

*A Quick Reference to
Common Tasks*

2nd Edition
Covers Word 2003

Word

Pocket Guide



O'REILLY®

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What Word Tries to Do for You

Word performs many behind-the-scenes actions that some people hate and some people love. You already learned about AutoRecover, which saves files in the background every few minutes. Word offers three other big automated features: AutoCorrect, Smart Cut and Paste, and background spelling and grammar check.

AutoCorrect

When you type a list using asterisks as bullets, Word converts it to a bulleted list. When you accidentally type “teh”, Word changes it to “the” as soon as you hit the spacebar. Word’s AutoCorrect feature tries to fix these types of text and formatting problems.

NOTE

So, what if you like automatic corrections sometimes, but not all the time? Leave them enabled and then use the Undo command (Ctrl-Z) as soon as the correction is made. Undo should reverse the automatic correction and let you keep going. For instance, if you occasionally want a “straight quote,” use Undo right after Word creates a smart curly quote.

You can also control what kind of corrections you want Word to apply. Select Tools → AutoCorrect to display the AutoCorrect dialog box. Two important tabs let you change the automatic options:

AutoCorrect

This tab controls actual text corrections. The options at the top of the tab deal mostly with incorrect capitalization. The “Replace text as you type” option specifies whether Word should use the long list of corrections at the bottom of the tab. You can delete items from the list or add your own items by entering them in the topmost

fields. In addition to the thousands of corrections built into Word, you can also create your own (covered in Part 2).

AutoFormat As You Type

The options on this tab control automatic formatting—bulleted and numbered lists, smart quotes (the curly quotes), and fraction characters, to name a few.

NOTE

In Word 97-2002, you can right-click any interface element and choose What's This? to see a description of its function. In Word 2003, press F1 to open a help window that documents the features on the dialog box.

Smart Cut and Paste

Smart Cut and Paste automatically controls how many spaces are placed before and after text when you paste it into a location. For the most part, this feature is benign. It is helpful to copy a group of words, paste them into a new paragraph, and have Word make one space at the beginning and end of the group. Depending on your tastes, you may want to fine-tune these settings.

First, select Tools → Options and click the Edit tab. You can check or uncheck the Use smart cut and paste box to turn the whole feature on or off.

In Word 2002 and 2003, you can fine-tune the Smart Cut and Paste option. Select Tools → Options, click the Edit tab, and then click the Settings button. Some of the more interesting options let you do the following:

- Set the options to the default used by Word 2002/2003 or by Word 97/2000
- Merge pasted lists with the surrounding list in the destination location

- Adjust table alignment when pasting tables or parts of tables into new locations
- Adjust sentence, word, and paragraph spacing when pasting

Spelling and Grammar

By default, Word checks both spelling and grammar in the background. Word puts squiggly red lines under words not found in its dictionary and squiggly green lines under suspected grammatical errors. Right-click the errors to see suggested corrections on the shortcut menu. While it sounds useful, most people find that having the errors marked in the document distracts them and slows down the display of longer documents. To remove the distractions, select Tools → Options, click the Spelling & Grammar tab, and choose one of the following:

- If you want Word to perform background checking, but not show the errors in the document, check the Hide spelling errors in this document box and the Hide grammatical errors in this document box.
- To turn background checking off altogether, uncheck the Check spelling as you type box and the Check grammar as you type box. Background checking degrades performance, especially in long documents. It's almost always more efficient to do a full spell and grammar check when you're done creating a document.

The rest of the options deal with *how* Word checks spelling and grammar (see Part 2).