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LESSON 2

THE WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEM

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the general features of Windows XP.
- Use a mouse to move around the desktop.
- Identify the parts of the window and what each one does.
- Work with menus and menu elements.
- Work with dialog boxes.
- Manipulate multiple windows.
- Access the Windows Help feature.
- Shut down Windows.

Estimated Time: 1.5 hours

VOCABULARY

Active window
Address Bar
Clicking
Command buttons
Commands
Default
Dialog box
Double-click
Dragging
Linking
Log off
Log on
Mouse buttons
Option buttons
Radio buttons
Right-click
Select (highlight)
Shortcut keys
Shortcut menu
Shortcut menu button
Standard desktop
Standard toolbar
Start button
Status bar
Submenu

Windows is a simple, familiar word, which does not sound very high tech. Yet Windows is an accurate name for a rich, powerful, high-tech software program. The Windows operating system is a visual or picture-oriented environment that provides an easy way for users to communicate or interact with the computer using graphic icons and buttons. Remember, Windows offers a graphical user interface, as opposed to the text-based DOS, and Windows' visual environment is the key to understanding and to using this impressive program.

But a graphical user interface does more than make Windows easy to use. One key benefit of a GUI is that it provides a consistent way to work within each program, a consistent way to work with other programs, and a simple and consistent way to switch between programs.

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The Windows World

1-3.1.1
1-3.1.3

The Windows environment provides you with an electronic version of your desktop, complete with electronic tools and supplies, all accessible at your fingertips. Its parallels with the physical desktop are not accidental; Windows is designed to be your workplace. Here you will work with your mouse by moving and clicking. You can check your clock (which automatically resets for daylight savings time changes), use your calculator, grab your files and folders, dial your phone, surf the Internet, and open your briefcase. You can instantly see a complete listing of all your tools and supplies, a complete log of all your files and folders—a complete inventory of everything on your computer. And don't forget that wastebasket, which Windows calls a Recycle Bin. You can even decorate your Windows desktop, as you will see later.

You can't appreciate the full potential of Windows until you understand its powerful capabilities, such as file linking and automatic file updating. This powerful yet friendly software is an operating system; that means it manages everything—both the hardware and the software that operate your entire computer system. With Windows, you shift to each new task and open or close programs as effortlessly and quickly as when you use your remote control to switch between TV channels. While one window remains open and active on the desktop, others remain open but inactive—either on the desktop or as buttons on the taskbar.

You learned in Lesson 4 that this capability of running several tasks, or programs, at the same time is called *multitasking*. Multitasking allows you to process data in one program while you are working in another. For instance, while you are working on a spreadsheet in one window, you might be printing a word-processing document in another window.

And with Windows' ***linking*** features, you can easily transfer data among programs and update the data automatically. For example, if you need to prepare a report every month that includes a financial statement in a spreadsheet, you can put the spreadsheet into a word-processing document and *link* it to the spreadsheet program so that updates made to the spreadsheet will automatically appear in the word-processing report.

Windows Updates

1-2.1.3

Whether you are new to Windows software or not, adapting to new software—even a new version of familiar software—can be taxing. Learning new tools and unfamiliar features can be time-consuming and may require training. But Windows simplifies the process considerably. Consequently, if you've used an older version of Windows, you'll make the transition easily to Windows XP Professional. As you make the transition, you'll see that Windows XP provides:

- Easier, faster, and more powerful ways to work with application programs, as well as special hardware settings and increased speed for your network connections.
- Greater reliability and built-in support for hardware and software improvements, such as being able to use up to four monitors at a time.
- Enhanced versions of desktop tools, the taskbar, and the Start menu.
- Upgraded support for multimedia that allows you to receive high-quality movies and audio directly on your desktop.

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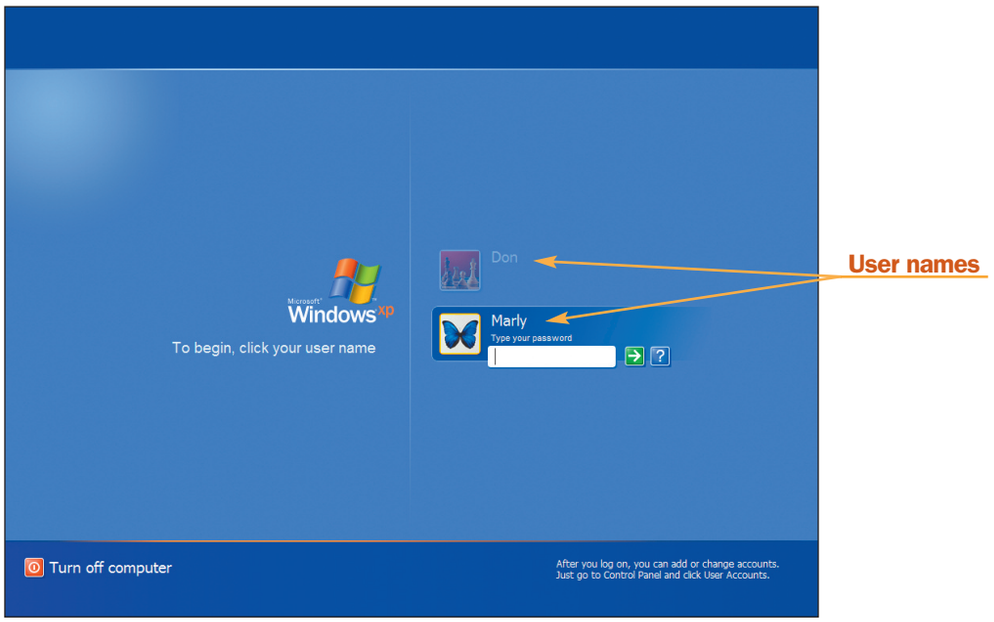
- A single, easy way to have automated access to and delivery of information—whether it is located on your computer, the local area network, or the Internet.
- A mechanism that schedules delivery of information from the Internet that you want to monitor, without requiring that you physically visit the site or even connect to the Internet.
- Advanced capabilities for Internet Explorer and support for all Internet standards.

Starting Windows

1-3.2.3
1-3.2.4
1-3.1.5

Windows XP automatically starts when you turn on your computer. If you are the only person using your computer, Windows XP displays your desktop, ready for you to begin your work. However, Windows may ask you to click a user name before it will give you access to the computer. This is because Windows XP lets many different users create their own accounts. Each account contains all the settings the user likes, such as screen colors, placement of items on the desktop, and other program options. In order to do this, Windows XP needs to know who is going to use the computer. If your computer uses this feature, each time you start the computer, a Welcome screen appears, as shown in Figure 2-1, with each user's account name and an associated icon. You must ***log on***, or tell the computer who you are, by clicking one of the user names and, if prompted, entering a password. If you do not follow the correct logon procedure for the computer, you will not be able to access the system. Windows loads all your preferred settings and opens to the Windows ***standard desktop***, as shown in Figure 2-2.

FIGURE 2-1
Windows XP may ask users to log on



The Windows XP operating system is made up of many specialized computer files that create the Windows environment, including the desktop. Like any computer files, operating system files can become damaged by power surges, viruses, or out-of-date coding. If fundamental operating systems are corrupted, the operating system may need to be reinstalled or updated. A system that frequently locks up and requires rebooting may be a warning sign of unstable operating system files. It's important to reinstall or update the operating system when needed to protect the computer and its data files.

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STEP-BY-STEP 2.1

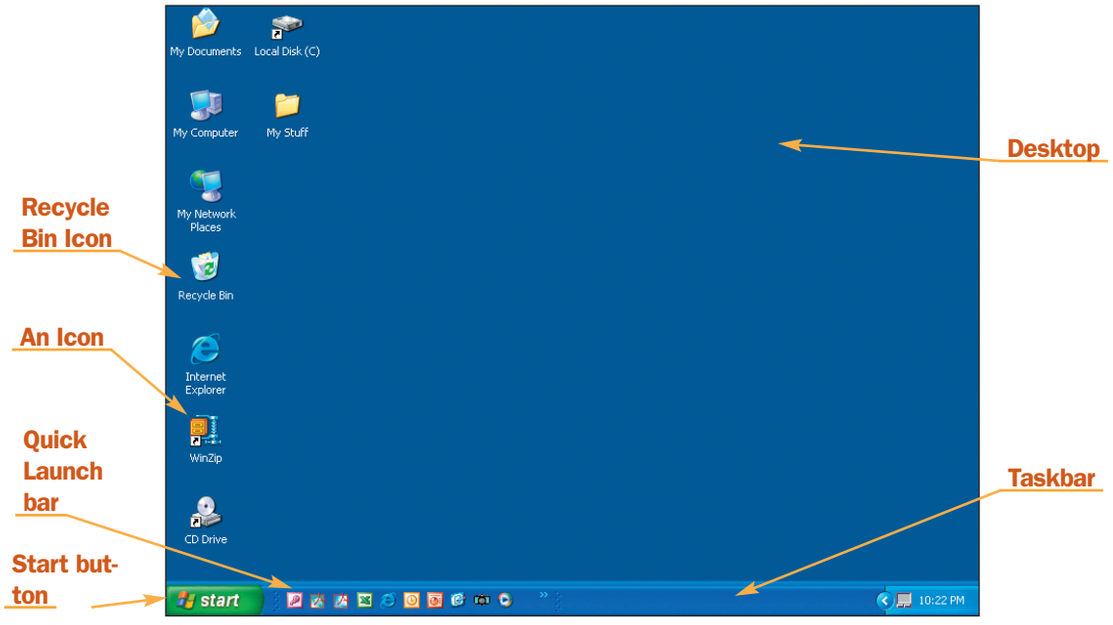
1. Turn on your computer system.
2. Windows will start automatically.
   a. If prompted, click one of the user names or enter the user name you have been assigned. (You may need to ask your instructor or system administrator for assistance with which user name and password to use.)
   b. If prompted, key your password. As you key your password, the password box will fill with black circles—one for each character in your password. Your password won't display for security reasons, so key your password carefully. If you can't remember your password and you had a password clue entered to help you remember, click the blue box with the question mark to the right of the password box to display a memory clue to your password.
   c. If your system is set up for multiple users, click the green arrow to the right of the password box or press **Enter** on the keyboard or click the **OK** button. Windows should then start.

Computer Concepts

A computer's operating system checks a password by comparing the characters (usually a group of letters or numerals) you enter to a list it stores that associates authorized users with their passwords. If the password you enter matches the one in the computer's list for your user name, you can log on to Windows.

3. Compare your screen with that illustrated in Figure 2-2. Your screen may differ slightly, and there may be more icons on the desktop, but the basic elements should be the same. Spend a few minutes looking at the layout of your screen and the position of the elements. If your screen does not display elements similar to those shown in Figure 2-2, ask for assistance. Remain on the Windows desktop for the next Step-by-Step.

FIGURE 2-2
Windows XP standard desktop



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When you open a window, the software determines the window size and location on the desktop. A predetermined software choice or setting is called the ***default***. You can change many defaults; for example, you can control the position and size of your windows by changing the default settings. (We will examine changing settings and customizing the desktop in Lesson 8.)

Look again at Figure 2-2, which identifies the main components of the opening Windows screen: the desktop, the taskbar, the Start button (which gives you access to the Start menu), the Quick Launch bar, and icons you can use to work with Windows programs and features.

The Taskbar

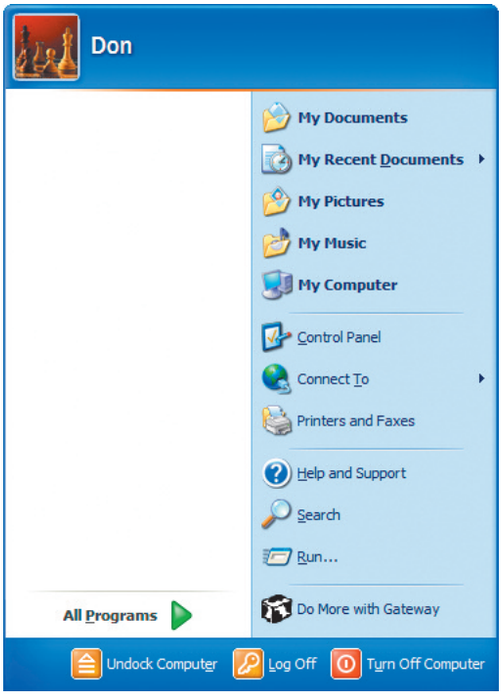
Locate the taskbar in Figure 2-2, in its usual default location at the bottom of the screen. You can move it to the top, left, or right side of the desktop to suit your needs. Wherever you choose to position it, you will find the taskbar to be a very convenient helper.

You use the taskbar for two important tasks: to display the Start menu and to switch among currently running programs that you want to keep open. Every program you keep open is represented by a button on the taskbar that offers easy access to all your running programs—just click the button. For example, if you open Excel, the taskbar displays a button for that program. If you then decide to run Paint, the taskbar adds a button for that program. One glance at the icons on the taskbar buttons tells you which programs are running (active).

The Start Menu

You click the ***Start button*** on the taskbar to display the Start menu, as shown in Figure 2-3. The Start menu contains a list of options you will use throughout this book that enables you to complete frequently performed tasks quickly and easily. For example, you can launch programs from the Start menu, open recently used files, change your system's settings, find files or folders, access Help topics, and close or shut down Windows.

FIGURE 2-3
The Start menu



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Look closely at the Start menu shown in Figure 2-3. Notice that the items on the menu are placed in one of four sections. These sections are at the top, bottom, left, and right of the menu. The login user name is displayed in large letters in the section across the top of the menu, and options for logging off or shutting down Windows are displayed along the bottom of the menu. A list of folders and programs is displayed on the left and right side of the separator line in the middle portion of the start menu.

The items on the right side of the separator line are known as the pinned items list. These items remain there and are always available for you to click to start them. You can add items to the pinned items list. The list of programs on the left of the separator line is known as the most-often-used-programs list. The programs displayed on the most-often-used-programs list appear there when you use them. Clicking the All Programs item opens a list of programs currently installed on your computer. When you click one of these programs, the program is placed in the often-used-programs list. Windows has a default number of programs that are displayed on this list. When that number of programs is reached, a program you have not opened recently is replaced in the list. You can change the default number of programs displayed on the most-often-used list.

Following is an explanation of the options commonly found on the Start menu:

- *All Programs* contains a complete list of the programs installed on your computer and allows you to launch any program quickly from the desktop.
- *My Documents* contains a list of the documents saved in this folder for quick access.
- *My Recent Documents* contains a list of the documents that were recently opened or created. Your computer may not show this option, but you can add it by customizing your Start menu. Other optional entries in the Start menu include *Favorites*, *My Network Places*, *Printers and Faxes*, and *System Administrative Tools*.
- *My Pictures* contains a list of the digital photos, images, and graphic files saved in this folder.
- *My Music* contains a list of music and other audio files saved in this folder.
- *My Computer* displays the contents of your computer. You can see the hardware devices, resources, programs, and files that are stored on your computer. My Computer also provides information about different system resources, such as the size of the hard disk and how much space is available on it. You can also use My Computer to format disks and to run programs.
- *Control Panel* provides options for customizing the "look and feel" of your desktop. For instance, the Control Panel option lets you change settings, such as the computer's date/time, desktop background, display colors, keyboard language, and mouse controls.
- The *Help and Support* option opens the Windows Help facility, an easy-to-use program that provides you with information about Windows and its programs.
- The *Search* option is one of the most important capabilities in the Windows program. It helps you find files and folders. This option also lets you search for Web sites you visit frequently, plus it provides a quick way to find people whose names are stored in a variety of electronic address books.
- The *Run* command allows you to begin a program quickly from the Start menu. You can also use this command to find a file or program.

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- The *Log Off* option permits you to exit the account you are using and keep the computer on for you or another user to log on at a later time.
- The *Turn Off Computer* (or *Shut Down*) option provides options for safely shutting down and/or restarting Windows and your computer.

The Quick Launch Bar

The Quick Launch bar on the taskbar displays icons for frequently used programs so they are always visible on your desktop. You will see small icons that represent programs, settings, and other features. The Quick Launch icons let you launch these features quickly—just click to open a window or dialog box. You can find out what each icon on the Quick Launch bar will do by resting the mouse pointer on the icon. A balloon will appear describing what the icon is.

Moving Around the Desktop

1-3.2.4

You have already used the computer's mouse to click and open an application, and you can see the pointer you control with the mouse move around the Windows desktop. The mouse lets you race all over the screen—and, if you want, carry materials with you as you move.

Recall that the mouse is an input device. It allows you to find files, access tools, grab folders you need to move, or place items on the Windows desktop. Of course, you can also use the mouse to put those tools, files, or folders away. But that's not all. The mouse serves a number of other convenient uses. Your desktop is a visual work area, and the mouse is the key to that work area.

Most computers include a mouse as standard equipment. However, some systems, especially portable laptop and notebook models, may have an integrated trackball, touchpad, or Trackpoint on or next to the keyboard. These input devices work like a mouse, but they take less space and don't require a desk to move around on.

Working in a Connected World

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The administrative assistant is responsible for the overall functioning of an office. The position requires the person to work with considerable initiative in the absence of the supervisor and to exercise independent judgment within the framework of established policies and objectives.

The computer is the main tool that the administrative assistant has to complete many of the required tasks, using word-processing, database management, spreadsheet, and personal information software programs daily. The administrative assistant also uses other types of computer capabilities depending on the type of office in which he or she works. The qualifications required to be an administrative assistant include excellent communication skills, both verbal and written; knowledge of modern office practices, systems, and equipment; the ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously; strong math, interpersonal, and organizational skills; and a professional, friendly, and outgoing personality. A college degree is usually preferred. Evidence of some training and impressive experience, however, is sometimes acceptable.

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If you're using a conventional mouse, clear an area (at least 1 square foot) next to the keyboard on your computer desktop for moving the mouse. For best performance, use a mouse pad. It's specially designed to sit under your mouse and facilitate its movement. Hold the mouse so the cable extends outward (away from your hand) and the body of the mouse rests under the palm of your hand. Rest your index finger lightly on one of the buttons.

Computer Concepts

A wireless mouse is sometimes called a *hamster* because it has no "tail," or cord, to connect it to the computer. Instead, it transmits information to the computer with infrared impulses.

The Mouse Pointer and Its Shapes

The arrow you see on the desktop is the mouse pointer, a graphical element you move around the screen to select items (such as icons and menu options), issue commands, and move or manipulate screen elements (such as text or windows). Move the mouse and you will see the arrow move.

The pointer changes its appearance depending on the task in which Windows is engaged. Most of the time, it looks like an arrow, but it may assume a number of other shapes. For example:

- When you are working with text, the pointer changes to an I-beam.
- When Windows is working on an instruction and isn't ready to accept further input from you, the pointer changes to an hourglass (or some other icon, like a bouncing ball, if you have chosen a different theme for Windows). This icon means "Wait. Windows is busy finishing a task."
- When an arrow is attached to the wait icon, it indicates that Windows is working on a task but you can still select and move objects.
- When the pointer turns into a circle with a slash through it—the international "no" symbol—the message is "This action is not allowed."

When you move the pointer over parts of a window, the different pointer shapes give you visual clues about how you can move the mouse.

Operating the Mouse

The mouse moves the pointer around the screen, but it does much more than that. The mouse allows you to move windows and to choose various programs by using the ***mouse buttons***. Every mouse has one, two, or three buttons, depending on the manufacturer. By default, the button on the left is the primary button (the one you will use most often). It is also referred to as the select/drag button because it is the one you use to select and move elements around the screen. The secondary button, usually the button on the right, is called the ***shortcut menu button*** (shortcut menus are discussed later in this lesson), and when you use it, you ***right-click***. You'll learn when to right-click as you practice using Windows.

Your mouse may also have a "Fast Wheel" located between the primary and secondary buttons or on the side so you can operate it with your thumb. The wheel lets you move through documents quickly by allowing you to roll to scroll. If you click this wheel once, your pointer changes to a large arrow and you can scroll extremely rapidly just by moving the mouse pointer up or down on the screen.

If you are left-handed, Windows allows you to reverse the primary and secondary mouse buttons so you can use the mouse with your left hand. You'll learn how to do this in a later lesson. For the purpose of this book, however, we will always consider the left button to be the primary button and the right button to be the secondary or shortcut menu button.

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You use the mouse buttons to select objects and to move objects or icons around the screen. You ***select***, or ***highlight***, an item by pointing to it and pressing and then releasing the left (primary) mouse button. When you press and then release the left mouse button, the action is referred to as ***clicking***; some commands require you to ***double-click*** (that is, click twice quickly). If you don't double-click the button fast enough, Windows interprets your action as two single clicks rather than one double-click. (With a little experience, you'll double-click expertly.)

Moving objects with the mouse is known as ***dragging***. You drag an object by placing the mouse pointer on the item to be moved, then pressing and holding down the primary mouse button while moving the object. When the pointer is at the right location, release the mouse button. Table 7-1 lists and explains five common techniques for using a standard two-button mouse device.

Computer Concepts

You can change your desktop settings so different shapes appear to indicate the different tasks. If you choose a desktop theme, the shapes will be changed automatically to match the theme.

TABLE 2-1
Operating the mouse

TO	DO THIS
Drag	Press and hold the mouse button and move the mouse in the desired direction, then release.
Click	Press and release the left (primary) mouse button.
Double-click	Click the left mouse button twice in rapid succession.
Right-click	Press and release the right (secondary) mouse button.
Select	Point to an item and click the mouse button.

Using the mouse proficiently requires a little practice—and a little patience. In a very short time, you'll use the mouse comfortably and smoothly.

STEP-BY-STEP 2.2

1. Move the mouse (or other pointing device) on your desk (or mouse pad). As you move the mouse, watch the screen to see how the pointer moves:
   - **a.** Move the pointer to the far left of your screen by sliding the mouse to the left on the desk or mouse pad. Do not lift the mouse.
   - **b.** Move the pointer to the far right of your screen by sliding the mouse to the right.
   - **c.** Move the pointer to the top of your screen by moving the mouse toward the top of your desk or mouse pad.
   - **d.** Move the pointer to the bottom of your screen by moving the mouse toward the bottom of your desk or mouse pad.
2. Display and then close the Start menu:
   - **a.** Point to the **Start** button in the corner of the taskbar.
   - **b.** Click the left mouse button.
   - **c.** Point to a clear area of the desktop and click the left mouse button. The Start menu closes.

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STEP-BY-STEP 2.2 Continued

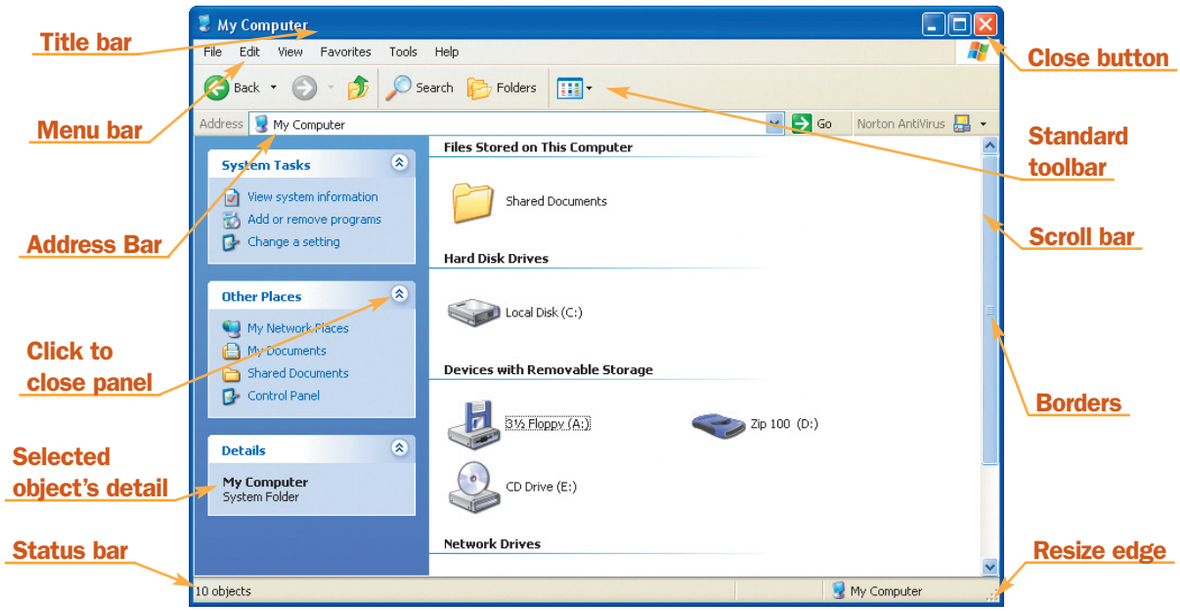
3. Select and rearrange an icon on the desktop:
   a. Point to the **Recycle Bin** icon, and hold (do not click) the pointer on the icon for a few seconds. Notice that a small window opens displaying a description of the icon. Click the mouse button. Notice that when you click an icon, it changes color. The change in color means the icon is selected.
   b. Click anywhere on the desktop. As you do so, notice that Recycle Bin is deselected (that is, it returns to its original color).
   c. Again point to the **Recycle Bin** icon.
   d. While holding down the mouse button, drag the icon about one inch to the right and release the mouse button. As you drag the icon, note how a "ghost image" of the icon follows the mouse pointer to indicate where the icon will be placed when you release the mouse button.
   e. Drag the Recycle Bin icon back to its original position.
4. Double-click the **Recycle Bin**. The Recycle Bin window opens.
5. Close the Recycle Bin window by clicking the **Close** button.

Identifying the Parts of a Window

1-3.2.1
1-3.2.4

In Lesson 5, you were introduced to the basic parts of the window. Let's take a closer look now at these tools and what they can do. Figure 2-4 identifies the parts of the window by name.

FIGURE 2-4
Parts of a window



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- The title bar is at the top of the window. It displays the name of the program running in a window—in this case, "My Computer."
- Directly below the title bar is a menu bar, which lists available menus (the specific choices depend on the program you are running). The menu bar in Figure 2-4 lists six choices: File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help.
- The ***Standard toolbar*** contains buttons that permit you to access various functions and to issue commands. The toolbar in the My Computer window has buttons for navigating your computer's resources and for changing the display of the objects in the window. If the toolbar is not displayed, open the View menu, select Toolbars, and select Standard Buttons.
- The ***Address Bar*** displays the name of the open folder or object. It also permits you to key the address of a Web page quickly without opening your browser. If it is not displayed, open the View menu, select Toolbars, and select Address Bar. Not all applications have an Address Bar option, however. Many programs indicate the name of an open file in the title bar with the program's name.
- In the rectangular window are icons, which you learned about in Lesson 5. In this window, the icons represent the parts of your computer system and programs to control the system. The icons in your window may be different from those shown in Figure 2-4. When you select an icon, a description of it displays below and to the left of the icon.
- The Minimize, Maximize/Restore Down, and Close buttons appear at the upper-right corner of the window on the same line as the title bar. Recall that the Minimize button reduces the window to a button on the taskbar, and the Maximize button enlarges the window to fill the screen. Once the window is full-screen size, the Maximize button changes to a Restore Down button, which enables you to restore the window to its previous (smaller) size. The Close button quickly closes the window.

Note

When you load Windows, the default settings on your computer may cause your screen to look slightly different from the screens shown in this text's figures.

- The borders are the four lines that define the limits of the window.
- The ***status bar*** provides information on the currently selected object or the task you are performing. As you choose menu items, select window objects, or issue commands, the actions are described on the status bar.
- The resize edge provides a large spot to grab when you want to resize a window without moving the upper-left corner.
- When the window is not large enough to display everything, you will see scroll bars. Clicking the scroll bar moves (scrolls) the contents of a window so you can view objects that are hidden.

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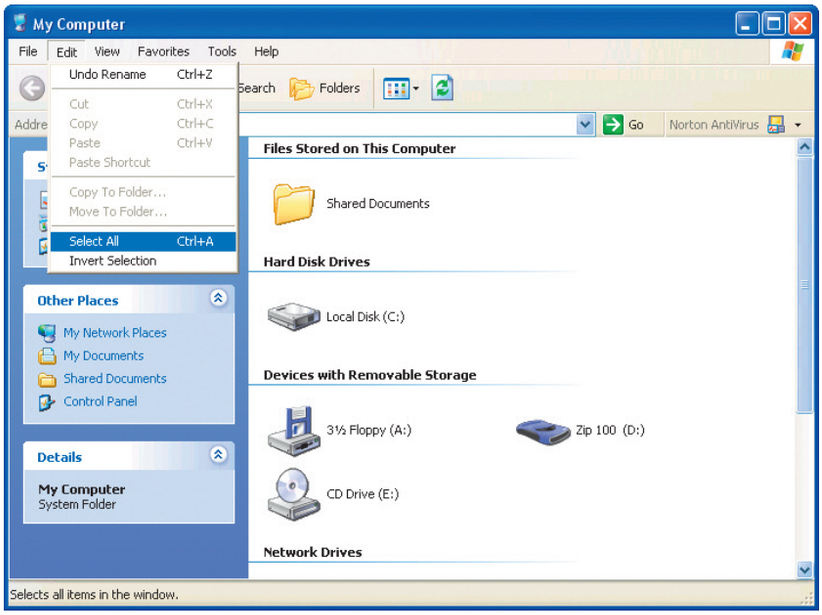
Working with Menus

A menu is a list of options or choices. Every window you open in Windows XP contains a menu bar offering menus. The My Computer window in Figure 2-5 has a menu bar with six menus: File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. Each of these menus, in turn, offers a number of ***commands*** you can issue to perform a task or function.

FIGURE 2-5
Menu in the My Computer window



If all these menu choices appeared on the desktop at the same time, your work area would be too cluttered to be useful. Windows' menus organize the choices so they are out of sight but within reach. To find out what choices are available on a particular menu, you display the menu by clicking it. When you click the menu name, the menu drops down, as shown in Figure 2-5. Notice the differences among the listed options. One is highlighted, some are in black letters, some are in a lighter color, and some are followed by three periods. All menu choices have one letter underlined. Each visual element has a special meaning, as explained below.

Highlighting

In Figure 2-5, the Select All menu option is highlighted; that is, the words appear in white letters within a dark box. Highlighting indicates that an option is currently selected.

Colors or Shading

Not all menu options are available to you all the time. The dark or black letters indicate options that are currently available. Light or grayed letters indicate options that are not available. Look closely at the Edit menu in Figure 2-5. Which options are currently available?

Ellipses

An ellipsis is a series of three periods (…) following some commands. See the Copy To Folder and Move To Folder commands in Figure 2-5, for example. An ellipsis tells you that if you choose this option, a second window or dialog box will be displayed, requesting more information from you. (You'll learn more about dialog boxes later.)

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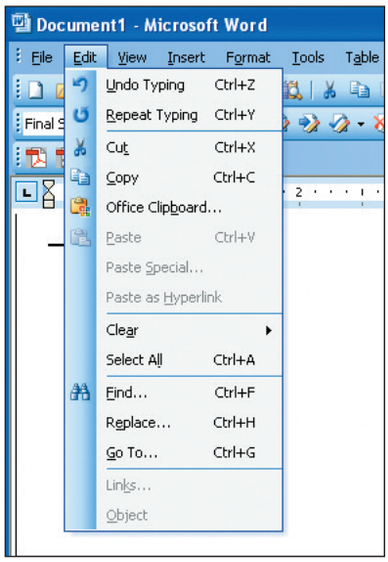
Selection Letters

In some applications, each menu option has one underscored letter or number, indicating a keyboard command you can use as an alternative to the mouse. On the keyboard, press the underscored letter or number to choose that command. You can press the selection letters only while the menu is displayed, but in program windows that support selection letters, you can use keyboard commands to display menus, too. For example, in many Microsoft software programs, the file names have an underscored letter (see Figure 2-6). By pressing the Alt key and the underscored letter at the same time, you can display the menu (for example, Alt + E displays the Edit menu in Figure 2-6).

FIGURE 2-6
An application window with menus that support selection letters



Shortcut Keys

Some menu options list ***shortcut keys*** to the right. Unlike selection letters, shortcut keys can be used even when the menu is not displayed. Shortcut keys also offer the advantage of not having to remove your hands from the keyboard while you are keying.

Shortcut keys generally combine the Alt, Ctrl, or Shift key with a letter key. In this text, such combinations are expressed as follows: Alt + X or Ctrl + O. In Figure 2-6, the shortcut keys for the Select All command are Ctrl + A. To execute this command using the shortcut keys, press the Ctrl key and hold it down while pressing the A key. Then release both keys at the same time.

Note

You can use either uppercase or lowercase letters for shortcut keys.

Right-Pointing Arrow

A right-pointing arrow next to a menu option (such as next to Clear in the Edit menu in Figure 2-6) indicates that if you point to that option, another menu will appear with more options. This second menu is a ***submenu***. Windows automatically opens submenus after the pointer has been resting on an option for a short period of time. You can click the option to display the submenu immediately.

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Selecting an Option from a Menu

To select an option from a menu, first open the menu by clicking the menu name on the menu bar. You'll find that as you move the pointer down the menu, the highlight also moves. Stop the pointer on the option you want to choose, and then click. The command you have chosen will execute.

You can also execute a command using the command's shortcut keys, if available. After you have become familiar with commands, you may find it easier to use shortcut keys for the commands you use most often.

STEP-BY-STEP 2.3

1. Click **Start**, and then click **My Computer** in the Start menu.

2. Display the options in the Favorites menu:
   a. Click the **Favorites** menu name in the menu bar.
   b. Select **Links** or let the mouse pointer rest on the option for a few seconds.
   c. You can click on a link, but if you do not have Internet access available, you will get a message saying the page cannot be displayed or that you do not have an Internet connection. If necessary, click **Work Offline**.
   d. If you do link to a Web page, click the **Close** button.

3. If necessary, restart My Computer and then select all the icons in the My Computer window:
   a. Click the title bar on the My Computer window to verify that it is selected.
   b. Key the shortcut **Ctrl + A**. All the icons are now selected.
   c. Click somewhere in the blank (white) space in the My Computer window to deselect the icons.
4. Close the My Computer window by clicking its **Close** button.

Working with Dialog Boxes

Some menu options, such as the Run… command in the Start menu, need more information before they can be executed. For example, before Windows can run (start) a program, it needs to know the program name. The ellipsis (…) that follows such a command signals that need for additional information. You provide the needed information by responding to a ***dialog box***, such as the one shown in Figure 2-7.

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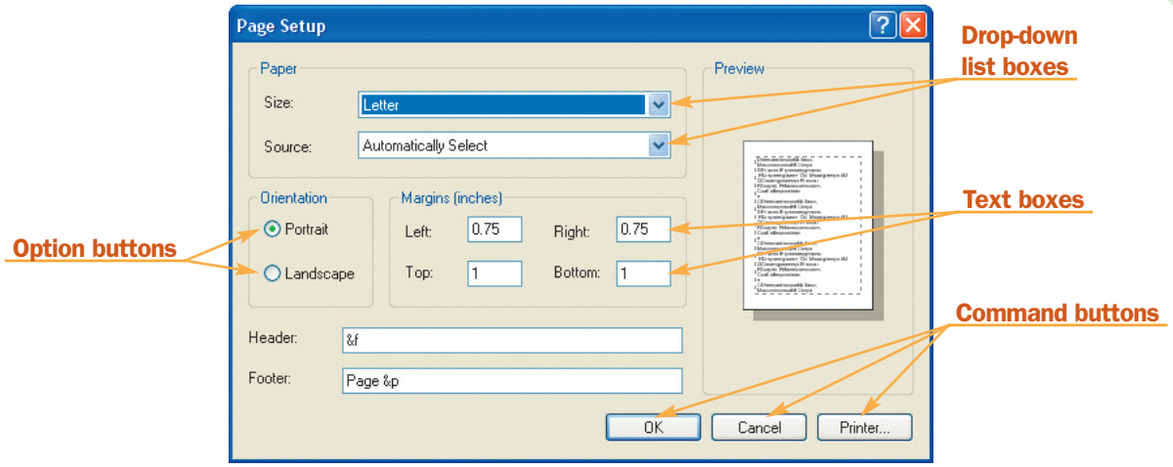
FIGURE 2-7
Command buttons, option buttons, and text boxes in a dialog box



A dialog box is itself a window and has some of the same features as a window, such as an identifying title bar and a Close button. But dialog boxes contain a number of other elements that help you give information to your computer. Let's take a look at the elements you will find most often in dialog boxes.

Buttons

There are two types of buttons: command buttons and option buttons.

- ***Command buttons*** carry out your instructions using the information selected in the dialog box. Command buttons are always rectangular. When you press a command button, the program accepts your instructions. If there is an ellipsis on the button (for example, Browse...), choosing it will open another dialog box. Typical command buttons are Open, Help, Cancel, and OK. The dialog box in Figure 2-7 contains three command buttons: OK, Cancel, and Printer....
- ***Option buttons*** (sometimes called ***radio buttons***) allow you to choose one option from a group of options (see Figure 2-7). To change a selection, simply choose a different button.

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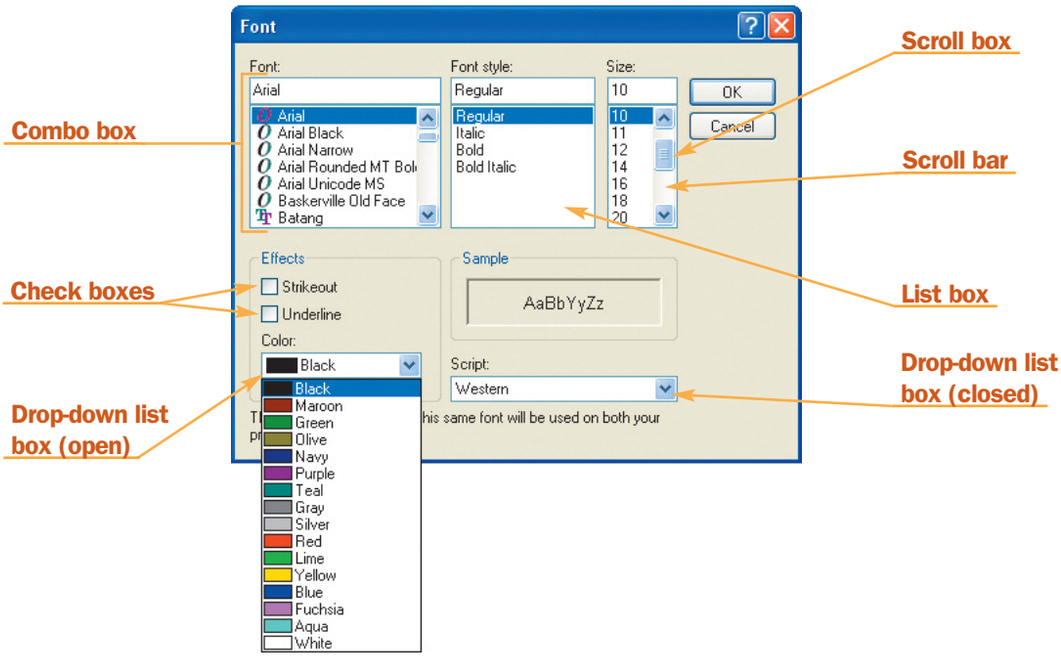
Boxes

There are four types of boxes: text boxes, check boxes, list boxes, and drop-down list boxes (see Figure 2-8). A combo box combines two types of boxes.

FIGURE 2-8
A dialog box containing several kinds of boxes



- ***Text boxes:*** Text boxes allow you to key information in the dialog box. A text box may contain a blinking insertion point to show you where to begin keying, or it may already contain text that you can change as necessary. To change existing text, highlight it by double-clicking it and then key the new text.
- ***Check boxes:*** Check boxes allow you to make choices from a group. However, unlike option buttons, you can check several boxes; that is, you can select a variety of options. Clicking with the mouse selects (✓) or deselects a check box.
- ***List boxes:*** List boxes present a set of options in list format. When the list of options is too lengthy to fit in the box, scroll bars are available to allow you to scroll through the items. Drag the scroll box to move up or down the list. Figure 2-8 shows scroll bars on the Font list box.
- ***Drop-down list boxes:*** Drop-down list boxes display only one option and a special arrow symbol. Click the arrow symbol to reveal the entire list box. Figure 2-8 shows two drop-down list boxes, with one of the lists displayed.
- ***Combo box:*** A combo box is a combination of a text box and a list box. You can select from the list or enter your own choice by keying it in the text box part of the combo box.

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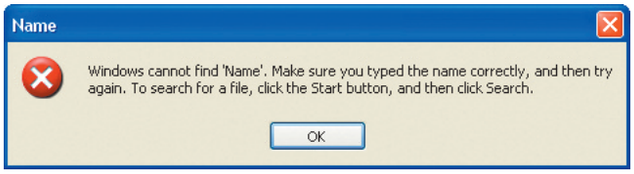
STEP-BY-STEP 2.4

1. Open the Start menu by clicking the **Start** button.

2. Move the pointer to the **Run...** command on the Start menu and click. The Run dialog box appears.
3. If the Run dialog box on your screen contains text, make sure the text is highlighted.
4. Key your first name in the text box—do not press Enter.
5. Click the **OK** command button. You now see a message box (another form of dialog box) similar to the one illustrated in Figure 2-9. Windows is telling you that it cannot locate the file you asked to run.

FIGURE 2-9
Message box



6. Click the **OK** command button to cancel the message display.
7. Click the **Cancel** command button to close the Run... dialog box.

Navigating Through Windows

1-3.2.2

Windows' multitasking ability allows you to perform more than one task at a time. As a result, you may have a lot of windows open on the desktop at one time, and this can be confusing. You can manage those windows and switch between them simply by rearranging the windows on your desktop.

Arranging Windows on the Desktop

In Lesson 5, you learned to drag a window to a different location on the desktop. Dragging can be very time-consuming when you have a number of open windows. A shortcut menu hidden on the taskbar makes it easy to arrange open windows. The ***shortcut menu*** contains the options that are most commonly performed from the current window display. While the shortcut menu is handy, not all options are included on it. To access the shortcut menu, point to any portion of the

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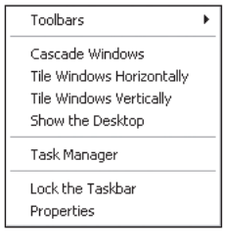
taskbar that does not contain a button and right-click. The shortcut menu in Figure 2-10 displays, allowing you to instruct Windows to organize the open windows on your desktop. You can choose one of three different arrangements: Cascade, Tile Horizontally, or Tile Vertically.

FIGURE 2-10
Shortcut menu



- The Cascade Windows option cascades the open windows into a stack with title bars showing; the active window is always in front of the stack, on the top layer.
- The Tile Windows Horizontally option tiles the open windows across the desktop from top to bottom, without overlapping any portion of any window.
- The Tile Windows Vertically option divides the desktop evenly among the open windows and aligns the windows across the screen, left to right, without overlapping any window.

The shortcut menu also contains a Show the Desktop command, which reduces all windows to buttons on the taskbar. You can cancel any option you select by using the Undo command. For example, the shortcut menu would list an Undo Cascade option once you selected the Cascade Windows option. Selecting this option restores the display to its previous arrangement.

At times, you may need to move a window to uncover another window or an object on the desktop. The quickest way is to drag the window by its title bar. If the window is maximized, you must first restore it to its previous size before you move it.

If you want greater control over the position and size of a window, resize it by dragging one of the three types of window borders (horizontal, vertical, or corner) in the direction you prefer.

Switching Between Windows

When multiple windows are open on your desktop, the one you are working with is called the ***active window***. Remember that the active window is easy to recognize because its title bar is a different color or intensity. You can make any open window the active window in one of two ways:

- If any portion of the window you want to work with is visible, click it. It will come to the front and become the active window.
- At any time, press and hold down the Alt key; then press Tab. A small window appears in the center of the display. The window contains icons for all items currently open, including items minimized on the taskbar. If you hold down the Alt key and then press and release Tab, you can cycle through all the icons. A box surrounds the item's icon and a description appears at the bottom of the window as it is selected. When the one you want is selected, release the Alt key. That item comes to the front and becomes the active window. This is called the fast Alt + Tab method for switching to a different window.

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STEP-BY-STEP 2.5

1. Double-click the **Recycle Bin** icon to open the Recycle Bin window.

2. Click the **Start** button, and then click **My Computer** on the Start menu to open the My Computer window.

3. Click the **Start** button, and then click **Search** on the Start menu to open the Search Results window.

4. Tile the open windows using the shortcut menu:
   a. Point to a blank area in the taskbar and right-click to display the shortcut menu.
   b. Select the **Tile Windows Vertically** option. The windows are now arranged differently, in a tiled format.

5. Right-click on the taskbar and select the **Tile Windows Horizontally** option from the shortcut menu. The windows are rearranged into this tiled format.

6. Right-click on the taskbar and select the **Cascade Windows** option from the shortcut menu. The windows are rearranged into a cascade format.

7. Change the active window:
   a. Click the **My Computer** window. If it wasn't in front, it comes to the foreground and becomes the active window.
   b. Click the **Search Results** window to make it the active window. This window comes to the front as the active window. (You may need to move the windows around on the desktop to see the Search Results Window.)

8. Undo the cascade format and return the windows to the Tile Windows Horizontally format:
   a. Point to a blank area in the taskbar and right-click to display the shortcut menu.
   b. Select the **Undo Cascade** option. The windows are again arranged in a horizontal tiled format.

9. Right-click on the taskbar and select the **Show the Desktop** option on the shortcut menu to minimize all windows to buttons on the taskbar.

10. Open the Search Results window using the Alt + Tab feature:
    a. Press and hold down the **Alt** key.
    b. Press and release the **Tab** key until the Search Results icon is outlined, and then release the **Alt** key.

11. Notice that this window is still in tile format. Display the Search Results window in the cascade format by right-clicking on the taskbar and selecting the **Cascade Windows** option on the shortcut menu.

12. Close all open windows by clicking their **Close** buttons. (You may need to open the other programs on the taskbar to close their windows.)

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1-3.2.4

The Windows Help Feature

Selecting the Help and Support option from the Start menu opens the Help and Support Center window. The Help and Support Center offers support in four categories:

- *Pick a Help topic* contains general information about a topic. For example, clicking What's new in Windows XP displays a list of resources that you can use to learn about Windows XP features.
- *Ask for assistance* provides two ways for getting outside help. The Remote Assistance option allows you to invite someone to help you. Using an Internet connection, anyone running Windows XP can view your screen and, with your permission, work on your computer. The Support option enables you to get help from Microsoft, from product experts, or to discuss your questions with other Windows XP users online.
- *Pick a task* provides access to the latest updates for your computer's operating system, hardware, and software. You can also use this category to find Windows XP–compatible hardware and software, restore your computer to a previous working state, or access helpful tools to keep your computer running smoothly.
- *Did you know?* displays a tip on using Windows XP. Each time the Help and Support Center is opened, the tip that is displayed is selected at random from a group of tips, so be sure to read the tip each time you access the Help and Support Center.

The Help and Support Center is designed to look and work much like a Web page. It has two sections, called panes. When you point to an underlined topic in the left pane, the pointer changes to a hand with the index finger pointing to the topic or word. This indicates that the topic is actually a link. When you click a link, the Help and Support entry is displayed in the right pane. For example, if you click the *Fixing a problem* link in the Pick a Help topic menu, the Help and Support entry will be displayed in the right pane.

Getting Assistance Online

The Help and Support Center's *Ask for assistance* section offers an option called Remote Assistance. Remote Assistance is a convenient way for someone you know to connect to your computer from another computer running Windows XP, chat with you, and observe your computer screen as you work. With your permission, you can receive the remote user's keystrokes as if he or she were keying on your keyboard. In this way, you are able to watch the remote user demonstrate the solution to your problem.

The second option in this section allows you to get support online from a technician who can answer your questions in e-mail or an online chat session. This option also gives you access to newsgroups that can offer tips and guidelines about working with Windows XP.

Using the Windows XP Application Help System

Selecting the Help option and then the Help Topics menu item (or the name of the application's Help, usually the first option) from a Windows XP application menu displays the Help Viewer for that program. For example, when you click Help in the Windows Paint program, and then choose Help Topics, you see the Help Viewer window shown in Figure 2-11. In some programs, the Help Viewer may appear in a narrow pane at the right of the document window; it has two panes when fully opened, as shown in Figure 2-11.

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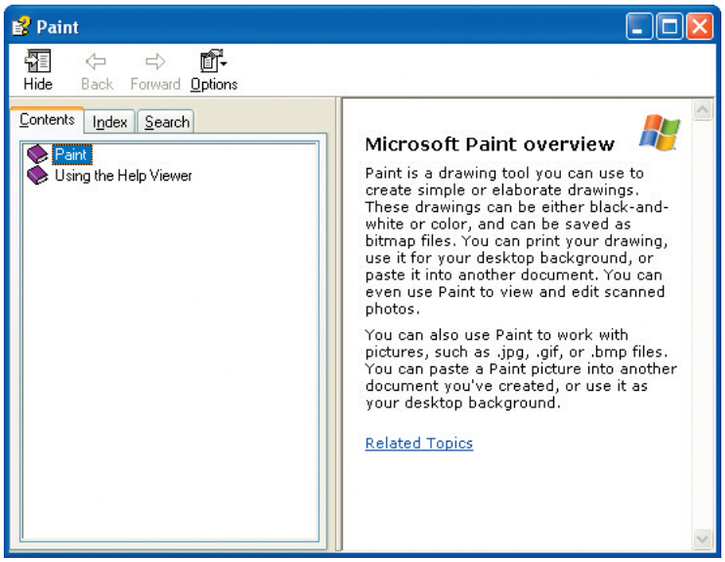
FIGURE 2-11
Windows Paint program's Help Viewer



The three tabs in the left pane of the Help Viewer let you locate and navigate Help topics in different ways.

- The Contents tab groups topics into general categories so you can browse the table of contents for an application's Help system to locate a topic. Each main topic has a book icon next to it. Click an icon to display a list of topics within that main topic.
- The Index tab provides an alphabetical listing of key words and terms with topics specific to the application you are using.
- The Search tab lets you search the Help topics for a term or feature. Again, the available help topics are specific to the application you are using.

STEP-BY-STEP 2.6

1. Click the **Start** button, and then select the **Help and Support** option on the Start menu.

2. Maximize the Help and Support Center window, if necessary.
3. Click the **Fixing a problem** link under the Pick a Help topic menu to display the Help and Support entry.
4. Read the choices in the listing in the left pane, and then click the **Application and software problems** link to display the Help and Support entry for this topic in the right pane. Notice that as you point on the topic, it becomes underlined, indicating that it is a link, and it is highlighted when the topic's entry is displayed in the right pane.

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STEP-BY-STEP 2.6 Continued

5. Read the choices for this Help and Support entry in the right pane, and then click **Print Troubleshooter** to display its Help and Support entry.
6. Click the **Close** button to close the Help and Support window.

7. Click the **Start** button, select **All Programs**, select **Accessories**, and then select **Paint** from the menu. When the Windows Paint program opens, click **Help** on the menu bar, then select the **Help Topics** option. The Paint Help Viewer opens, as shown in Figure 2-11.

8. Click the **Show** button, if necessary, to display both panes of the Help window.
9. Click the **Contents** tab, if necessary, to bring it to the front.
10. Click the **Paint** book icon to display its subtopics.
11. Click the **Work with Color** topic and then click the **Paint with a brush** entry in the list of links that drops down. The topic entry is displayed in the Help Viewer's right pane.
12. Click the **Paint** book icon in the navigation pane to close the book.
13. Close the Paint program Help system by clicking the **Close** button on the Help Viewer's title bar.

14. Close Paint by clicking the **Close** button on the title bar.

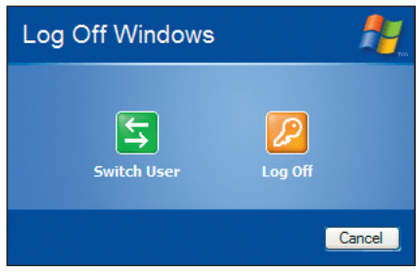
Shutting Down Windows

1-3.2.3
1-3.1.5

You shut down Windows by using the Start button. You have two choices along the bottom of the Start menu: Log Off or Turn Off Computer (or Shut Down). Each of these choices has options:

- *Log off*—Selecting this choice keeps your computer running while you log off the computer so someone else can use it. If you select this option (and your system is set up for multiple users), Windows will open a message box asking if you want to Switch User or Log Off, as shown in Figure 2-12. (If your system is not set up for multiple users, the message box gives you the choice between logging off or canceling this action.)

FIGURE 2-12
Log Off Windows message box



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- If you choose Switch User, the Welcome screen appears, but Windows keeps your open programs waiting for you. When the new user logs off, Windows switches back to you as the user and everything is just as you left it.
- If you choose Log Off, Windows saves your work and your settings and returns to the Welcome screen for the next user. Windows does not turn the computer off when this option is selected.

- ***Turn Off Computer*** (or ***Shut Down***)—Selecting this choice instructs Windows to prepare to shut down. Each time you select Turn Off Computer, a message box displays, giving you three options:
  - *Stand By*—Select this option if you want to save electrical energy but keep your current programs open so you can resume where you left off.
  - *Turn Off*—This option closes all programs (if you didn't close them first) and shuts down Windows. Depending on how your computer system is set up, your computer's and monitor's power may also turn off. If it is not set up to do this, a message box will appear informing you that it is safe to turn off the power to your computer.
  - *Restart*—This option quits Windows and restarts your computer, opening Windows back up.

STEP-BY-STEP 2.7

1. Click the **Start** button, and select the **Turn Off Computer** option (or the **Shut Down** option if applicable) from the Start menu. Shutting down the computer is good to do each time you are finished working for the day.

2. Select the **Restart** option. Windows will shut down and then automatically start running again. This is helpful if you decide you need to continue working or if your computer locks up.

3. Log on if necessary to start Windows.

4. Shut down Windows again. This time select the **Turn Off** option (or the **Shut Down** option if applicable). The computer may automatically turn itself off, or you will see a message box informing you when it is safe to turn off the computer. Follow your instructor's directions about turning off the computer.

Note

If your Start menu choice is Shut Down instead of Turn Off Computer, your message box will be named Shut Down Windows and it will contain a drop-down list of options. These options are Log off [User Name], Shut down, and Restart. Log off works the same as clicking Log Off from the Start menu. Shut Down is comparable to Turn Off. And Restart functions in the same manner as Restart from the Turn off computer message box.

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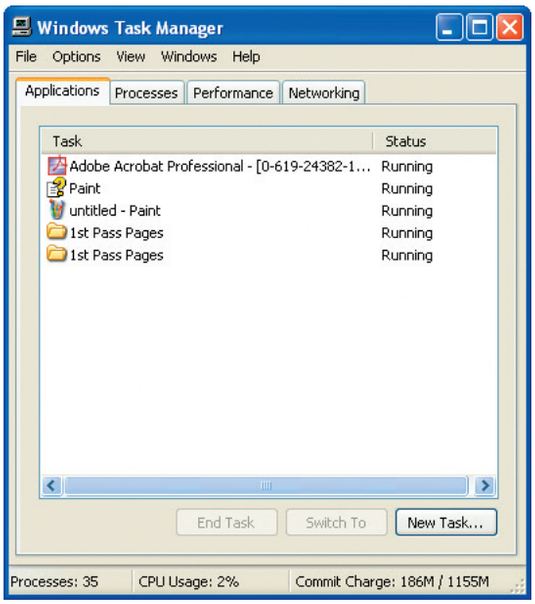
Sometimes a Windows application will stop functioning or will not respond, and you cannot close the program or perform any other tasks in Windows, such as turning off the computer. Use the Ctrl + Alt + Del key combination (press all three keys at the same time). The Windows Task Manager, shown in Figure 2-13, will appear. There are three options indicated at the bottom of the box—End Task, Switch To, and New Task. End Task will close the nonfunctioning program. To use the Switch To option, highlight one of the programs in the Tasks column that the Status column indicates is Running. The New Task button allows you to launch another program in a dialog box similar to the Run dialog box. If the system has "locked up" and you cannot close any applications, click the Shut Down button at the top of the Windows Task Manager box and you will see options including Turn off and Restart as well as other options. Select Turn off or Restart to safely shut down the computer when the applications are not responding at all.

FIGURE 2-13
The Windows Task Manager dialog box



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned:

- Most Windows activity takes place on the desktop.
- The Windows opening screen has the following basic components: the desktop, the taskbar, the Quick Launch bar, the Start button, the mouse pointer, and one or more desktop icons.
- You use the taskbar to open programs and documents and to switch back and forth between running programs.

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- The Start menu options let you launch programs, open recently used files, change your system's settings, find files or folders, access Help topics, and close and shut down Windows.
- The Quick Launch icons let you open a window or dialog box with a click.
- The mouse controls an on-screen pointer. The shape of the pointer will change depending on where you are on-screen and what you are doing.
- Mouse buttons let you make selections by clicking, right-clicking, and double-clicking. The primary button is used most frequently. The secondary button is used for shortcuts.
- The mouse lets you move (drag) objects.
- A menu is a list of options or choices. You make selections from a menu by pointing at and clicking an option or using the up or down arrow keys.
- On a menu, a highlighted option (white letters within a dark box) indicates that this option is currently selected, and light or grayed letters (as opposed to black or dark) mean that an option is not available.
- A right-pointing arrow next to a menu option indicates that the option has a submenu with more options.
- A series of three periods (…), called an ellipsis, following a command tells you that if you choose this option, a dialog box will open to request more information.
- A dialog box is a window. In it you will find command buttons and option buttons. Command buttons are rectangular and you click the button to execute a command. Option buttons (also known as radio buttons) let you choose one option from a group of options.
- A dialog box may also have check boxes, list boxes, text boxes, and drop-down list boxes, each of which allows you to make selections or key information.
- Windows' multitasking capability means that more than one window can be open at a time. The windows can be arranged on the desktop in a cascade, horizontally tiled, or vertically tiled format. Click any window or use Alt + Tab to bring a desired window to the front and make it the active window.
- You can access the Windows Help feature by clicking Help and Support on the Start menu.
- The *Ask for assistance* option in the Help and Support Center offers a variety of ways to get help, including online help. With Remote Assistance, you can allow someone you know to connect to your computer and demonstrate the answer to a question. The Support page also gives you access to Windows XP newsgroups where you may be able to find an answer to your questions.
- Every Windows XP application has a Help menu that opens the application's Help Viewer. The left pane of the Help Viewer contains three tabs that provide different options for searching the Help system. When you select an entry on one of the tabs, the right pane displays detailed information about the topic.
- When you want to shut down Windows, you select either the Log Off or the Turn Off Computer option (or the Shut Down option) from the Start menu.

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VOCABULARY *Review*

Define the following terms:

Active window
Address Bar
Clicking
Command buttons
Commands
Default
Dialog box
Double-click
Dragging
Linking
Log off
Log on
Mouse buttons
Option buttons
Radio buttons
Right-clicking
Select (highlight)
Shortcut keys
Shortcut menu
Shortcut menu button
Standard desktop
Standard toolbar
Start button
Status bar
Submenu

REVIEW *Questions*

MATCHING

Match the correct term in Column 2 to its description in Column 1.

Column 1	Column 2
___ 1. Desktop component that contains buttons for open programs	A. dragging
___ 2. Help option that allows someone at another computer to view your screen via the Internet	B. active window
	C. Recycle Bin
___ 3. Graphical element you move around the screen to select, move, and manipulate screen elements	D. taskbar
___ 4. Act of moving an object with the mouse	E. menu
___ 5. Icon on the desktop that contains deleted files	F. option buttons
___ 6. A list of options or choices	G. default
___ 7. A predetermined choice made by the software	H. command buttons
___ 8. The window in which you are presently working	I. Remote Assistance
___ 9. In a dialog box, the buttons that carry out your instructions using the information selected	J. mouse pointer
___ 10. In a dialog box, the buttons that represent a group of choices from which you can select one	

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MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the best response for each of the following statements.

1. The list of choices on a Windows menu bar _____.
   - **A.** is the same for all programs
   - **B.** will vary according to the program
   - **C.** displays as icons
   - **D.** None of the above

2. Shortcut keys _____.
   - **A.** can be used even when the menu is not displayed
   - **B.** are keystrokes that must be used in place of the mouse
   - **C.** always use the Alt key
   - **D.** cannot be used unless the menu is displayed

3. When a window is not large enough to display everything, _____.
   - **A.** you can click the Restore Down button to enlarge it
   - **B.** the status bar will indicate there is more to be displayed
   - **C.** you should drag its title bar to resize it
   - **D.** scroll bars will be displayed

4. The visual element that indicates whether a menu option is available is _____.
   - **A.** an ellipsis
   - **B.** the color of the option
   - **C.** an underscored letter
   - **D.** highlighting

5. If additional information is needed before a command can be executed, Windows displays a _____.
   - **A.** message box
   - **B.** dialog box
   - **C.** control-menu box
   - **D.** prompt box

PROJECTS

PROJECT 2-1

The local library has computers available with Windows XP Professional installed. You will be using one of these computers but can only spend one hour on it. Develop a strategy to maximize your time. Using the information from this and previous lessons, create a priority list, ranking the most important features to explore and skills to practice.

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PROJECT 2-2

1. At the Web site *www.microsoft.com/education/Tutorials.aspx* you can find information about free tutorials for Microsoft software. In the dialog box on the screen, you will see several drop-down list boxes that offer choices about age level, learning area, and product.
2. Select **Windows XP** as the product and choose appropriate options in the other lists.
3. Click the **Search** button at the bottom of the dialog box.
4. One or more tutorials will be listed in the search results. Click on the link to the tutorial that looks most interesting to you and use the information provided to write a summary of the features the tutorial offers. (Do not download the tutorial without your instructor's permission.)

PROJECT 2-3

1. Open the Windows Help and Support feature from the Start menu.
2. Click on the topic **What's new in Windows XP** and continue following links until information about new features in Windows XP opens in the right panel.
3. Click on the link **Related Topics** for more new features.
4. Read the information and make a list of some of the new features of the operating system. You should include at least five new features and what they do in your list.

TEAMWORK PROJECT

In your office, several people share one computer and each must log on using his or her own user name to start Windows. Recently, some workers have noticed that they are missing data, files are not where they should be, and their standard desktop sometimes looks a little different. There is some concern that workers are logging on using other user names. Working with two coworkers, research passwords in the Help and Support feature and online and then write a report suggesting how the computer users can select and use a password that will prevent unauthorized access to individual files and settings.

CRITICAL *Thinking*

In two weeks your computer will be upgraded to Windows XP Professional. This will be your first exposure to this operating system, and you would like to be prepared for the transition. Develop a list of off-line research resources where you can explore the vocabulary and basic procedures of running a Windows PC as well as develop an understanding of some of the pros and cons of desktop automation. These resources can include people, bookstores, and broadcast media. Access at least one of these resources, and write a summary of your findings.