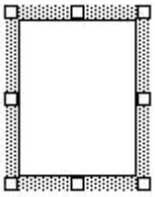
Text Boxes: Flexibility and Control

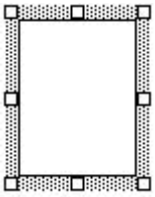
HINT: It is recommended that you print the page. Use the Print Option in the File menu at the top left corner of the screen.

This page and the activities for this section are written in 3 parts:

Part 1 - Using Text Boxes
Part 2 - Text Box Tutorial
Part 3 - Creating Text Boxes



Why use text boxes?



Text boxes give control that is not possible when just typing a document. Text boxes in a word processed or desktop published document add flexible elements that give the writer creativity in the placement and movement of blocks of text. They allow the writer to define and create different looks for all or part of a page. Using text boxes enables the writer to add color and emphasis that draws the reader's eyes to important information on the page. Graphics and word art, which will be discussed in future activities, share many of the characteristics of text boxes. As you learn the basics of text boxes in this three-part activity, you are learning skills you will be able to apply in subsequent activities.

Part 1 - Using Text Boxes

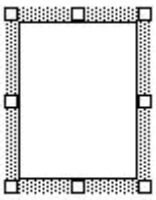
Let's start by practicing using text boxes that have already been created. After reading Chapter 4, *Word Processors, Desktop Publishing, and Web Based Editors*, and after reading the following directions, click on "Text Box Assignment" link at the end of this section.

Clicking on the "Text Box Assignment" link will allow you to download a Word document. Do you remember how to download a document from course 1? First, simply click on the link. Next, you should get a dialog box that asks if you want to open the file or save it to your disk. Choose to "Save it to disk" and use the "Browse" button to save the document where you want it on your computer. After it is downloaded to your computer, you can open it in Word just like any other document.

The Word document that you download contains text boxes that reflect the sections in the chapter comparing the three types of publishing tools. Your assignment is to fill in the text boxes with summaries of the information found in each section.

Each of the text boxes were created to allow you to add information following the "bullets". To add the text, you must first click after the bullet where you want to begin typing. If you do not click inside the text box you will be typing outside the box and the formatting of the page may be altered. (If that happens don't panic, just erase or "undo" what you have just typed, and click in the text box before you begin to type again. Remember that Ctrl+z is a shortcut keystroke for the "undo" command.) This is a case where we want to think "inside the box."

Each text box has a fixed size and if you continue to type beyond the size of the box your words will seem to disappear. If this is the case, you can enlarge the text box by clicking on the border of the text box so that it is highlighted. You will know it is highlighted when the border expands and eight little boxes called "handles" appear around the perimeter, as pictured below. To make the box larger click and drag any of the handles. The box will enlarge in the direction that you drag it. In this case, click and drag the handle in the middle of the bottom line of the box so that you maintain the established width of the box. In other cases, you may want to resize the text box in other directions.



Ready to begin your adventure into the world of the text box? Click on the following link to download the text box activity document:

Text Box Assignment #1

When you have finished writing your summary bullets for Chapter 4, **save your document and send it as an email attachment to your online mentor**.

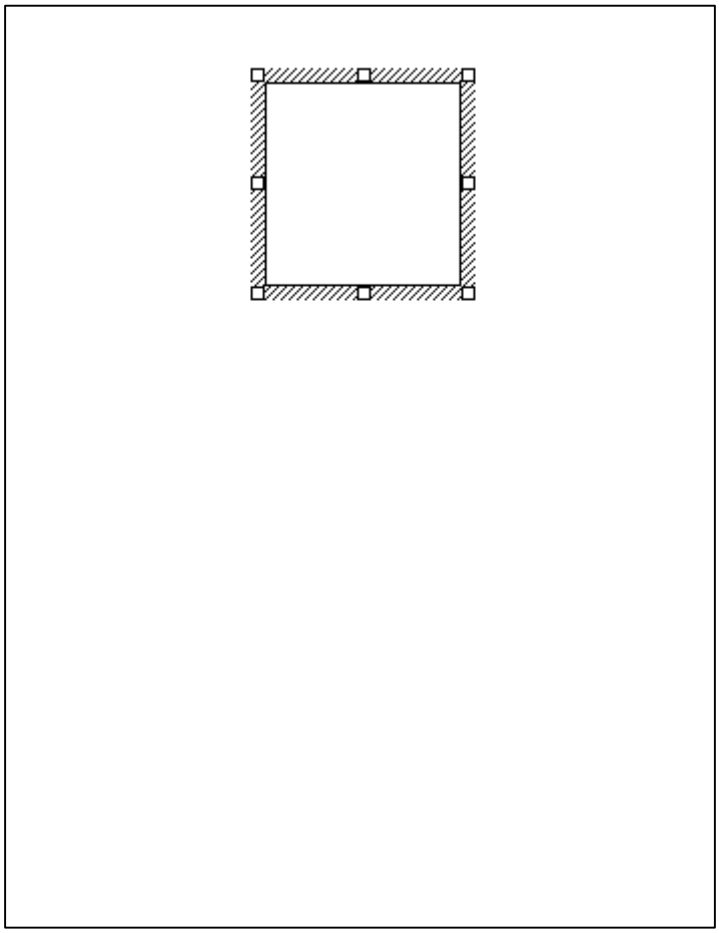
Part 2 - Text Box Tutorial

Now that you have had a little practice using the text boxes, it's time to learn how to create and format them.

Step 1: Open Microsoft Word and start with a new, blank document.

Step 2: To insert a text box, click “insert” on the Ribbon and then "Text Box." Select “Draw Text Box”

Step 3: Your cursor will change from an "I-beam" to a "+". Click and drag a text box, any size at the center of the page. You will move it later, but for now let’s start in the middle of the page. Your page should look like this:



Step 4: In the box, type your name, address and telephone number.

Step 5: Change the font if you want to use another style and/or size. (This example below shows the font "Comic Sans MS" at 14 pt size.)

Step 6: Resize the text box to fit close to the text that you have entered. It should look something like this:

Mary Learner
Center High School
123 Main St.
Scholar, VA 22209
(703) 555-2002

Step 7: Now let's format the box to change some of the properties. First, let's change the colors of your text box. Double click the outside edge of the text box. Notice the Ribbon above opens a new tab named “Drawing Tools Format”. This “new” tab allows you to format your text box any way you wish.

Right clicking the text box, and selecting “Format Shape” is another way to edit your text box but, for now, let’s stick with the commands on the Ribbon.

Step 8: The "Shape Fill" option refers to the color inside the text box. Change the color by clicking on the down arrow next to the "Shape Fill". Pick a color you like. Shape Fill also lets you add a picture to the background of your text box, change the gradient and even the texture.

Step 9: The "Shape Outline" option refers to the color of the border around your text box. This option gives you a few choices to make. You can change the Color, "Dashes," and "Weight:" of the border by clicking on the down arrows next to the option boxes and making your choices.

Step 10: Make your choices and change the look of the text box you created. If you change the line style, you may have to adjust the size of the box again so that all of the text is visible. The following example shows a yellow "Fill" and a green "Line" with a "Weight" change to 6 pt.

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Sometimes a reverse type makes a big impact in a document. This can be created by clicking on "Shape Outline" and selecting “No Outline”. Next click “Shape Fill” and select a dark fill color. Notice what happens to your font color as you select different fill shades. Your font color automatically adjusts as you change colors. If this does not happen, you will need to change your font color on your own, in order to see it through the darker shade. If you lose sight of your words, because they match the background color you choose, click and drag inside the text box. This should allow you find them and change them to white or another light color. You can change the alignment of the text if you like the look of centered text. Any text changes need to be made while the text is highlighted for the change to take effect. There are icons for alignment and font color on the Home tab of the Ribbon.

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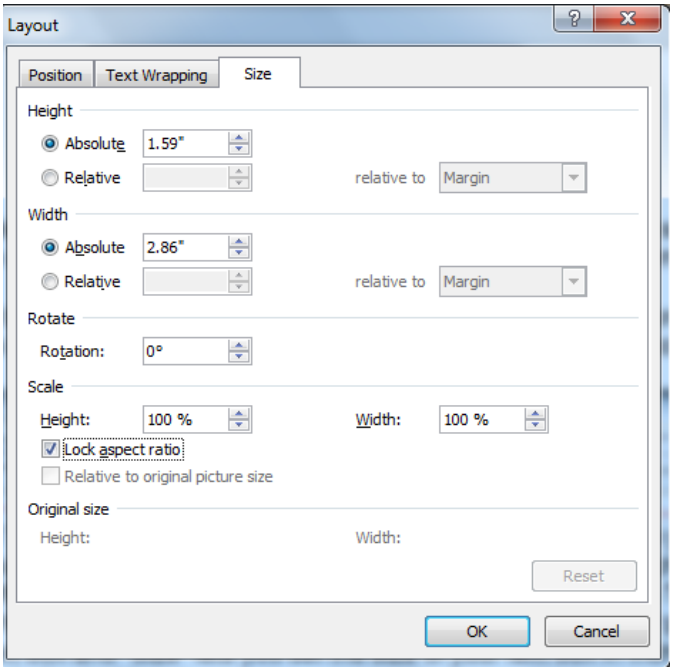
Step 11: Create and change the appearance of a few text boxes to make sure that you understand the above directions. Email you mentor if you have any problems.

Step 12: Let’s take a few minutes and look at the other options available on the “Drawing Tools Format” tab that are available when you format your text box.

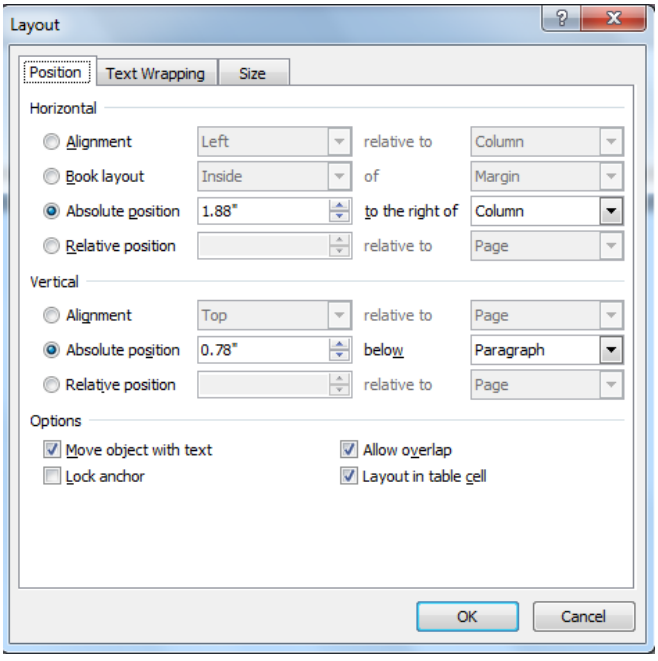
“Insert Shapes” allows you to add shapes to your box, “Shape Styles” give you different preset fill and outline options, “Shape Effects” allow you to add effects, such as glow, shadow and reflection to the edges of your text box. “Position” and “Wrap Text” allow you to choose how you want your text box to interact with any text on your page that is outside your text box and “Size” lets you set the size of your text box in inches, and allow you to scale the text box to any size.

If you click the small box with the arrow in the lower right corner of the “Size” area, the “Advanced Layout: Size” dialog box will open.

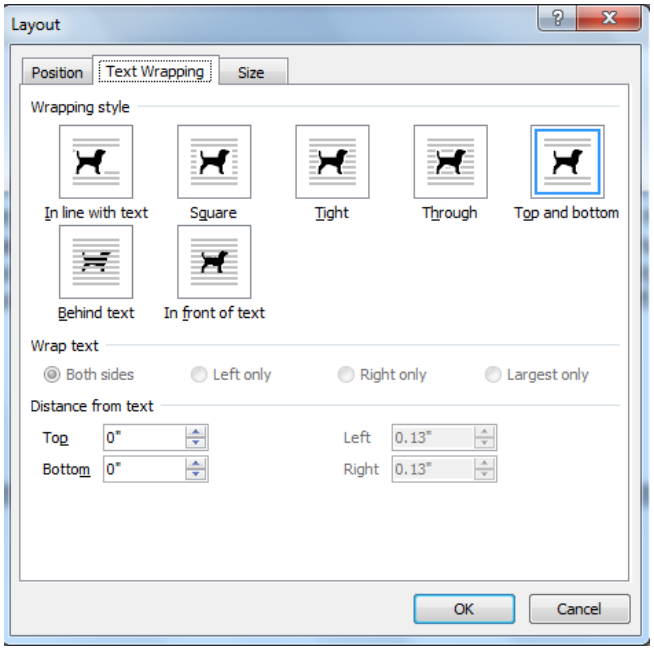
If you check the lock aspect ratio box, on the “Size” tab, the text box will maintain the original size ratio and increase the height and width in proportion to each other when you resize your text box.



The "Position" tab allows you to set the position of the text box on the page. There are two very important boxes on this page - the "Move object with text" and "Lock anchor" options. If these boxes are checked, the text box, or any other graphic that you might use, will attach itself to the text outside of the box. If you move the text outside the box, the text box will also automatically move with the text. It is often helpful to *uncheck the (Move object with text) check box*. Many frustrations may arise if you leave this little box checked.



The "Text Wrapping" tab is also important when you are adding a text box as an element in a larger document. Before you set the "Text Wrapping" options, you need to make a decision. What do you want the text to do outside the text box? This is what is called wrapping. Do you want the outside text to wrap around your text box closely? Do you want the text box to have text above and below only and nothing to the left or right? Or do you want the text to go through the text box (which is sometimes the case when the text box is being used as a watermark)? These choices are the same when inserting and formatting images into a document, so some may be more appropriate for images than text boxes. Try choosing different options and seeing the effects.



The "Text Wrapping" tab may look a little different in different versions of Word, but the concept is the same. Options might be in different locations. If you are having trouble locating these features, email your online mentor, and he or she will help you find the feature you need.

Step 13: Now it's time to experiment. Try some different combinations. Add some text outside of the text box and see how the text box "acts" with other text. Email your mentor whenever questions arise. When you are ready and you have all of your questions answered, move on to part 3.

Part 3 - Creating Text Boxes

Now that you are an expert, let's make some text boxes!

There is some important information in Chapter 4 that you will need to remember. Use text boxes to create a document that will help you remember.

Creating Text Boxes Assignment:

- Create 3 text boxes
- Use the following titles for the three text boxes : Word Processor, Desktop Publisher, Web Based Editor
- Using the information on pages 84-86 in the book, create a bulleted list of reasons to use/choose that tool
- Add your name and email address either as another text box, or as text outside the box
- **Email the final document to your mentor**