

Lesson 1 – From the Beginning

Terms

Icons: small clickable pictures which represent a program or device on the computer.

My Computer icon: see everything that's on your computer.

Recycle Bin icon: saves all of the things you've deleted so that you can retrieve them later if you wish.

Personal Computer (PC): a computer with its own operating system and a wide selection of software, intended to be used by one person.

Operating System (OS): Windows is an example of an operating system. It is the master program in a computer which maintains disk files, runs applications and handles devices such as the mouse and printer.

File: everything that's saved on your computer, including programs or data which you've entered.

Application: a computer program or piece of software designed to perform a specific task.

Mouse: a device used to input instructions into your computer (keyboards are also input devices).

Window: a frame containing a program or information.

Desktop: a graphical representation of an office desktop on your computer screen.

Menu: a list of options within a window available to the user.

Commands: words and/or pictures in a menu which tell the computer to do something.

Buttons: boxes on which you can click to perform a task.

OK button: technically means "Okay, I understand".

Cancel button: use if you change your mind or clicked something by accident.

Window buttons: the minimize, maximize, restore and close buttons at the top right hand corner of a window.

Start button: gives you access to files and programs.

Taskbar: the blue box to the right of the start button at the bottom of the screen. It always contains the buttons for the programs you're currently working with (i.e. that are still open).

Screen Saver: a moving picture which automatically appears on your desktop if you haven't used your computer in a while, saving your screen from "burn-in" of a static image.

Icons of Note



Power button



Minimize, Maximize and Close buttons



Mouse Pointer



Hourglass (your pointer turns to an hourglass if your computer is busy; wait for it to disappear before proceeding)



Help

Key Concepts

1. Windows automatically starts when you turn on your computer. In addition to turning on your computer, you may also need to press a button on your monitor to turn it on as well (p. 22).

2. After you turn on your computer (and monitor if necessary), the desktop appears. You can change the appearance of your desktop (p. 23).

Challenge: change your desktop picture and basic font colour (see pp. 295 & 299).

3. The mouse can do five things (pp. 23-24):

1. Point (look for the mouse pointer icon).
2. Click (use the left button)
3. Double-click
4. Drag
5. Right-click

4. Point and click on the *start* button at the bottom left hand corner of the desktop. A menu appears which contains several commands. Whenever you point to a command with the mouse and the command turns blue, it is activated. If that command has a triangle beside it, that means there is a sub-menu to explore. Clicking on a blue command activates it further by telling the computer to start that program.

Exercise: Practice pointing and clicking (pp. 24-30)

Challenge: open up Microsoft Word and find some triangles which lead to more menus.

5. A window can be minimized, maximized, restored, or closed using the window buttons at the top right hand corner of a window. When you *minimize* a window, you are just “putting it

away” for awhile. It shows up on the taskbar at the bottom of your desktop. By clicking on it again, you bring it to the front of your work area. Open programs are always shown in the blue taskbar at the bottom of the screen. If you *close* a program, you are stopping it.

Exercise: Practice minimizing, maximizing and closing windows. Note how the taskbar works (pp. 31-37)

Challenge: open Word, Excel, and Explorer and see them show up on the taskbar. Minimize, maximize and close the programs.

6. A gray button is not active; therefore, nothing will happen when you click on it.

7. Screen savers save your computer monitor from “burn-in” of a static image. Remove it by moving the mouse or hitting a key on your keyboard.

Challenge: Change the screen saver settings (see p. 300).

8. The help menu can be your greatest friend. Look for the question mark icon on various programs.

Challenge: Find the help menus for Windows, Explorer and Word. When in Word, find out how to start a table.

9. You don’t have to shut down your computer every time you are done using it. Click on the start menu and go to *Turn Off Computer* or *Shut Down*. From there, putting it on *Stand By* is usually sufficient. If there is a planned or probable (as in the case of a lightening storm) power outage, or if you are going away, you may want to completely shut down your computer.

Exercise: Familiarize yourself with the various stop features of Windows (Standby, Turn Off, Restart) (pp. 38 and 40).

Reference:

Stuur, Addo. 2007. *Windows XP for Seniors*. “Chapter 1: Starting and Stopping in Windows XP”. Visual Steps.