
Tools to Support Writing in Microsoft Word

Quick Guide

Created 04/00

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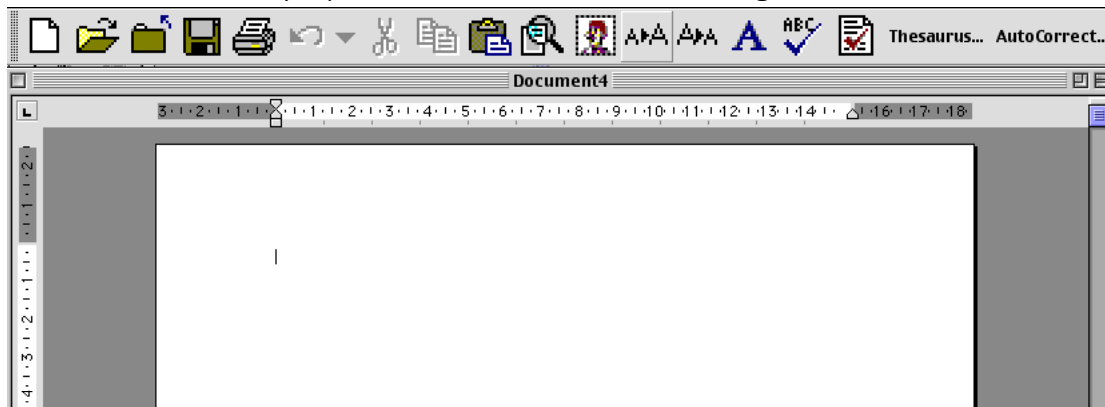
Microsoft Word has many facilities that can help writers with spelling and other writing difficulties. This sheet summarises the main tools.

Word Help Guide

The Word Help system gives more information on how to set up Word. Go to the 'Help' menu, and open 'Microsoft Word Help'. Type 'Accessibility' into the text box, and press return, you will be offered a description of the Word Accessibility features.

ToolBar

One of the potentially confusing aspects of Word is the toolbars at the top of the screen. You can choose to have fewer or no toolbars displayed; to choose what buttons you want in the toolbar, and to display the toolbar buttons in a larger size.



A simple writing ToolBar

The ToolBar shown has large buttons, and has commands to open, save, print etc; cut, copy and paste; swap between a small and magnified view; add clip art; grow and shrink font sizes and choose font; and use spell and grammar checkers, thesaurus and AutoCorrect.

To show or hide toolbars, select **ToolBars** from the **View** menu, and tick only those toolbars you want. For example, for a writing task, you might show only the Standard and Formatting toolbars.

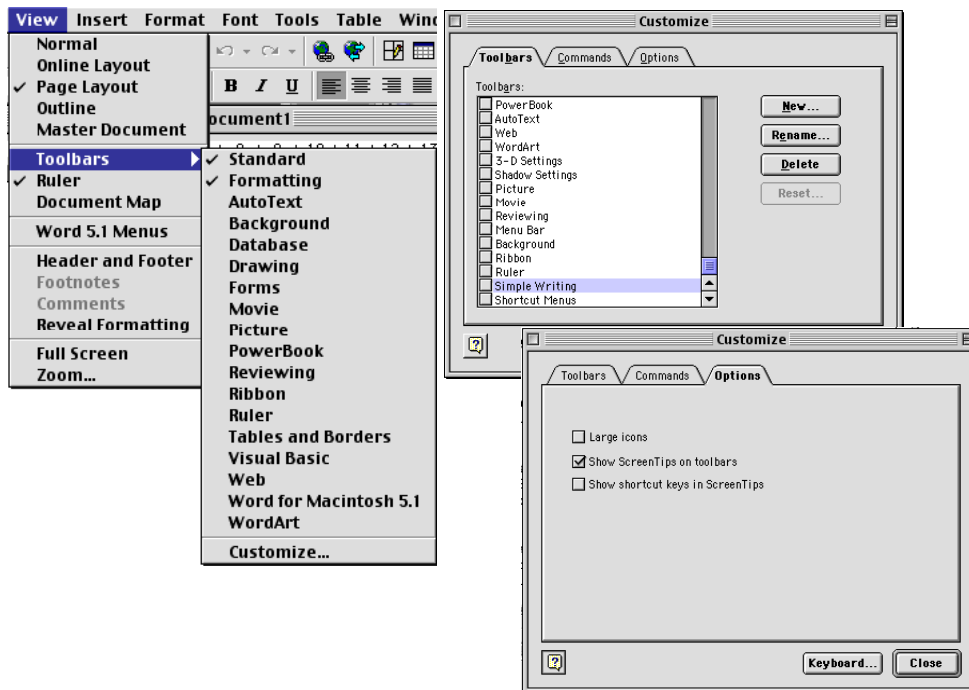


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To make the buttons larger, go to **View -> ToolBars -> Customize -> Options** and select the Large icons.

To customise or create a new ToolBar with only those buttons and commands you want, go to **Tools -> Customize -> ToolBars**, and add a new toolbar, or click on one of the existing ones. Then click 'Commands' to see the list of possible buttons that can be added to a Toolbar. To remove a button from the Toolbar, drag it from the Toolbar at the top of the screen and drop it off the end of the Toolbar. To add a new button to the toolbar, drag it from the 'Commands' list to the position in the Toolbar you want it to appear.



Creating Templates

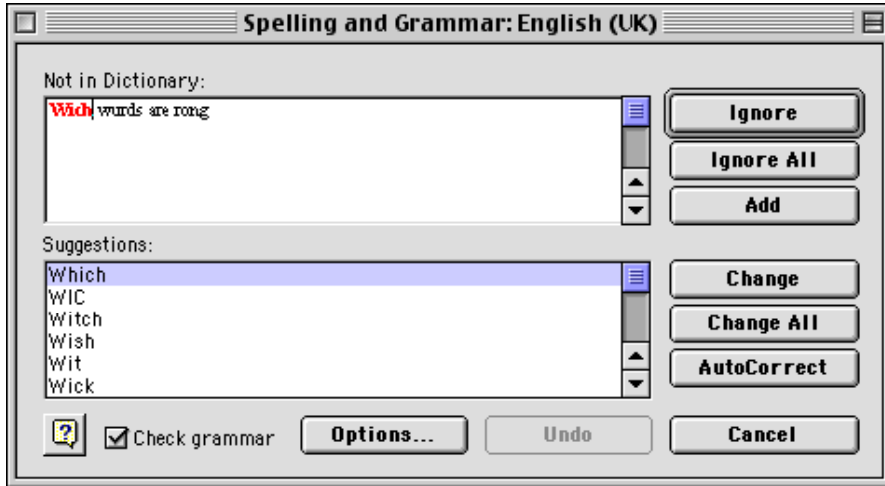
Templates let you create documents with the correct font, headings and subject already set up. To create a document template:

1. Open a new document
2. Select the preferred font, set a preferred size and style e.g. Helvetica, 14 point, bold.
3. Add in any text in the Header and/or Footer. For example, the Header might include 'Essay/Project/Report by'. The footer might include Page Number, Date, Subject area.
4. Save the document as a template by going to **File -> Save as**.
 - ❑ Give the document a name such as 'Writing template'.
 - ❑ Choose the folder to store it in, or create a new folder, give it a name. (The pupil might wish to have a folder of his own templates - one for English literature, one for worksheets etc.)
 - ❑ Click on Save File as...
 - ❑ Drag down to *Stationery*
 - ❑ Click Save.

- If required, create a short cut on the desktop to open the template from the desktop.

Spellchecker

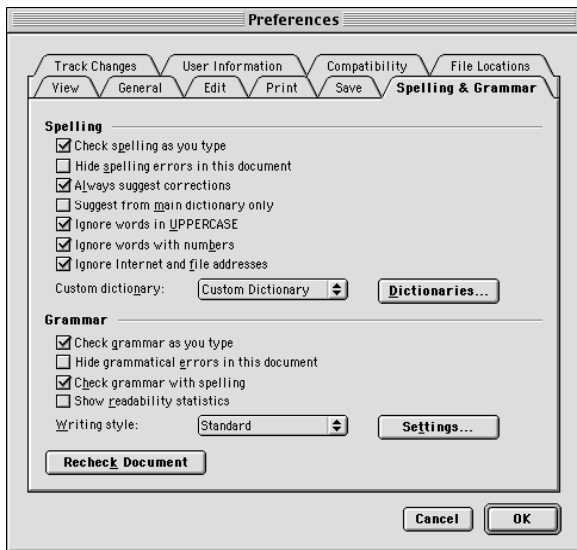
The standard Word spell-checker is quite good at recognising spelling mistakes and offering correct spellings.



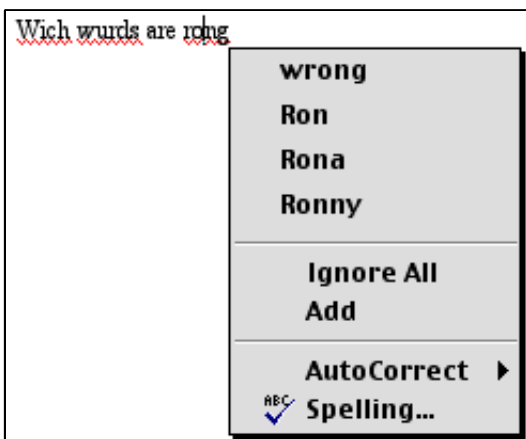
To use the spellchecker to check the complete document, press F7 (⇧ F7 on a Mac), or choose **Spelling** from the **Tools** menu.

To spell-check a particular word or section of text, highlight the text and then press F7 (⇧ F7 on a Mac).

When Word comes across a word it does not know in the document, it offers a list of likely alternatives.



The Word 7 spell-checker can automatically check words as you type and underline suspect words with a red wavy line to draw your attention to them. Possible grammatical errors are marked with a green line. If you want to switch this feature off, go to **Tools -> Options (Preferences on a Mac)**, click on the **Spelling and Grammar** tab, and then turn off **Check Spelling as you type**.



A quick way of spell checking a particular word is to point or click on it, and then click the right hand mouse button. (On a Mac, hold down the Ctrl key when you click.)

Two common difficulties with the Word spell-checker are:

- You may not be able to recognise the correct word from the spellchecker's list of offerings.
- You have to type the word reasonably accurately

for the spellchecker to offer anything at all, and with longer, more complicated words this may be a problem.

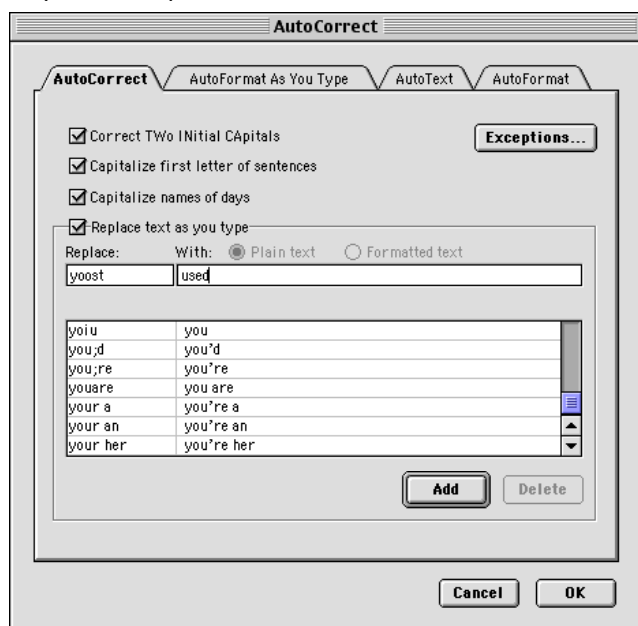
If you cannot recognise the word in the list, you should look at **Talking First Word**, **TextHELP!**, **KeySpell** or **Write:Outloud 3**, which all have talking spell-checkers (addresses at the end of this sheet).

If your spelling is too bizarre for the spell-checker to cope with, consider some of the options described below.

AutoCorrect and AutoText

The Word **AutoCorrect** facility automatically replaces a mis-spelling with a correctly spelled word. It is designed to fix typing errors - say replace 'tch' with 'the' - but you can also use it to pick up more difficult words, and so that you just have to type a short abbreviation instead of the whole word.

Suppose you always spell 'used' as 'yoost'. Open AutoCorrect by clicking on **Tools -> AutoCorrect**. Type 'yoost' into the 'Replace' box, and the 'used' into the 'With' box. Click on **Add** and then **OK** to close AutoCorrect. Now, when you type 'yoost' it will automatically be replaced by 'used'.

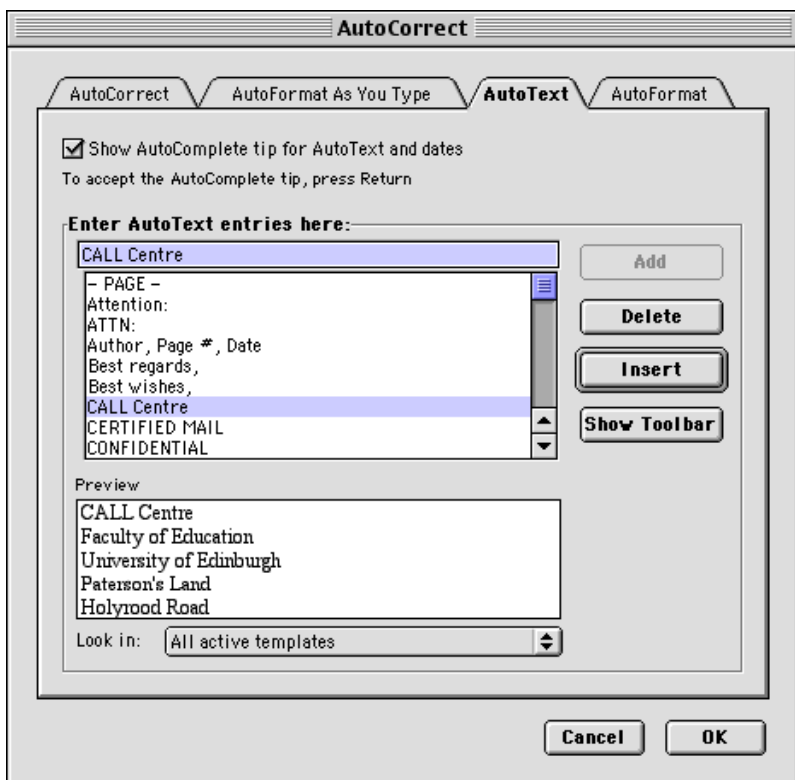


An easy way to put lots of alternative spellings into the Auto-correct dictionary is to add them when you spell-check. If the correct spelling is offered, just click on 'Auto-correct' and the word pair will be automatically added to the Auto-correct dictionary.

You can add several mis-spellings, each with the correct spelling, to the AutoCorrect dictionary. Suppose you always have problems spelling 'anyone', spelling it as 'enyon', 'enywon' or 'enywone'. You could add all three mis-spellings to AutoCorrect, so that no matter which spelling you typed, the correct word would always be typed into the text.

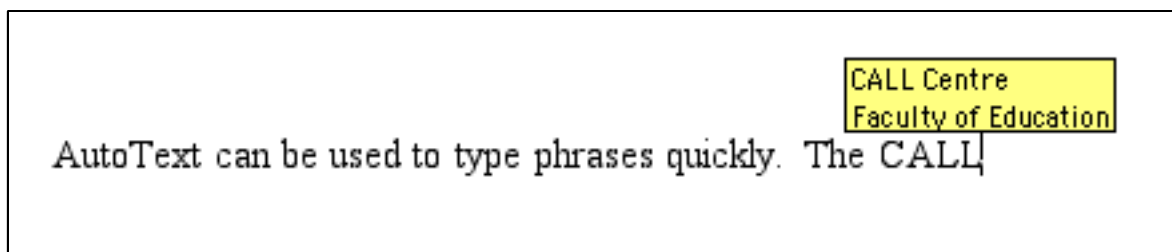
You can also use AutoCorrect to store short abbreviations for longer, difficult words, for example 'establishment' or 'bourgeoisie'. Add them with a short abbreviation that you will be able to remember and spell - say 'est' for 'establishment' and 'brg' for 'bourgeoisie'. Then every time you type 'est' followed by a space, Auto-correct will replace it with 'establishment'. When you type 'brg' followed by a space, 'bourgeoisie' will be inserted. Remember it's important to choose an abbreviation which is not a whole word - you wouldn't use 'an' as an abbreviation for 'anthropology' for example.

AutoText is designed for storing and retrieving words, phrases or graphics. For example, you might want to add an AutoText item to type your address quickly. Type it out, and then copy it to the clipboard. Click on **Tools -> AutoCorrect -> AutoText** and you will see the first line of the text as the entry, and the entire text shown in the Preview box.



Click on **Add** to add the entry to the list.

Then, when you start to type the abbreviation - for example **CALL**, the phrase will be offered in a small box. If you want it inserted into the text, press **Enter**, otherwise press **Esc**.



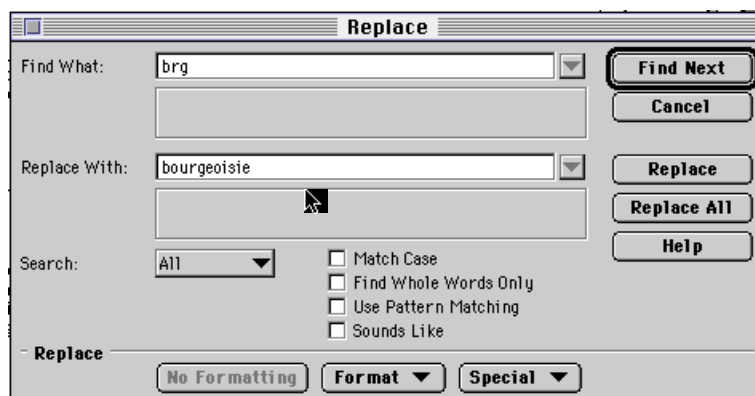
Find and Replace

Another technique is to use **Find and Replace** as a 'manual' version of the Auto-correct feature.

First, build a word list of all the words with which you have difficulty, correctly spelt. If you create the word list in a Word table, you can easily sort it alphabetically. Save the list in a file.

When you are writing, use a short abbreviation for the longer word - say 'brg' for 'bourgeoisie' again. After you are finished the text, open up your word list file, find

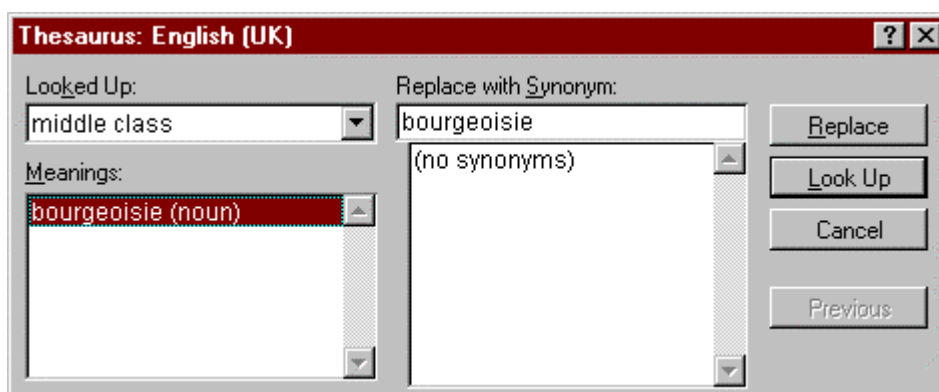
'bourgeoisie', copy it into the clipboard, then paste it into the 'Find and Replace' facility in Word, and replace 'brg' with 'bourgeoisie' throughout the text.



Thesaurus

Sometimes the Word thesaurus can be used to help you spell difficult words. Suppose you have problems with 'bourgeoisie': type 'middle class', highlight it and press SHIFT+F7 (Shift + F7 for a Mac) to ask for an alternative.

This only works when you can think of short words that mean the same as the longer one you want, so it's not a universal solution.



Word Lists

Many dyslexic writers know which words are going to be a problem in advance, so one technique is to get someone to help you create your own 'dictionary' of these words and store it on the hard disc. You could have lists for different subjects, or organise them alphabetically - use a MS Word table to create lists in alphabetic order. When you start to write, open the word list and copy and paste the difficult words from the list into the document. **Talking Word for Windows** and **Talking First Word** have word lists built-in which you can customise for your own subjects and interests. **WordBar** is a popular program that can be used to create word lists, organised alphabetically or by topic.

Text to speech output

Some writers find it helpful to have the computer read out the text using synthetic speech. This can be helpful to review and proof read text, or to echo back each word or sentence as it is typed, to check for accuracy and sense. Word on PC does not have text to speech output built in, but you can add it with other programs. (Word 98 on the Mac does have a text to speech facility.)

Talking Word for Windows, Talking First Word, textHELP! and **KeySpell** can all add text to speech to Word on the PC. The first two programs are designed for younger writers and so present the writer with a simplified toolbar, as well as adding speech. Note that Talking Word for Windows only works with Word 2 or Word 6 - it does not work with Word 97.

TextHELP! and **KeySpell** are designed for older writers and have fairly sophisticated text to speech output, plus other facilities like their own specialist spellchecking systems.

Software

Talking Word for Windows, £41, from REM

Talking First Word, £69 from RM (supplied with many Window Box systems).

textHELP! Read and Write, £115, from iANSYST, Inclusive Technology, REM

KeySpell, £69, from iANSYST, Inclusive Technology, Words Worldwide.

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