview: Print Preview is a word processing feature that will show you what your document will look like on a piece of paper if it were to be printed.

Rulers: The rulers appear at the top and side of the document within the word processing window and are used to show the position of the margins, tabs, indents, columns, rows and other items that are set for the document.

Scroll Bars: Since many documents are too long to fit legibly on a single computer screen, vertical and horizontal scroll bars are included to allow you to move through the document and change the area of the document that is currently being viewed on the screen.

Selecting / Highlighting: Selecting (or Highlighting) an object or area of text is typically the first step to making a change to that item. When an item is selected (or highlighted) the next action (whether it be formatting, deleting, copying, or cutting) will typically only affect that item. Items are usually selected (or highlighted) using the mouse by clicking in the starting position (and holding down the mouse button) and dragging to the end of the area that you want to select.

Spelling / Grammar Checker: Most word processing programs include a utility that checks for proper spelling and grammar. Depending on the application being used, these utilities may run automatically and alert you to errors as you type (such as in Microsoft Word) or require you to run the utility manually. Either way, you typically will be given options as to whether or not to accept the changes suggested by the utility. The exception to this would be if AutoCorrect is turned on and the item in question appears in the AutoCorrect listing.

Tabs: Tabs are used to control the placement of text on a page. Tab stops can be set within the ruler at the top of the word processing window. In addition to the location of a tab (example: 2 inches in from the left margin), the type of tab can also be set. Common tab types include left, right, centered and decimal. The tab type controls how the text will be aligned if it is forced to that tab stop. When the tab key is pressed on the keyboard, the cursor will move to the next tab stop location.

Table: A table is a collection of text, data or other items that are arranged in columns and rows.

Template: A template is a starting point for a document that contains initial formatting options, settings, colors, layout and placeholders. A typical blank document begins with the "Normal" template, but sometimes it is a time saver to begin with a preformatted template when creating a more advanced document (such as a brochure or flyer).

Tool bar: A tool bar consists of buttons that provide a shortcut way of performing a commonly used function. There are many different toolbars that exist in word processing applications, each of which focuses on a particular topic or category.

Typeface: The typeface determines the shape of the letters and numbers in a document. Common typefaces include Times New Roman and Arial. A collection of letters and numbers of one particular typeface makes up a Font.

Undo: The "Undo" command can be used to reverse the last action (or series of actions) that you have performed in a document. When using the Undo command, each item must be reversed sequentially, meaning that if you would like to undo the action you took 7 actions ago, you would first need to undo actions 1 through 6 as well.

Word Processing: Word Processing refers to the act of using a computer to create, edit, save and print documents.

Word Wrap: Word Wrap refers to the function of a word processor that will automatically force text to a new line when the right margin is reached while typing. Word Wrap eliminates the need for pressing the Enter key on the keyboard at the end of every line.