

Small Tips and Tricks



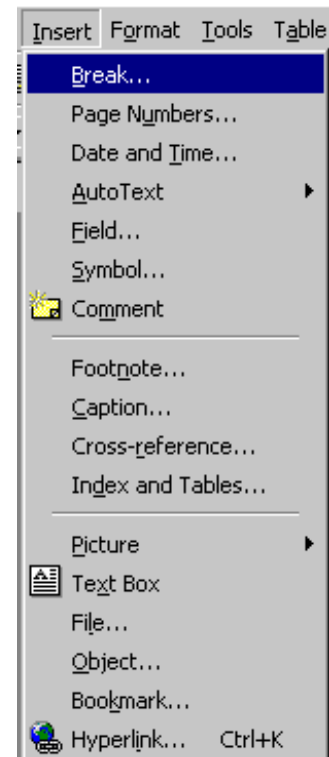
1) Alt keys

Although the mouse is very convenient there are times when taking your hands off the keyboard can slow you down, particularly if you are a touch typist. Most applications are set up to be operated by the keyboard as well as the mouse. It's just a matter of remembering the key combinations.

When you look at the menu bar of any application you will see that each entry has one letter underlined.



If you press the Alt button on the keyboard and then the underlined letter then the menu will drop down. For example, pressing Alt + I will drop the Insert menu as shown right.



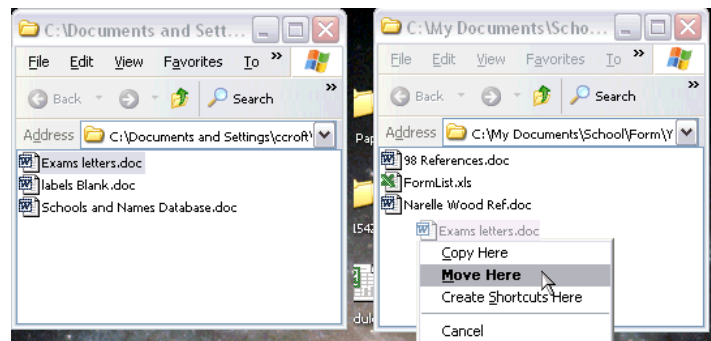
You can select any item by pressing its underlined letter, this time without the Alt button. For example, pressing Alt + I then T would insert the date and time.

Of course, this is not something you would use with tasks that you do infrequently but for ones that you use quite often it can be worth remembering the letters that make up the shortcut.

For example, when using Excel I often use the ***Edit, Paste Special*** command to cut and paste. The shortcut for this is Alt+E,S. Once memorised, this is a lot faster than using the mouse.

2) Copying and moving files

Most people routinely drag and drop files from one location to another but may not be aware of how to choose whether the file is to be moved or simply copied. The answer is to use the right button on the mouse instead of the left.



In the example to the right I want to move the file "Exam letters.doc" from the left-hand folder to the right. I have moved the mouse over the file and then dragged it using the right button instead of the left. When I drop it into the right-hand folder a small menu pops up asking me whether I want to copy, move or create a shortcut. Simply click (left button) on the option you want to use.

3) *Moving around*

Some control keys allow easy movement on the page. For example, holding down Ctrl and pressing left/right arrow moves a word at a time. Page Up & Down move a screen at a time and pressing Ctrl and Page Up/Down will move up/down by a full page at a time.

4) *Selection and movement of text*

If you double click on a word with the mouse then it will be selected. Click in the blank space of the left margin and it will select the entire line to the right of the mouse pointer. Double clicking will select the entire paragraph.

Once text has been selected you can use ^X then ^V to cut and paste it, or you can simply drag and drop the text into the new position.

5) *Control keys*

There are certain shortcut keys that are common to almost all applications and will save you a lot of time if you remember them. To use them hold down the Ctrl key on the keyboard and press the letter of the shortcut. The Ctrl key is commonly abbreviated as ^. Thus Ctrl+C is written as ^C.

Key	Effect	Key	Effect
^B	Bolds the selected text.	^V	Pastes the text from the clipboard to the page.
^I	<i>Italics</i> the selected text.	^S	Saves the file.
^U	<u>Underlines</u> the selected text.	^P	Prints the file.
^E	(<i>Word only</i>) Centres the line.	^O	Opens a file.
^C	Copies the selected text to the clipboard.	^Z	Undo.
^X	Cuts the selected text to the clipboard.		
^C^C	(Word only) Displays clipboard manager (see later).		

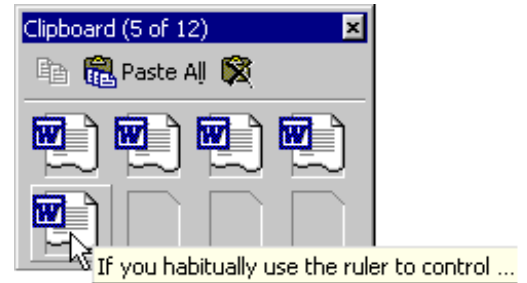
6) *Copying and pasting format.*

If you habitually use the ruler to control indenting and margins, or if you use numeric lists or bullets then you'll know that it can be quite frustrating in Word when it 'forgets' your formats in the next paragraph. You can easily transfer formats from one portion of text to another by using Ctrl+Shift+C (copy style) and Ctrl+Shift+V (paste style).

For example, suppose you've been using a numbered list and you've interposed a picture or some ordinary text that has normal style. You will often find that when you resume the numbering it will be out of order or have a different style. Simply position the cursor in the last correct paragraph, copy the style with Ctrl+Shift+C and then paste it into the new paragraph. The same trick can be used to ensure that you have a consistent style of headings or indents/margins. See also the later topic of assigning keyboard shortcuts to styles.

7) ^C, ^C for clipboard.

If you press ^C twice in succession in Word then the Clipboard will pop up as shown right. By clicking on any of the icons the text it contains will be pasted into the current cursor position. If you're not sure which is which then let the mouse pointer hover over the items. The first few words of the contents will appear.

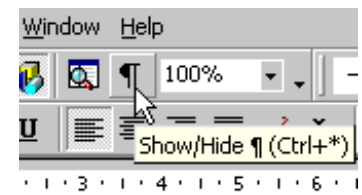


The advantage of this is that you can retrieve and re-use anything that you've previously copied using ^C during your current Word session. This includes pictures or anything else that can be copied to the clipboard.

8) Adding extra buttons to the toolbars in Word.

You may think that the toolbar is fixed and unchanging but this is not the case. It is very easy to add new buttons or to remove buttons that are of no use to you.

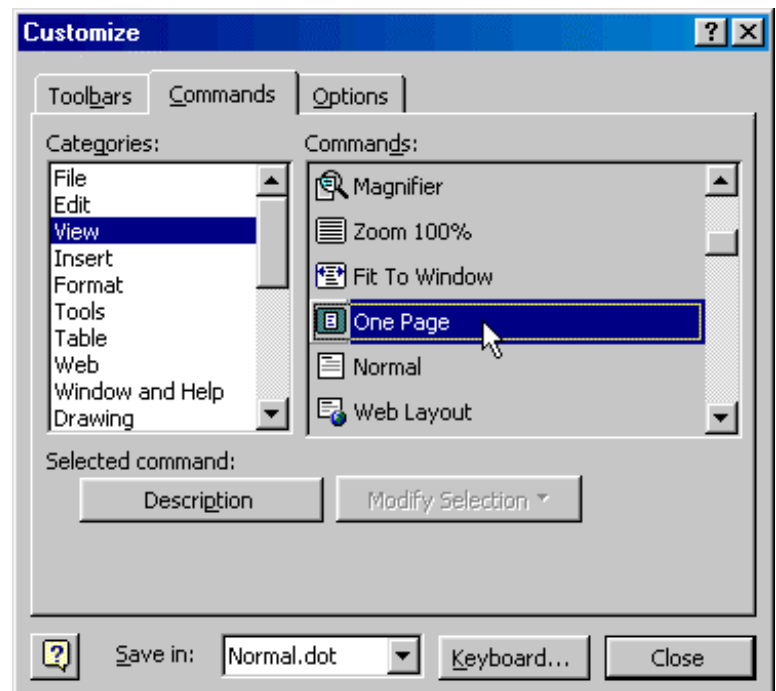
If you want to remove buttons then the first stage is to find out what each button does and decide if you need it. If you position the mouse pointer over a button and wait a second or two then it will declare what it does in a small pop up text box. If there is a shortcut key for the button then this will also appear. The example shown right is a button that I personally will probably never use which shows or hides formatting marks in the text.



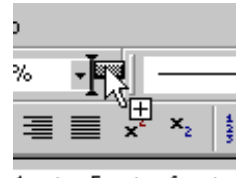
To add or remove buttons select Customize from the Tools menu and the dialog box right will appear. Click on the 'Commands' tag to see the view on the right.

To remove a button from the existing toolbar simply drag it and drop it onto the Customize dialog box. It will vanish.

To add a new button or to restore one you've previously removed, first find it in the list of commands. These are arranged by category and it is worth spending a few minutes scrolling through them. There are many commands (buttons) which don't appear on the standard toolbars but which you may find quite useful. For example, to see page layout I quite often like to zoom out to be able to see the whole page. There is a button that does this. If you use it then you will probably also want the one below it that restores normal layout.

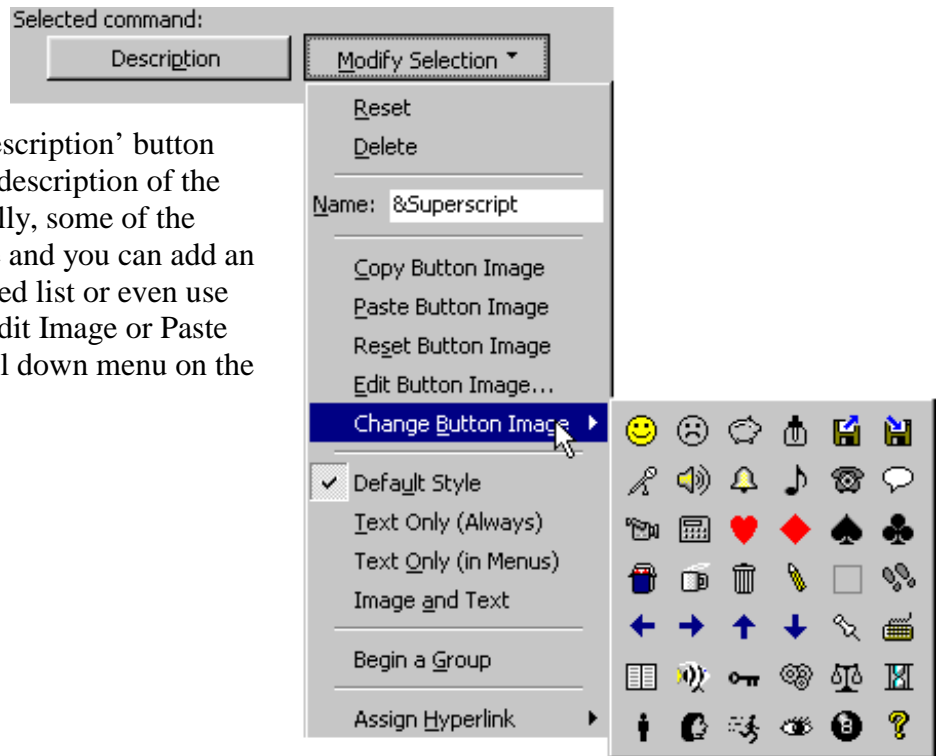


Click on the new button and drag it to the toolbar. When you are over the toolbar you will find that a black 'I-beam' cursor will appear to show where the button is to be positioned, as shown right.



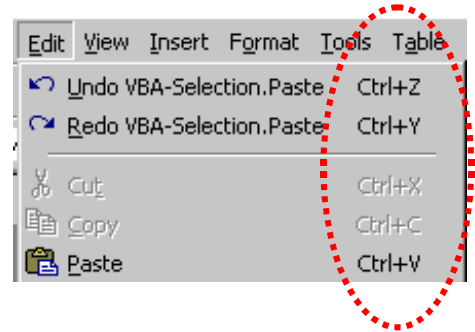
When you drop the button it will appear in its new position. As long as the Customize dialog box is open you can move this or any other button around by simply dragging it.

For the adventurous there are a number of ways that you can further modify the buttons. Clicking on the 'Description' button shown right will give you a description of the button's purpose. Additionally, some of the buttons don't have an image and you can add an image from the small supplied list or even use your own image using the Edit Image or Paste Image commands on the pull down menu on the right.



9) *Setting up additional accelerator keys.*

Once you have become used to using accelerator keys such as ^C and ^V you may want to explore others. Many of these can be found on the menus as you can see in the Edit menu right.



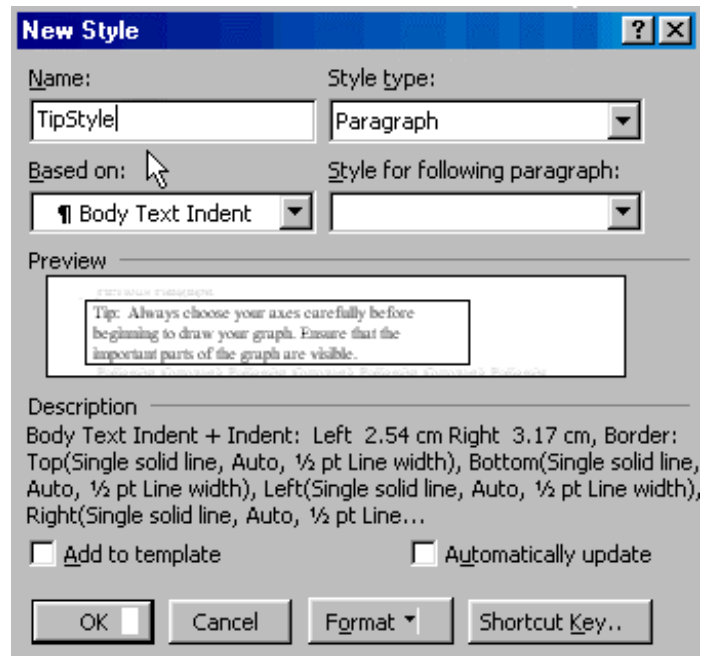
You can also start assigning your own keys to common tasks. I'll illustrate this by assigning a particular style to one of the function keys at the top of the keyboard. Suppose you've decided to use the style of the paragraph below as a regular feature on your worksheets.

Tip: Always choose your axes carefully before beginning to draw your graph. Ensure that the important parts of the graph are visible.

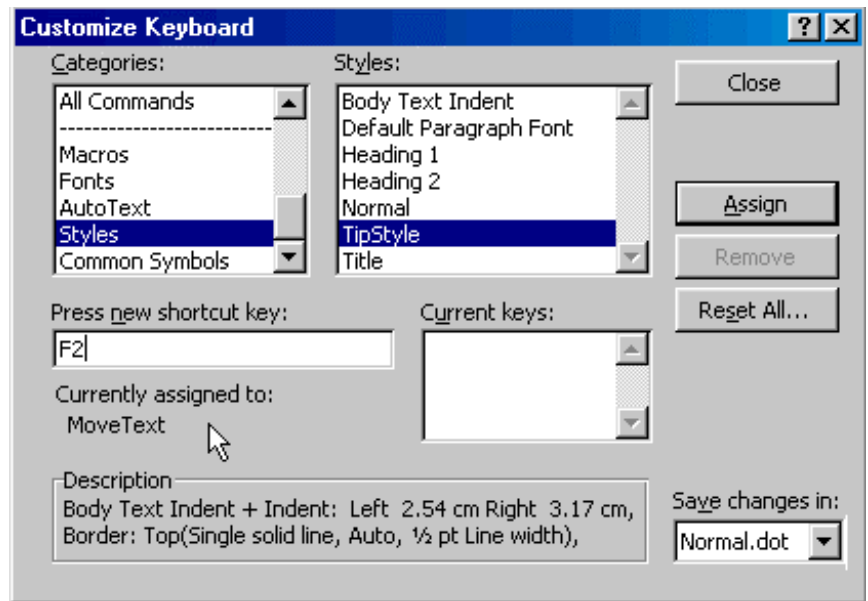
To assign this style to the a key, follow the steps on the next page. Most people have a limited number of paragraph and heading styles that they use regularly and find that assigning them to the row of Function keys is a great shortcut. It's best to avoid using F1, as it is the Help key and you may want to use it for its intended purpose at some stage.

Assigning a style to an accelerator key

- Position the cursor inside the paragraph you've set up.
- From the Format menu, choose Style. Click on the 'New' button. The style should appear in the Preview pane.
- Give the style a name. In this case, as shown right, I'm calling it "TipStyle".
- Click on 'Ok' to assign the name and then close the Style dialog box.



- In the Tools menu, open the Customize dialog box, click on the button labelled 'Keyboard' and a further dialog box will appear. In the left hand 'Categories' window scroll down to find 'Styles'. In the right hand window, locate "TipStyle" and click on it to select it.




- Place the cursor in the field called "Press new shortcut key" and press the button that you want to become the shortcut. This can be a single key or a combination of keys such as Ctrl-F2 or Ctrl-Shift-F2. It doesn't have to be a function key. Basically any combination is ok. If it conflicts with an existing key combination, which it often will, then you will be told. For example, in the case above it conflicts with "MoveText". Since I don't care about that I will click on the 'Assign' button to over-ride it.
- Close all the dialog boxes and you will now find that pressing F2 (or whatever you used) will now convert the paragraph you are working on into "TipStyle".

10) Creating a departmental set of templates

If your department wants to use a standard layout for tests, exams, letters to parents, memos etc then you may want to create a single folder on your departmental drive to contain these.

For example, part of the template we use for our levelling tasks in Maths is shown below:

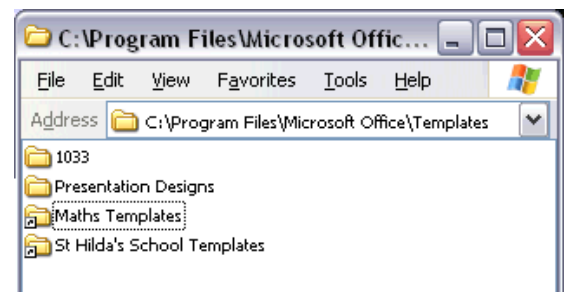
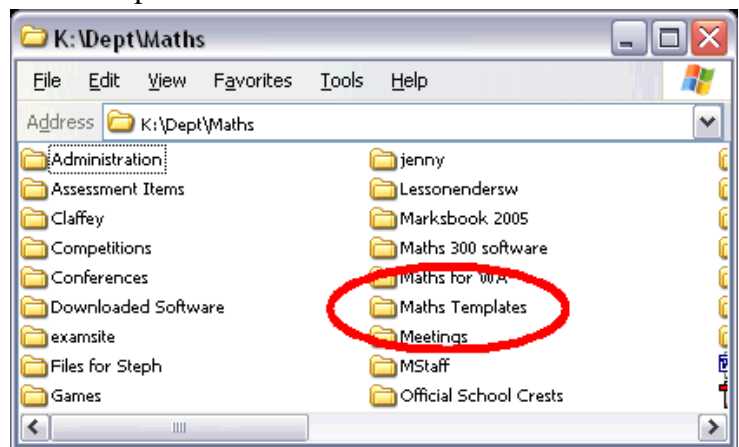
Topic:	Arc Length & Earth Geom.	
Date:	1/2/2005	
Levels:	6 to 7	
Entered?:		
Name:		

1.	M 10b	Level 6	-	•	+
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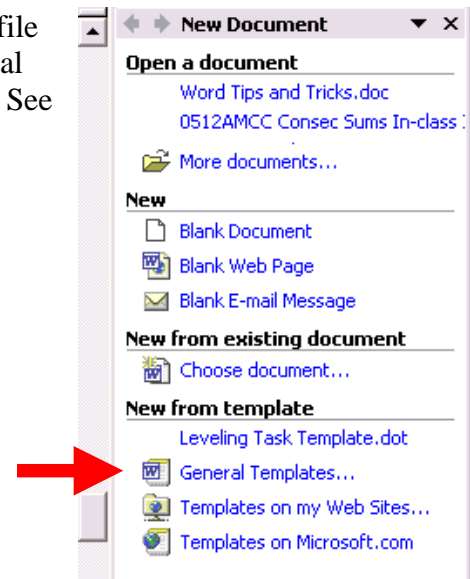
To create a template you simply need to save the file using a .dot extension rather than the usual .doc extension. When you then click on a .dot file to open it a copy is automatically created rather than opening the original.

To make these templates available to your department in the same way as the set of General St. Hilda's Templates are, you should follow the steps below:

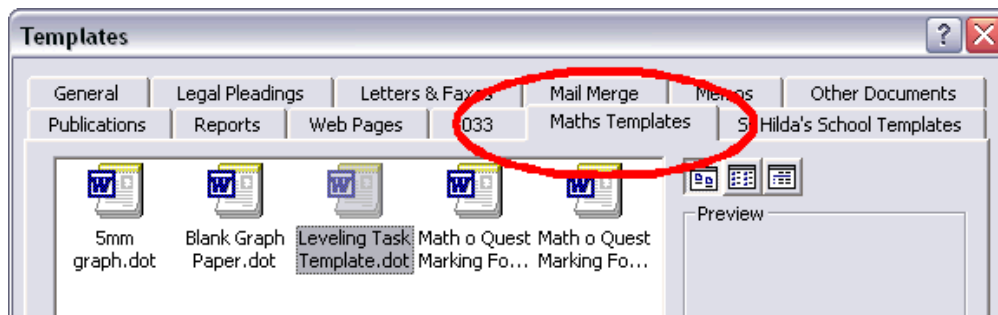
- Create the folder on your departmental drive to hold the templates. Leave it visible as it is on the right.
- On each of the departmental computers, go to MyComputer and follow the links from MyComputer to C:\ drive, to "Program Files", to "Microsoft Office".
- Once you have this folder open, use the right button drag method explained earlier to create a shortcut in that folder to your departmental template folder. The computer will add the phrase "Shortcut to..." to your shortcut and you may want to remove that.



- If you now use the File menu in Word to create a New file then you'll find that a list of templates and other material such as recent files will open on the right of the screen. See right.



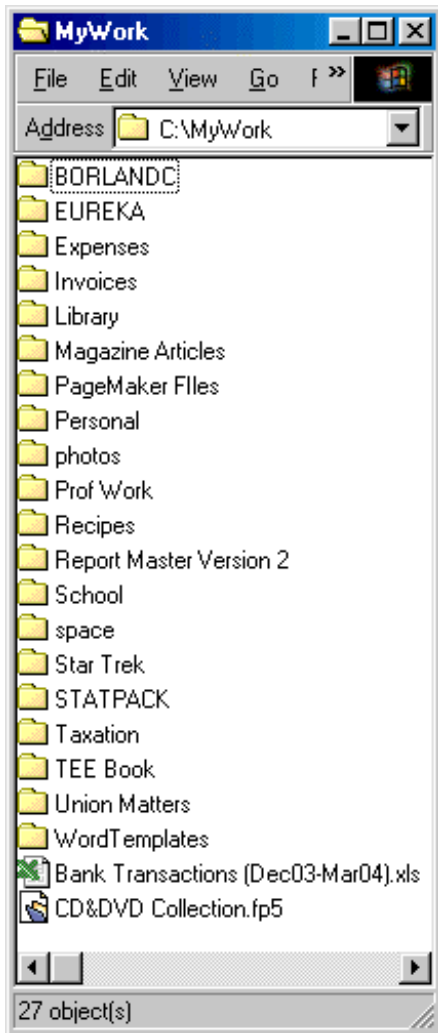
- If you click on the “General Templates link then a collection of templates will open. One of the tags at the top of the list will be your departmental templates (see circled tab below). Click on this to see the templates in your departmental folder.



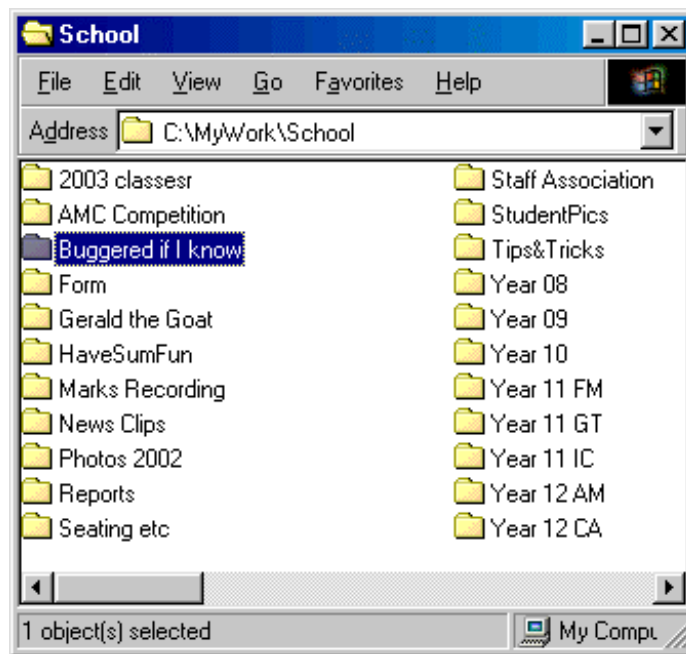
The advantage of setting it up this way is that any changes to the template need only be done in one place and all staff will always be using the most recent version of any templates.

11) Organise your files!

Set up a folder structure that reflects your thinking and allows you to find files again when you want them. There is nothing more frustrating than knowing that you have a worksheet on the topic you are about to teach but not being able to find it. In the picture below you will see a sample of the layout I use. You need to evolve your own.



Starting with the C:\MyWork folder is a good idea since many applications default to that folder when saving. The one on the left is for my home computer. Inside it I have another folder called “School” whose contents are shown below.



Within each of the subject folders in the School folder are further folders to store tests, exams, worksheets and so on. For example, the “Year 11 IC” folder contains the folders shown right.

You may notice in the top right window a folder called “Buggedger If I Know”. While this is obviously somewhat facetious, there is a purpose to it also. Place anything in here that doesn’t immediately seem to fall into a logical category and then review the folder every few months to see if you have accumulated a set of files that are similar enough to deserve their own folder.

Evolving a logical structure is different for each person but it is worth spending a bit of time getting it right. The result can be very satisfying when a colleague says “Where’s that test I wrote last year?” and you can find it quickly and easily!

