Some of the most useful Word shortcuts

Or how to save yourself hours by giving your mouse a rest!

Article contributed by Dave Rado

General keyboard time-savers
Styles
Moving around and selecting things
(to return to top, press Ctrl+Home)

This list doesn't attempt to be comprehensive, but is a list of the shortcuts which save me the most time.

You can also get a complete list of keyboard shortcuts by selecting **Tools + Macro + Macros**, where it says "Macros in", select "Word Commands", select the command called "ListCommands" and press "Run". Or you might find the following more useful:
Word commands, and their descriptions, default shortcuts and menu assignments

General keyboard time-savers

1. **If you look at the menus**, you will see many of Word's keyboard shortcuts displayed next to the command – for instance, **Ctrl+C** next to Edit + Copy, **Ctrl+V** next to Edit + Paste, **Ctrl+F** next to Edit + Find, etc. Learning and using these shortcuts will save you many hours, allowing you to spend more time with your family! (And many of them work in *all* Windows applications).

    One menu shortcut which is *not* displayed but which I find very useful is **Ctrl+F2** for Print Preview.

    One which *is* displayed but which is so useful and so often missed that it's worth mentioning specifically is **Ctrl+Z** to Undo. Keep pressing **Ctrl+Z** to Undo as far back as you want – if you go too far, press **Ctrl+Y** to redo.

2. **To access the menus** with the keyboard press **Alt** plus the underlined letter on the main menu. Then type the underlined letter in the drop-down menu. E.g. type **Alt+ V, P** to go into Page Layout View, or **Alt+ V, O** to go into Outline View. If you have the mouse in your hand it's quicker to use the mouse (and then the toolbars come into their own), but when touch-typing, accessing the menus with the keyboard saves a lot of time.

3. **To apply or remove Bold**, Italic or Underline press **Ctrl+B**, **Ctrl+I**, or **Ctrl+U**. Use **Ctrl+L** to left-justify text, **Ctrl+E** to centre it, **Ctrl+J** to justify it, and **Ctrl+R** to right-justify it.

4. **To return to your last edit point**, press **Shift+F5**. For instance, if you have copied and want to return to where you were in order to paste. Press **Shift+F5** again to go to up to the last three edit points, or a fourth time to return to where you started.

    Also use this when you first open a document, to go straight back to where you were last editing it.

5. **To change the case of any text**, select the text and press **Shift+F3**. Very useful, for instance, if you have accidentally LEFT YOUR CAPS LOCK ON!

Keep pressing **Shift+F3** to toggle between ALL CAPS (or "UPPERCASE"), no caps (or "lowercase"), and First Letter In Caps (which Word misleadingly refers to as "Title Case" – a true example of Title Case would be "First Letter in Caps", but to achieve this level of intelligence you need a macro).

You get more options if you use the Format + Change Case dialog, though.

6. **You can repeat most commands** and actions by pressing **F4**. This is much more useful than you might think.

   For example, apply borders to a table. Go to your next table, select it, and press **F4** to apply the same borders. (Or do the same with rows within a table).

   Convert a picture from Floating to Inline, then use **F4** to do the same with all other pictures.

   Apply a Style somewhere, then use **F4** to apply the same Style to all other paragraphs in the document which need that Style applied.

   Select one table row, right-click, Insert Rows. Select the new row and **F4**. Select the two new rows and **F4**. Select the four new rows and **F4** – and so on.

   In Word 97, you can use **F4** in combination with the Table + Cell Height and Width dialog to make each column in one table exactly the same width as the equivalent column in another table – a trick I use constantly. In Word 2000 and higher, the Table Properties dialog doesn't support F4, a serious retrograde step; but fortunately you can fix this. See: **How to sidestep the problems of the Word 2000 (and higher) Table Properties dialog** for details.

   Before you start, make sure you can see both tables (split the window if necessary). Then select a cell in one table, select **Table + Cell Height and Width**, choose the "Column" Tab and press **OK**; select a column in the other table and press **F4**. The width you "captured" from the first table will now be applied to the other one. (You can even use this trick if the two tables are in separate documents.)

   You can use the same principle to left or centre-align multiple tables, apply table indents, etc. Apply the formatting you want to one table, using the Cell Height and Width dialog (or if it is already applied, simply display the dialog and press **OK**), and just click in the other tables you want to apply the formatting to and press **F4**.

   I also use **F4** for applying bold to the first couple of words in each item in a bulleted list (easier on the fingers than **Ctrl+B**); for merging cells in several different rows; for making the Page Setup identical in two different sections of a document (see **Working with sections**), or in two different documents – the list of time-saving uses for it goes on and on!

7. **You can repeat the last Find or Goto** by pressing **Shift+F4**.

8. **You can cycle through all open Word documents** by pressing **Ctrl+F6** (or you can cycle backwards by pressing **Ctrl+Shift+F6**.

   In Word 2000 you can also use Alt+Tab, which cycles through all open applications. Word 2000 uses SDI (Single Document Interface) which makes each Word document behave as if it were a separate instance of Word, although it isn't.

9. This one is more esoteric, but very useful if you customise commands a lot, and several people have emailed me with this tip.

   If you have a numeric keypad, press **Alt+Ctrl+Num+** (hold down **Alt** and **Ctrl** and press the **+** key on the numeric keyboard). If you *don't* have a numeric keypad, **assign a shortcut key** of your own to the Word command **ToolsCustomizeKeyboardShortcut**. Either way, when you press the shortcut, the mouse cursor will change into a 4-headed squiggle:
   ⌘

   Now if you press another shortcut key combination, the "Customize Keyboard" dialog will display and show you which command or macro is currently assigned to that shortcut. (for instance, if you press **Ctrl+F4** while the squiggly cursor is visible, the

dialog will display the **DocClose** command).

Alternatively, if you invoke the squiggly cursor and then select any **menu** item, the "Customize Keyboard" dialog will display and show you which command or macro that menu button is assigned to. Unfortunately, this doesn't work for toolbar buttons, but you can temporarily Ctrl+Drag a toolbar button onto a menu (select Tools + Customize first), and then use the squiggly cursor to find out what command or macro the button is assigned to.

And unfortunately, it works less reliably with custom menu buttons than it does with built-in ones – according to squiggly cursor, several custom buttons that I've assigned to macros are actually assigned to the ToolsMacro command!!! That's a bug.

Styles

1. **To remove manual formatting**: Press **Ctrl+Spacebar** to remove character formatting. Press **Ctrl+Q** to remove paragraph formatting. These shortcuts return the formatting to the default for the Style in use. To return the selection to the "Normal" style, press **Ctrl+Shift+N**.

    If you've been emailed a document by another company and need to get it into your "Corporate style", and if it contains a lot of manual formatting (as they usually do), print it, and then press **Ctrl+A** (Select All), **Ctrl+Spacebar** and **Ctrl+Q.** If the document uses styles, but the styles are in a mess (as they will be if the author had the default "**Autoformat as you Type**" settings on), press **Ctrl+Shift+N** as well. Then apply styles. Doing this can save you hours per document, literally.

2. **Avoid formatting text manually** as much as possible – use **Styles** instead.

    But where you *need* to format manually, you can use **Ctrl+Shift+C** to copy formatting and **Ctrl+Shift+V** to paste it. Having copied formatting, you can use **Ctrl+Shift+V** as often as you like – even across multiple documents – without having to copy again until you close Word.

    If a **paragraph marker** is selected when you copy, this will copy and paste the paragraph formatting; otherwise it will just copy and paste the character formatting.

    You can also use **Ctrl+Shift+C** and **Ctrl+Shift+V** to copy & paste such things as drawing object lines and fills – in both Word and PowerPoint.

    The **Paintbrush** on the Toolbar does more or less the same thing, (although it's much harder to use, and you have to *double*-click on it if you want to apply the same formatting multiple times); and in Excel and Visio, where unfortunately Ctrl+Shift+C and Ctrl+Shift+V don't work, the Paintbrush can be a huge time-saver for things like reapplying cell properties and shape fills.

3. **To create Headings**, hold the **Alt+Shift** keys down, and while keeping them held down, press the **Left** or **Right** arrow on the keyboard – Left arrow to create a main Heading, or promote an existing one, Right arrow to create a subheading or demote an existing one. No need to select anything first, just click in the paragraph which you want to apply the formatting to.

    This one is *very* useful in any View but especially in **Outline View**, as it allows you to promote and demote a large number of Headings at once.

    Alternatively, you can press **Ctrl+Alt+1** to create a Heading 1, **Ctrl+Alt+2** to create a Heading 2, etc. But unfortunately, in Europe, **Ctrl+Alt+4** has been hijacked for the Euro symbol.

    Personally I much prefer the **Alt+Shift** method anyway; easier on the fingers, only one shortcut to remember; and you don't need to think about which Heading Level you want to apply, you only have to think about whether you want the heading to be the same level as the previous one (Left arrow), a higher level (Left arrow twice) or a sub-heading of it (right-arrow). When going through a long document applying headings, this shortcut saves me hours!

Alt+Shift+Left or **Right** arrow can also be used to promote and demote outline numbered or bulleted lists – not just Headings.

If the Headings don't look the way you want them to, *don't* format them manually! Redefine the Styles instead (Format + Style + Modify).

Incidentally, some people also like using **Alt+Shift+Up** and **Down** arrows to change the order of their Headings in Outline View, so give that a try. Personally, I prefer using drag and drop.

4. **Never!** use manual page breaks – they're a maintenance nightmare. Instead, on the Format + Paragraph + "Line and Page Breaks" tab:

   a) Select "Keep with next" to keep paragraphs together. For example, on the top few rows of a table or the top few paragraphs of a bulleted list, or an inline picture which needs to stay with its caption – although in the latter case it would be better to build this into your Picture style definition.

   b) Select "Keep Lines together" to prevent a paragraph from ever being split over two pages (but see also "Widow/Orphan Control", covered below).

   c) Select "Page break before" to force a page break where needed – again, build that into your style definitions where possible, e.g. for the Heading 1 style in a long document, and for the style you use for your Table of Contents title.

   "Widow/Orphan control" prevents one line of a paragraph being "orphaned" at the top or bottom of a page – but this is built in to your style definitions by default anyway.

And a last point while on the subject of styles, make sure that under Format + Style + Modify, the "Automatically ~~Screw Up~~ Update" setting is turned off. Unfortunately, it is turned on by default for the List Bullet and TOC styles. Turn them off!

Moving around and selecting things

1. **To move around a document**:

   a) Use **Ctrl+Left** or **Right** arrows to move one word; use **Home** and **End** to move to the start or end of a line; **Ctrl+Home** or **Ctrl+End** to move to the beginning or end of a document, **Ctrl+Up** or **Down** Arrow to move one paragraph, and the **Up** or **Down** arrows to move one line. And of course, **PgUp** and **PgDn** to move one screen, but you knew that one!

   b) Press **F5** and in the left-hand pane of the **Goto** dialog, select "Section" to go to the next section, "Table" to go to the next table, etc. Or you can use the browse button near the bottom of the scroll bar, pictured on the right (although I never do!). The browse object changes when you use Find/Replace or select a different object in the Go To dialog, which I find infuriating (see the **1c** for more on this).

   c) By default, **Ctrl+PgDn** is assigned to the **BrowseNext** command, and **Ctrl+PgUp** is assigned to **BrowsePrevious**. If the last thing you used **Goto** for was to go to a table, they will go to the next or previous table.

   Some people like this, because it allows them to go backwards as well as forwards, whereas **Shift+F4** only goes forwards (although you can also use **Shift+F5** to go back). But personally, I find it *infuriating*, because 90% of the time I just want to go to the next or previous page, not to a table, thank you. So I've assigned the GoToNextPage command to Ctrl+PgDn and the GoToPreviousPage command to Ctrl+PgUp (which you can do using Tools + Customize+ Keyboard). I'd be lost without these ones (as would most of my users!).

2. To select text:

a) Hold the **Shift** key down and use the key combinations covered in **1a**. For example, to select everything from the insertion point to the end of the document in order to delete it, press **Ctrl+Shift+End** – *much* quicker than any other way! Similarly, **Shift+Up** or **Down** Arrow selects one line, **Shift+PgUp** and **PgDn** selects one screen, and so on.

And if you've selected too much, just keep the Shift key down while you use the same keys covered in **1a** to de-select what you don't want.

This works just as well when selecting cells in Excel, incidentally, and is probably even more of a timesaver in Excel than it is in Word.

b) Another good way of selecting text is to click where you want the selection to start, use the scrollbars (or wheelie if you have one on your mouse) to scroll until you can see where you want your selection to end, and with the **Shift** key held down, click again.

As with **2a**, you can de-select if you've selected too much by keeping the Shift key held down and clicking again.

c) A third method, which I never use but some people swear by, is to either double-click on the status bar where it says "**EXT**", or press **F8**. This puts you into Extended Selection mode, which means you can use the same shortcuts as in **2a** but *without* having to hold the Shift key down.

While in Extended Selection mode, you can also press **Enter** to select to the end of the paragraph; or press **period** (**.**) to select to the end of the sentence. Keep pressing **Enter** or **period** to select more paragraphs or sentences. (I got this one from Beth Melton).

And again you can de-select if you've selected too much, but this time without needing to keep the Shift key held down.

Pressing **F8** twice selects a word, three times a sentence, four times a paragraph and five times the entire document.

To get out of Extended Selection mode, press **Esc** or double-click on the status bar again.

d) **Double-click** on a word to select it, **triple-click** to select the paragraph. **Ctrl+Click** to select a sentence.

Or **click once** in the left margin (which MS refers to as the "Selection Bar" in Help) to select one line, **double-click** to select a paragraph and **triple-click** to select the document (although I usually use **Ctrl+A** to select the document).

e) To select a block of text (for instance, to quickly remove manually typed bullets), **either** hold the **Alt** key down while you drag; **or** press **Ctrl+Shift+F8** and then move the arrow keys on the keyboard.

The latter method works much better than the former if selecting large blocks spanning multiple pages (I picked this one up from the newsgroups).

f) The following tip was supplied by Klaus Linke: sometimes you may have selected some text by moving *down* the document, and you may suddenly realise that you want the selection to *begin* further *up* the document (or the other way round); and Word won't let you do this without deselecting and starting again!

You can get around this problem by assigning the following macro to a keyboard shortcut. Press your shortcut to change the selection direction (so that for example, if you can't currently extend the start of the selection upwards, you *will* be able to do so after pressing the shortcut); then press the same shortcut again to reverse the direction back to how it was:

```
Sub ChangeSelectionDirection()
    Selection.StartIsActive = Not (Selection.StartIsActive)
End Sub
```

3. **To move and select within a table:**

   a) **Alt+Mouse Click** selects a column. **Alt+Double-click** selects the table.

   b) **Alt+PgDn** goes to the bottom of a column, **Alt+PgUp** to the top. Press **Shift** as well, to *select* to the top or bottom of the column.

   c) To select a row, click in the left margin of the document; drag down or up to select multiple rows.

   d) To change the order of your rows, you can use the **Alt+Shift+Up** and **Down** arrows (no need to select anything). Or you can drag and drop.

4. **To move paragraphs of text without resorting to cut and paste**, you can use drag and drop. If you are moving paragraphs to a position that is off-screen, split the window first (Window + Split).

   Alternatively, if you are in Page/Print View or Normal View, and your cursor is **not** in a table, you can move the current paragraph(s) up or down the document using the **Alt+Shift+Up** and **Down** arrows. Whereas in **Outline View**, this moves Headings and all their subsidiary text, in Page/Print View or Normal View it just moves the current paragraphs (but in a table it moves the current rows instead).

5. **To edit text while you're in Print Preview**, click on the page to zoom in, then click on the Magnifier button 🔍 on the Print Preview toolbar to switch into edit mode. Click on the Magnifier again when you want to quit edit mode and zoom back out.

   Word of warning: Be careful **not** to type unless you are in Edit mode! Word lets you do this, and because there's no visible insertion point, you will have no idea where the text you type is going to be inserted! This is a bug.

Oh, and one last thing – don't forget about your **right mouse button**!