

Basic Computer Skills: Windows

Course Description

This course is designed to teach the basics of Microsoft's Windows operating system. The purpose of the class is to provide a beginning computer user with the necessary skills and knowledge to use their mouse, manage their virtual desktop, organize information, and to perform various "housekeeping" tasks that enhance their computer workspace.

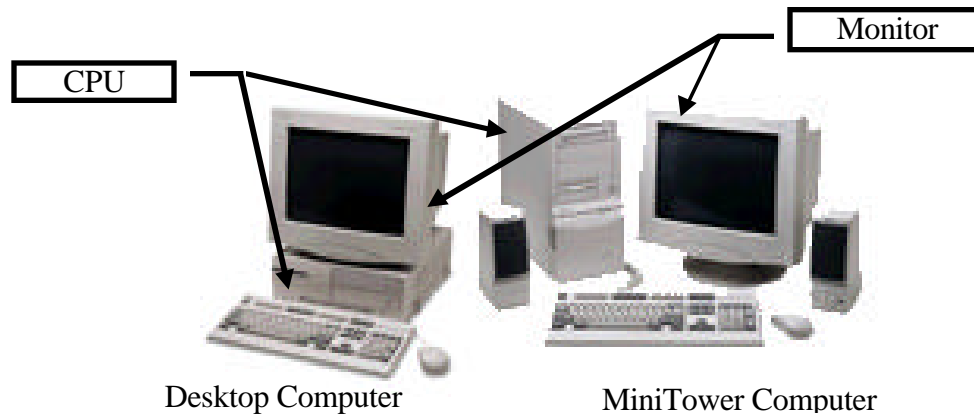
Objectives

At the end of the workshop, you will be able to:

- Turn the computer on and off.
- Demonstrate the five basic mouse skills: 1) Point, 2) Left-click, 3) Right-click, 4) Double-click and 5) Drag.
- Identify major components of a typical window.
- Use the Windows workspace as a virtual “desktop”.
- Locate the Start Button and use it to launch programs or other actions.
- Move and use desktop windows.
- Perform window functions: maximize, minimize, scroll, resize, move, and close.
- Use the Recycle Bin to delete files.
- Organize your files into an information hierarchy.
- Use the Task Bar.
- Format a floppy disk.

Starting Up

To start a Windows computer you simply turn on the power switch which is usually on the front of the central processing unit (CPU). You may also need to turn on the power to the monitor. Sometimes (especially on older computers) the power switch is located in the back.



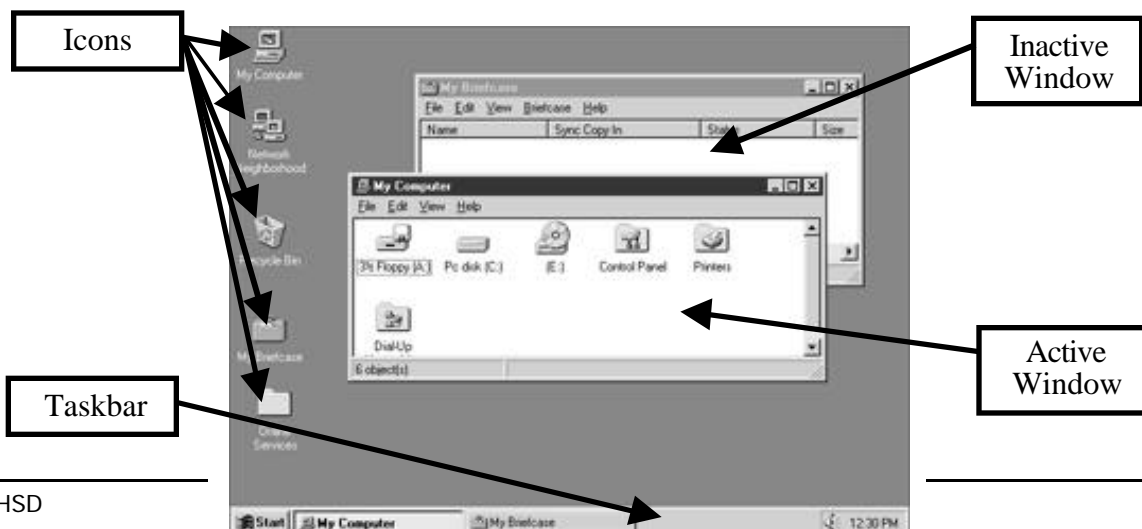
The Desktop

The screen on the computer monitor is the Windows “desktop.” It was designed to emulate a work area in an office or home. It can be thought of as an electronic version of the top of your desk. You can:

- move objects around on the desktop
- look at them as you need
- organize them in folders

At the bottom of your screen, there is a horizontal, gray bar called the Task Bar. It is always available, and has some special features that we’ll discuss later.

Review the picture on the next page for names of standard desktop items.



A mouse is a pointing device attached to the computer by a cable. The Windows mouse has two active buttons. They are the “left” mouse button and the “right” mouse button.

The left button is usually the **primary** button for a right-handed person, and the right is the **secondary** button. (If you are left-handed, ask your instructor to help you reconfigure your mouse.)

Using the mouse, you can perform the following operations: 1) Point, 2) Left-click, 3) Right-click, 4) Double-click, 5) Drag.

□ **Point**

“Point” means you move the mouse across a flat surface until the mouse pointer (↖) rests on the item of choice on the desktop (the screen). The very tip of the arrow is the “hot spot” and determines what you are pointing to.

As you move the mouse across a flat surface, the movement of a ball in the underside of the mouse is electronically sensed, and the mouse pointer moves across the desktop in the same direction.

□ **Click**

“Click” means you press and then immediately release the primary mouse button. It makes a clicking sound. Usually, you will point to an item on the screen before clicking. When you click on an item, it usually highlights (changes color). A highlighted item is said to be “selected”.

□ **Right-click**

Press and immediately release the secondary mouse button. As with the primary mouse button, you often point to an item or region on the screen before right-clicking.

□ **Drag**

Point to an item. While holding primary mouse button down, move the mouse. The item should move to a new location. When it is where you want it, release the mouse button.

Practice by dragging the “My Computer” icon to a different location on the desktop. Then return it to its original location.

□ Double-click

Quickly press and release the primary mouse button twice without moving the mouse. In most cases you will point to an item before you double-click.

Double-clicking is the most difficult mouse skill to learn. Many people have a tendency to move the mouse before completing the double-click action. If the mouse moves between clicks, the computer registers your action as two separate clicks rather than one double-click. Practice will help you get past this problem if you encounter it.

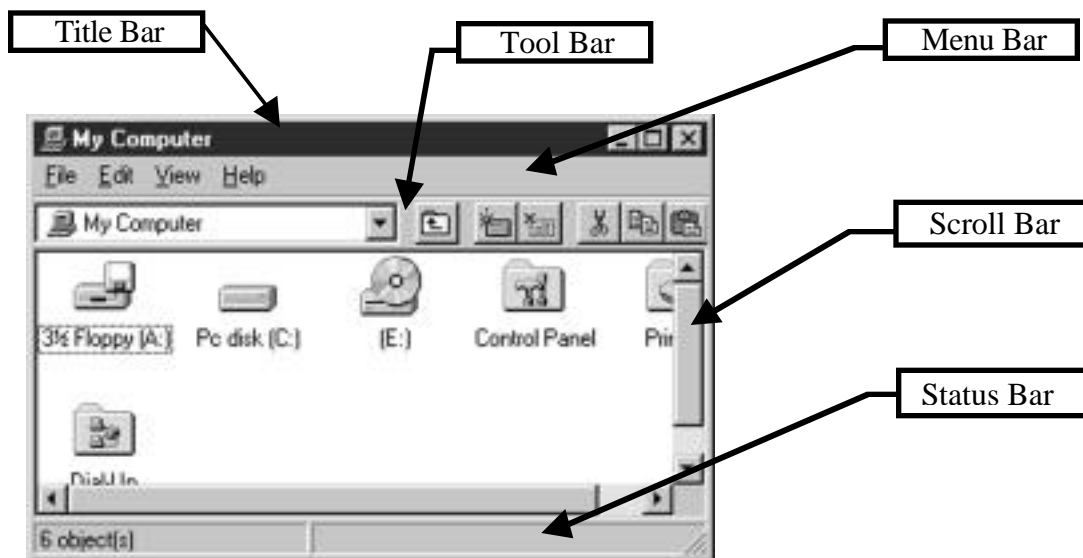
As an exercise, point to “My Computer” and double-click. When you double-click correctly, a window titled “My Computer” will open up.

Windows

This is what Windows is all about – windows! Any work that you do on your computer is done inside a window. You may have just one, or several windows open at once, and you can move information from one window to another.

There are many parts of a typical window that you can manipulate and control in order to suit your own work style.

You have already opened a window called “My Computer” by double-clicking its icon. It should look something like the diagram below. Take a moment now to familiarize yourself with the names of some of the parts.



Your window may not look exactly like this one, but it is important for you to know the location of the five Bars: The Title Bar, Menu Bar, Tool Bar, Scroll Bar, and Status Bar.

In addition to the Bars shown in the diagram, you may find a horizontal Scroll Bar along the bottom of the window.

□ **Title Bar**

- Displays the name of a window. You can move a window by dragging its Title Bar.
- If the window is *inactive*, the title bar is gray. When the window is *active*, the Title Bar is another color – usually blue.
- The Title Bar also contains the Minimize, Maximize and Close Buttons, which we will explore later.

□ **Menu Bar**

The Menu Bar has several words on it. Each word contains a pulldown menu. Click on a word in the Menu Bar to reveal its menu. Move your mouse over another Menu Bar word to reveal a different menu.

The words and commands available in the Menu Bar will change depending on what application is open in the window. The Menu Bar is “context sensitive.”

□ **Tool Bar**

- The Tool Bar offers you quick access to often-used functions like Cut, Paste and Undo.
- You can also use the Tool Bar to access other areas of your computer where information is stored.

□ **Status Bar**

The Status Bar gives you information about the number of icons in the window, the memory requirements, and other context sensitive information.

□ **Scroll Bar**

The Scroll Bars allow you to view icons that are outside the current boundaries of the window.

The Task Bar

Across the bottom of your screen, you'll see the Task Bar.



Task Bar






One of the most important features of the Task Bar is the Start Button on the left side. The Start Button contains a popup menu that gives you access to many programs and features on your computer.

To the right of the Start Button you'll see buttons for each open window. The Task Bar gives you easy access to all the windows you have open. As we go through this lesson, you'll use the Task Bar to switch back and forth between different windows.

Moving and Resizing Windows

You have several options for changing the position and size of windows on your desktop. As you become more and more familiar with how your computer works, you will begin to see the advantages of having more than one window open at a time. You'll need to know how to keep things neat, and how to get at what you want when you want it. This section helps you manage the size, location and appearance of windows on your desktop.

- **Minimize Button** 
 - The Minimize Button looks like a minus sign and is located on the right side of the Title Bar.
 - When you click the Minimize Button, the window collapses and its title appears in the Task Bar at the bottom of your screen.
 - To redisplay the window, just click on its title on the Task Bar. It will return to its previous size and location.

- **Maximize  and Restore  Buttons**
 - The Maximize Button is also located at the right side of the Title Bar.

- When you click the Maximize Button, the window expands to fill the entire screen and the appearance of the button changes.
- Click the same button again to return the window to its original size (restore). Note that restoring is not the same thing as minimizing.

□ **Close Button**

- This button closes the window and removes the window's name from the Status Bar.
- Practice opening and closing "My Computer".

□ **Resizing a window**

- To resize, you need to drag the lower right corner of the window. When your cursor is positioned over the resizing area, it turns into a two-headed arrow.
- Drag the bottom right corner of the window to resize. Release the mouse button when the window is the size you want.
- Dragging down or to the right makes the window bigger.
- Dragging up or to the left makes the window smaller.
- You can also drag the left and right edges of a window to resize it.
- As an exercise, use the "My Computer" window and change its size several times.

□ **Scrolling a Window**

You can use the Scroll Bars to view contents of a window that are currently outside the viewable area. If your window doesn't show any Scroll Bars right now, resize it smaller until one or both Scroll Bars appears. There are three ways to scroll:



Click the Scroll Arrows at either end of the Scroll Bar.

Drag the Scroll Box.

Click on the Scroll Bar itself.

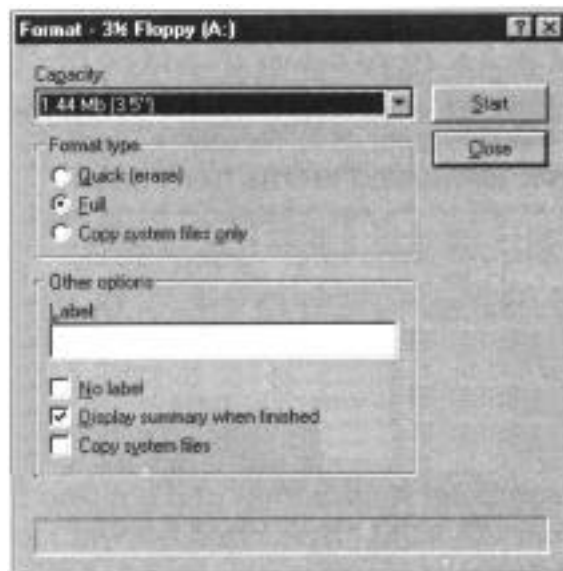
It may be more effective and save time to avoid scrolling by resizing a window to its maximum size.

Format a Floppy Disk

Floppy disks must be formatted (initialized) before they can be used. The formatting procedure prepares the disk to receive information from the computer. This operation only needs to be done once on each new disk. If you buy preformatted disks, the procedure has already been done for you.

IMPORTANT: If you format a disk that already has information on it, all that information will be lost. Generally, you will only want to format brand new disks.

- Begin by applying a label to your 3 1/2 floppy disk. Unlabeled disks can be real time waster.
- Insert your disk into the drive.
- Double-click on My Computer.
- Right-click the mouse on drive A: to display the shortcut menu.
- Click Format. The format dialog box will appear.
- Verify that the format settings are as in the diagram at the right. Capacity should be 1.44 MB and format type should be Full.
- Click the Start Button. You'll hear the disk drive start up as the process begins. It takes a minute or two. Relax.
- When the formatting is complete, you'll get a display of statistics about your disk. There really isn't anything here that is terribly important. Click the Close Button. Your disk is formatted.



Creating and Saving Documents

In order to use your computer effectively, you must know how to save your work. In this section of the workshop you'll start the Notepad program and create a document. Since you may want to take a copy of your work home with you, you'll begin by formatting a floppy disk.

- Start a program.
- Click the Start Button on the Task Bar.
- Point to Programs.
- Point to Accessories on the Programs submenu.
- Point to Notepad on the Accessories submenu.
- Click Notepad.

You have started the Notepad program. It opens a new, blank window in which you can enter text.

□ Create a document

To create the document in Notepad, you must type the text you need in the document. At the end of each line of text, press the enter key to indicate the end of the line of text.

□ Save a document

Now that you have created a document, you'll want to save it. Windows allows you to save your work in many different places. Let's save this document to your floppy disk.

- In the Notepad window, click File in the Menu Bar.
- Click Save As. You'll get a dialogue box that looks something like this:



- Type a name for your document in the File name box.
- Double-click “3 1/2 Floppy {A:}” in the list of locations just above the file name. Notice that “3 1/2 Floppy {A:}” appears in the Save In Box at the top of the window.
- Click Save. You'll hear the disk start to spin as your file is stored on the disk.
- In the File Menu, choose Exit. This will close the Notepad program.
- You can verify that your document was save by double-clicking the “3 1/2 Floppy {A:}” icon. Your file should appear as an icon in the “3 1/2 Floppy

{A:}” window. If you double-click the icon, it will start the Notepad program and load your file.

- In order to complete the final portion of this workshop, you should now save another copy of your file onto the floppy disk under a different name. Repeat the steps above, but type in a different name in the Filename Box.

□ The Recycle Bin

Now that you have learned how to create documents, you need to know how to throw them away when you are finished with them. Your disk can only hold a certain amount of information, and eventually, you’ll have to get rid of something. When you want to throw something away, you use the Recycle Bin.



Using the Recycle Bin is a two step process. First you put something in the Recycle Bin. This tells the computer that you expect to get rid of it, but it isn’t gone yet. You can pull your file back out of the Recycle Bin if you discover you’ve made a mistake. Second, you tell the computer to empty the Recycle Bin. Once you have done this, your file is gone. (There is specialized software that can recover some deleted files, but it is not always completely successful.)

Let’s throw away the second file you created with Notepad.

1. Open the “3 1/2 Floppy {A:}” window by double clicking its icon.
2. If necessary, move the window so that you can see both the window and the Recycle Bin icon.
3. Drag your file’s icon from the My Computer window and put it on top of the Recycle Bin. Your file will disappear into the Recycle Bin.
4. When you are ready to completely delete your file, double-click the Recycle Bin to open it. In the File Menu, select Empty Recycle Bin. Your files will be deleted.

Organizing Your Files

As you begin to do more and more work with your computer, you will create many files. Each file will contain information associated with a particular project of event. For example, you may have a file that has all your grades for the fall semester, or files with pictures of your class, or your correspondence with parents of students in a particular class.

The hard drive on your computer can store hundreds of thousands of pages of information, much more than a typical four-drawer file cabinet can handle.

For you, the trick is to organize your files in a way that allows you to return to them when you need them. There are two keys to keeping your information accessible. First, you must know how to create folders. Second, you need to know how to save and retrieve files in a specific folder.

When you save a file on a computer, it works much the same as it does when you store a piece of paper in a file cabinet. You wouldn't toss out paper just anywhere in the file cabinet. You want to make sure that you know where your file is going when you store it on your hard drive as well. Fortunately, Windows '95 has some tools that help you do just that.

There are two categories of places where you can store your files:



Storage Media: This includes disk drives (floppy drives and hard drives), ZIP drives, tape drives, etc. The most common places to store your files are your hard drive or your floppy disk. Think of storage media as file cabinets. Some file cabinets are big (hard drive) and some are small (floppy disk). But they all store a lot of information.

Folders: *Folders reside on storage media* and offer you a means to categorize information. Folders on your computer work exactly like folders in your file cabinet: They subdivide your storage medium to help you keep things organized. There is one big difference between

folders on your disk and folders in your file cabinet: on a disk drive a folder can have hundreds of folders inside it --and each of those folders may have many folders inside them. You can't do that with paper folders. Electronic storage media are not constrained by physical space.

Create folders as needed to keep your information organized in a way that makes sense to you.

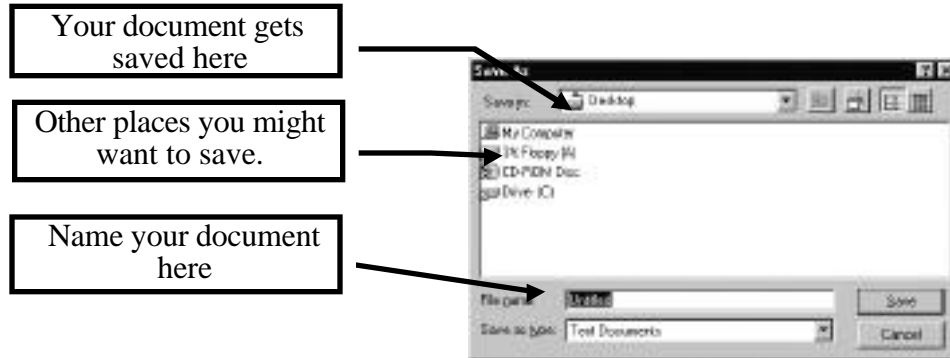
Saving Files

There are two things that you must pay attention to when you save a file:

- Where are you saving the file? What folder is it going into? What drive is it on?
- What is it called? Have you given it a name?

If you are aware of these two things, you'll save a lot of time and frustration.

When you choose Save from the File Menu, you'll get a box that look something like this:



Use the “Save In” pulldown menu to locate the proper folder for your new file. Before you click the save button, put your own file name in the File Name Box.

Whenever you save a file, ask yourself two questions:

- Where am I putting it?
- What am I calling it?

Shutting Down

❑ Shut Down

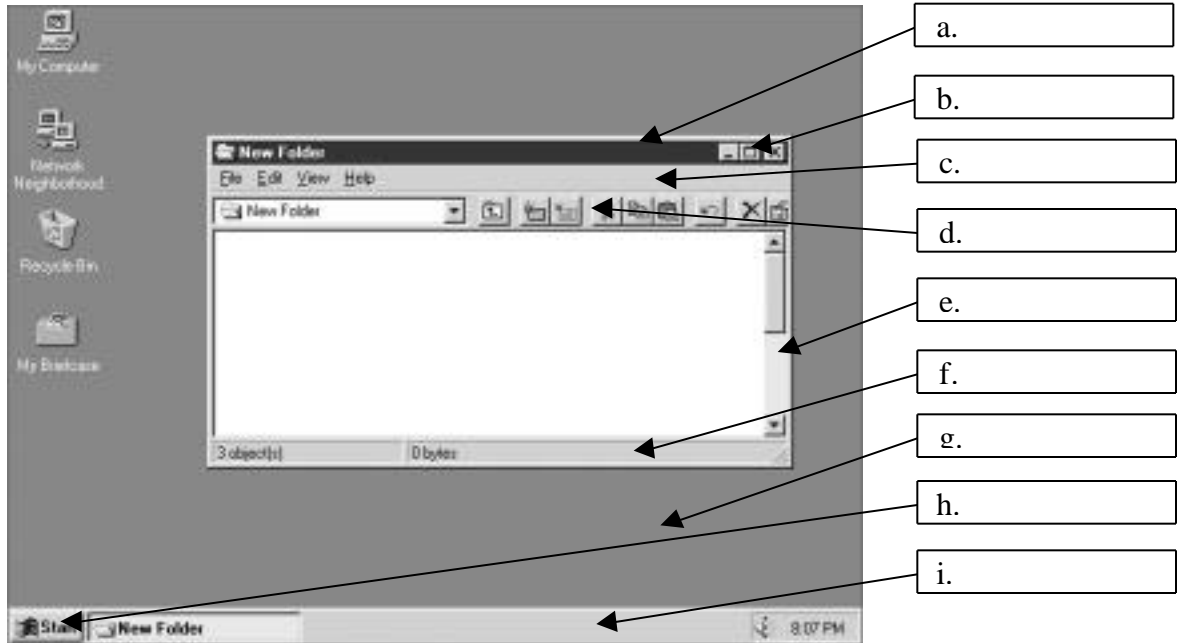
Shutting Down your computer is different than starting it up. Before it turns off, the computer is supposed to perform a few “housekeeping” chores. To shut your computer down correctly, do the following:

- Click on the Start Button in the Task Bar.
- Click on Shut Down

After the computer performs the necessary routines, the screen will tell you that it is “OK to shut down.” When you see this message, press the power switch to turn the computer off. On most modern computers it is better to leave the monitor turned on. The screen will go blank, and the power indicator light may change color when you turn your computer off. This indicates that your monitor is in idle mode.

Assessment

1. Fill in the names of the indicated items below.



2. What are the two important questions you must answer when you save a file?

3. What do you click to shut down your computer

4. Name two types of storage media.

5. What is the purpose of folders?

6. What is the difference between Minimize and Restore?