

Chapter 1

Hello, Word!

In This Chapter

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 - ▶ Deciphering the Word screen
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Life would be easier if you used a pencil to write text. You could grab a copy of *Pencils For Dummies* and be on your way. That book is far thinner than this one and has more illustrations, which some people find enriching. Your ambitions are most likely higher, which is why you've chosen, or had the choice thrust upon you, to use Microsoft Word as your text composition tool. That's a good decision, but Word remains a far, far more complex tool for composing text than a wooden cylinder filled with graphite.

Start Your Word Day

As computer software, Microsoft Word dwells in the realm of Windows. To get work done in Word, you must contend with the multitudinous ways available in Windows to run the Word program. These methods can vary from the obvious to the obnoxiously cryptic, so instead I present you with the three most common ways to start your Word day.

- ✓ Before you can use Word, your computer must be on and ready to work. So turn on your PC, laptop, or tablet if it's not already on and toasty. Log into Windows.
- ✓ Do not attempt to make toast in your computer.



- ✓ Ensure that you sport a proper posture as you write. Your wrists should be even with your elbows. Your head should tilt down only slightly, although it's best to look straight ahead. Keep your shoulders back and relaxed. Have a minion gently massage your feet.

Starting Word the traditional way

Propriety demands that I show the traditional, boring way to start Word. Let me be quick:

1. Press the Windows key on the keyboard.

The Windows key is adorned with the Windows logo icon, which I won't illustrate here because it's changed over the years. The key is nestled between the Ctrl and Alt keys to the left of the spacebar. A duplicate is found on the right side of the spacebar. Use either key.

2. Look for Microsoft Word on the Start menu.

The item might be titled Word or Word 2016 or something similar.

If you don't find Word right away in Windows 10, click the All Apps button to hunt it down. In Windows 7, click the All Programs button.

Sometimes Word is found on a Microsoft Office or Office 2016 submenu.

3. Click the Word icon or button to start the program.

Watch in amazement as the program unfurls on the screen.

Starting Word the best way

The *best* way to start Word, and the way I do it every day, is to click the Word icon on the taskbar. Word starts simply and quickly.

The issue, of course, is how to get the Word icon on the taskbar. Follow these steps:

1. Find the Word icon on the Start button's All Programs menu.

See the preceding section, Steps 1 and 2.

2. Right-click the Word icon.

3. Choose the command Pin to Taskbar.

The Word icon is *pinned* (permanently added) to the taskbar.

Starting Word in Windows 8 (for the few who still use Windows 8)

One of the reasons Windows 8 was so aggressively unpopular was that it eschewed the traditional Start button menu for a tile-based Start screen. If you're still burdened with Windows 8, or you run Windows 10 in Tablet mode, start Word by pressing the Windows key on the keyboard and then clicking the Word 2016 tile on the Start screen.

You can stick the Word icon to the taskbar, as described in this chapter: Click the Word tile on the Start screen and then choose the command Pin to Taskbar. (The Pin to Taskbar command is at the bottom of the screen.)

Opening a document to start Word

You use the Word program to create *documents*, which are stored on your computer in much the same way as people pile junk into boxes and store them in their garages. To start Word, open a document. Follow these steps:



1. Locate the document icon.

Use your Windows kung fu to open the proper folders and hunt down a Word document icon, similar to what's shown in the margin.

2. Double-click the icon.

This step is a standard Word operation: Double-click an icon to open a program. In this case, opening a Word document starts Word.

The document is opened and presented on the screen, ready for whatever.

- ✓ You use Word to create documents. They're saved to storage on your computer or in the cloud. Details are offered in Chapter 8.
- ✓ The document name is assigned when it's originally saved. Use the name to determine the document's contents — providing that it was properly named when first saved.
- ✓ Document icons are managed by Windows. If you need to find a lost document, rename it, or organize your documents into a folder, you use Windows, not Word.

Behold the Word Program

Like all programs in Windows, Word offers its visage in a program window. It's the place where you get your word-processing work done.

Working the Word Start screen

After starting Word, the first thing you may see is something called the Word Start screen, as shown in Figure 1-1. It's friendlier than that ominous empty page that's intimidated writers since the dawn of paper. (The blank page comes later.)

You can use the Start screen to open a previously opened document, start a new document based on a template, or start with a blank document.



Previously opened documents are listed on the left side of the window, as illustrated in Figure 1-1. Word's templates are found under the heading Featured. Templates you've created appear under the Personal link. Click a template thumbnail to create a new document based on that template.

To start on a blank document, click the Blank Document template. Then you see the ominous empty page, which I wrote about earlier.

Once you've made your choice, Word is ready for you to start writing. Word is also equally content if you just stare at the screen and await inspiration.



- ✓ The Word Start screen doesn't appear if you start Word by opening a document. See the earlier section, "Opening a document to start Word."
- ✓ You can also disable the Start screen so that Word starts with a blank document. See Chapter 33.
- ✓ The Word Start screen appears only when you first start Word. It does not appear if you start a new document while the Word program window is already open.

Examining Word's main screen

Writing is scary enough when you first see the blank page. With a computer, that level of terror just isn't good enough. Therefore, Word festoons its program window with all kinds of controls. I recommend that you refer to Figure 1-2 to get an idea of some basic terms. Ignore them at your peril.

The details of how all the gizmos and whatnot in the Word window work are covered throughout this book. They give you more control over your document, although the basic task of typing text is pretty straightforward. See Chapter 2 to get started.



- ✓ To get the most from Word's window, adjust the window size: Use the mouse to drag the window's edges outwards. You can also click the window's Maximize button (refer to Figure 1-2) to have the window fill the screen.
- ✓ The largest portion of Word's screen is used to compose text. It's blank and white, just like a fresh sheet of paper. If you choose to use a template to start a new document, this area may contain some preset text.

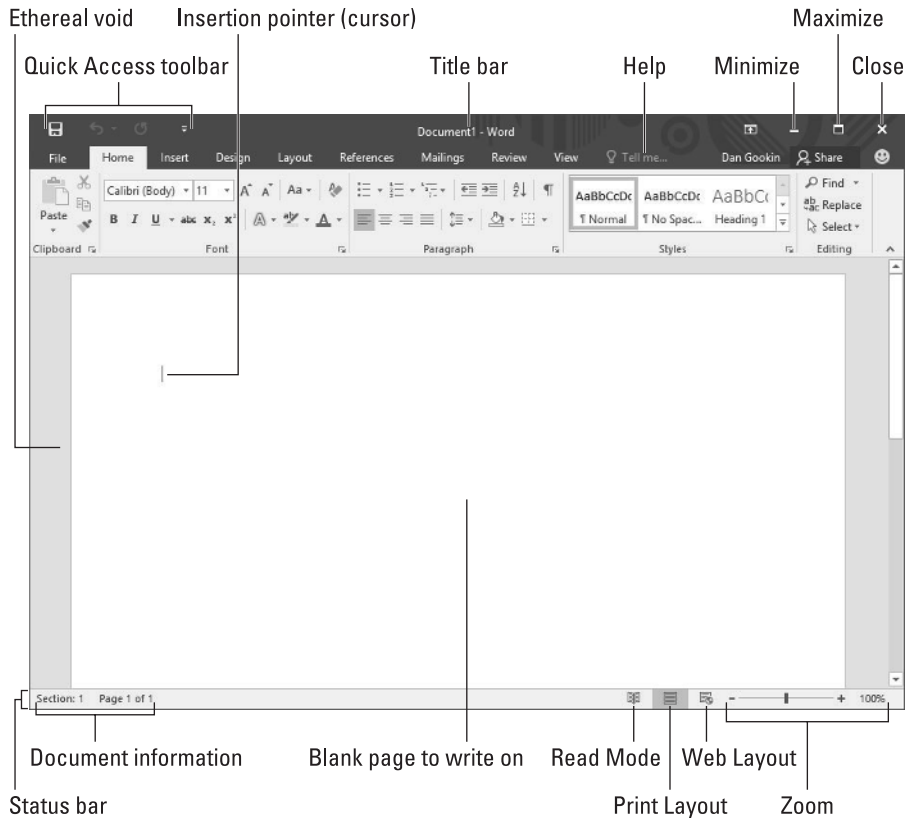


Figure 1-2:
Word's
visage.

Working the Ribbon

An important part of Word's interface is the Ribbon. It's where a majority of Word's commands dwell and where settings are made. These items appear as buttons, input boxes, and menus.

The Ribbon is divided into tabs, as shown in Figure 1-3. Each tab holds separate groups. Within the groups, you find the command buttons that carry out various word-processing duties.

To use the Ribbon, first click a tab. Then locate the command you need by scanning the group names, and then hunting down the button. Click the button to activate the command or to display a menu from which you can choose a command.

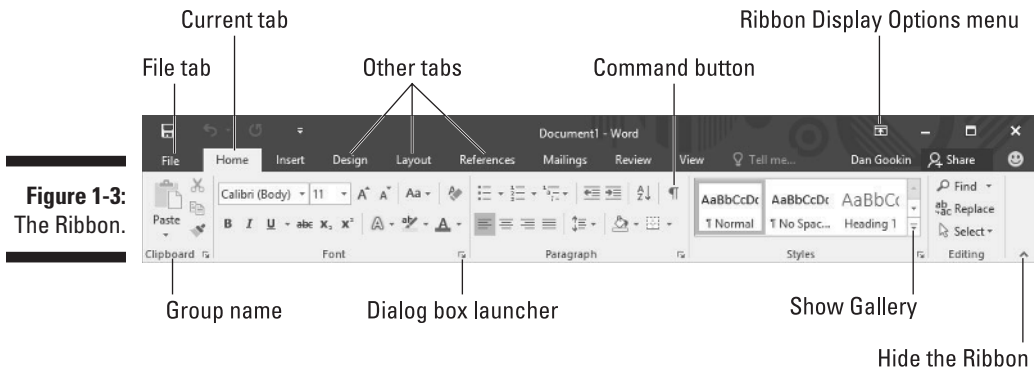


Figure 1-3:
The Ribbon.

- ✓ Some items on the Ribbon let you input text or values, or make other settings.
- ✓ Galleries on the Ribbon display a smattering of tiles. To see them all, click the Show Gallery button in the lower-right corner of the gallery, as illustrated in Figure 1-3.
- ✓ Use the dialog box launcher icon in the lower-right corner of a group to open a dialog box relevant to the group's function. Not every group features a dialog box launcher.
- ✓ The amazingly frustrating thing about the Ribbon is that it can change. Some tabs may appear and disappear, depending on what you're doing in Word.
- ✓ To ensure that you always see all the command buttons, adjust the program's window as wide as is practical.
- ✓ Clicking the File tab replaces the contents of the Word window with a screen full of commands and other information. To return to the Word window, click the Back button (shown in the margin) or press the Esc key.



Showing and hiding the Ribbon

The good news is that you can hide the Ribbon if it bothers you. That way you see more document and less junk. The bad news is that you might accidentally hide the Ribbon when you don't want to.

To control the Ribbon, use the Ribbon Display Options menu, located in the upper-right part of the Word window and illustrated in Figure 1-3. Choose an item to determine how to display the Ribbon. Your choices are

Auto-Hide Ribbon: The most annoying choice, the Ribbon appears only when you hover the insertion pointer near the top of the document.

Show Tabs: With this choice, only the Ribbon's tabs appear. Click a tab to summon the rest of the Ribbon.

Show Tabs and Commands: This option shows the entire Ribbon — tabs and commands — as illustrated in Figures 1-2 and 1-3.

To temporarily hide the Ribbon, click the Hide the Ribbon button, labeled in Figure 1-3. To bring back the Ribbon, click a tab and then at the spot where the Hide the Ribbon button appears. Click the pushpin icon to make the Ribbon stick.



I recommend that you keep the Ribbon visible as you discover the wonders of Word.

Changing the document view

Just to keep you on your toes, Word offers multiple ways to view your document. The blank area where you write, which should be full of text by now, can be altered to present information in a different way. Why would you want to do that? You don't! But it helps to know the different ways so that you can change them back.

The standard way to view a document is called Print Layout view. It's the view shown in this book and it's how Word normally starts. A virtual page appears on the screen, with four sides and text in the middle. What you see on the screen is pretty much what you'll see in the final results, whether printed or published as an electronic document.

The other views are

Read Mode: Use this view to read a document like an eBook. The Ribbon and pretty much the rest of Word is hidden while in Read mode.

Web Layout: This view presents your document as a web page. It's available should you undertake the dreadful possibility of using Word as a web page editor.

Outline: This mode helps you organize your thoughts, as covered in Chapter 25.

Draft: The Draft view presents only basic text, not all the formatting and fancy features such as graphics.

To switch between Read Mode, Print Layout, and Web Layout views, click one of the View buttons, found in the lower-right corner of the Word program window (refer to Figure 1-2).

To get to Outline and Draft views, as well as to see all View modes in one location, click the Views tab and choose a command button from the Views group.

Making text larger or smaller

When the information in Word's window just isn't big enough, don't enlarge the font! Instead, whip out the equivalent of a digital magnifying glass, the Zoom command. It helps you enlarge or reduce your document, making it easier to see or giving you the Big Picture look.

Several methods are available to zoom text in Word. The most obvious is to use the Zoom control found in the lower-right corner of the Word window on the status bar. Adjust the slider right or left to make the text larger or smaller, respectively.

To make the text appear on screen as close to actual size as possible, click the 100% button on the status bar.



- ✓ Zooming doesn't affect how a document prints — only how it looks on the screen.
- ✓ For more specific zoom control, click the View tab and use the commands found in the Zoom group.



- ✓ If the mouse has a wheel button, you can zoom by pressing the Ctrl key on your keyboard and rolling the wheel up or down. Rolling up zooms in; rolling down zooms out.

Cajoling Word to help you

Like most Windows programs, a Help system is available in Word. You can summon it by pressing the F1 key, which displays the Word Help window. There you can type a topic, a command name, or even a question in the box to search for help.

The F1 key also works any time you're deep in the bowels of Word and doing something specific. The Help information that's displayed

tends to be specific to whatever you're doing in Word. Little buttons that look like question marks also summon Word Help.

In the age of Google, Word also offers a Tell Me help box on the Ribbon, as illustrated in Figure 1-2. Type a topic or question in the box and press the Enter key to see a quick list of commands or suggestions, or to obtain online help.

End Your Word-Processing Day

It's the pinnacle of etiquette to know when and how to excuse oneself. For example, the phrase "Well, I must be off," works a lot better than growling, "Something more interesting must be happening anywhere else" — especially at Thanksgiving. The good news for Word is that's completely acceptable to quit the program without hurting its feelings.

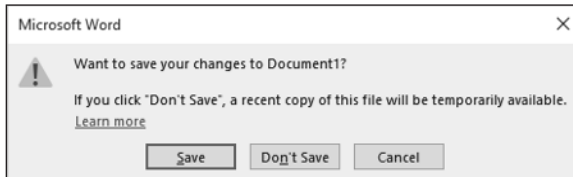
Quitting Word

When you've finished word processing and you don't expect to return to it anytime soon, you quit the Word program. Click the X button in the upper-right corner of the Word program window (refer to Figure 1-2).

The catch? You have to close each and every Word document window that's open before you can proclaim that you've completely quit Word.

The other catch? Word won't quit during that shameful circumstance when you have unsaved documents. If so, you're prompted to save the document, as shown in Figure 1-4. My advice is to click the Save button to save your work; refer to Chapter 8 for specifics on saving documents.

Figure 1-4:
Better click
that Save
button!



If you click the Don't Save button, your work isn't saved and Word quits. If you click the Cancel button, Word doesn't quit and you can continue working.

- ✓ You don't have to quit Word just to start editing another document. Refer to the next couple of sections for helpful, timesaving information.
- ✓ After quitting Word, you can continue to use Windows by starting any other program, such as Spider Solitaire or perhaps something more relaxing, like *Call of Duty*.

Closing a document without quitting Word

You don't always have to quit Word. For example, if you're merely stopping work on one document to work on another, quitting Word is a waste of time. Instead, you can *close* the document.

To close a document in Word and not quit, follow these steps:

1. Click the File tab.

The File screen appears. Commands line the left side of the screen, as shown in Figure 1-5.

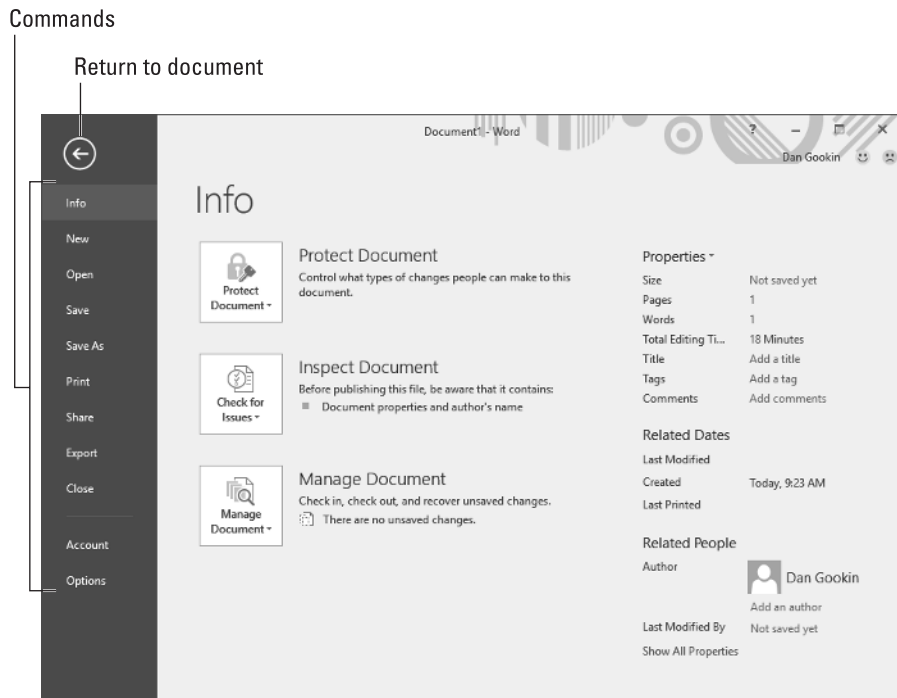


Figure 1-5:
The File tab
screen.

2. Choose the Close command.

3. Save the document, if you're prompted to do so.

The shame! Always save before closing. Tsk-tsk.

After it's closed, you return to the main Word window, although a document isn't shown and many of the command buttons are dimmed (unavailable). At this point, you can start working on a new document or open a document you previously saved.

Bottom line: There's no point in quitting Word when all you want to do is start editing a new document.



- ✓ There's no urgency to close a document. I keep mine open all day, even when I go off to do something un-work related like play a game or see who's being obnoxious on Facebook. To return to your document at any time, click its button on the Windows taskbar.
- ✓ The keyboard shortcut for the Close command is Ctrl+W. This command may seem weird, but it's used to close documents in many programs.
- ✓ To swiftly start a new, blank document in Word, press Ctrl+N.

Setting Word aside

Don't quit Word if you know that you will use it again soon. In fact, I've been known to keep Word open and running on my computer for *weeks* at a time. The secret is to use the Minimize button, found in the upper-right corner of the screen (refer to Figure 1-2).

Clicking the Minimize button shrinks the Word window to a button on the taskbar. With the Word window out of the way, you can do other things with your computer. Then when you're ready to word-process again, click the Word button on the taskbar to restore the Word window to the screen.