

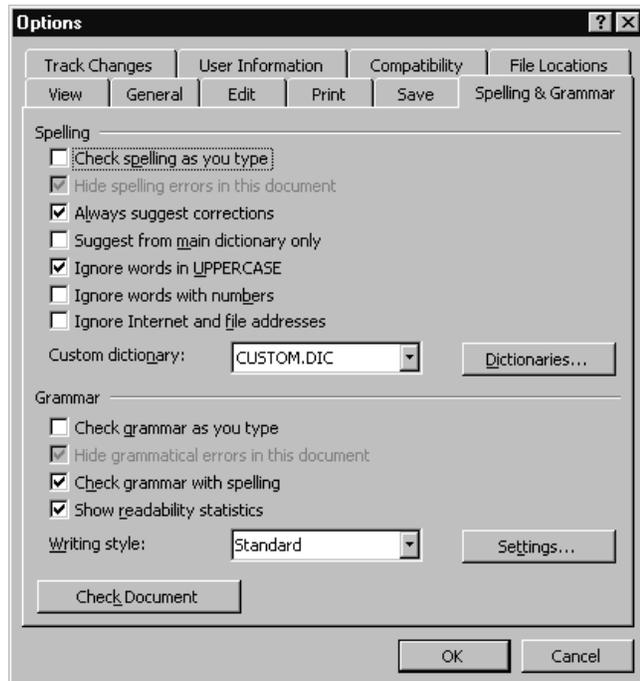
Select your tools carefully.

Microsoft Word has many features that hinder rather than help, no matter how slick they seem. I recommend you change default settings to make Word a better tool.

Spelling and Grammar

Do not edit while you type your draft. Unfortunately, Word wants you to edit your draft while you type by putting squiggly red and green lines on your screen to challenge your spelling and grammar. You need to turn off this annoying feature. From the tool bar, go to Tools, then Options. Select Spelling and Grammar.

In the pop-up window, uncheck Check spelling as you type, and uncheck Check grammar as you type.

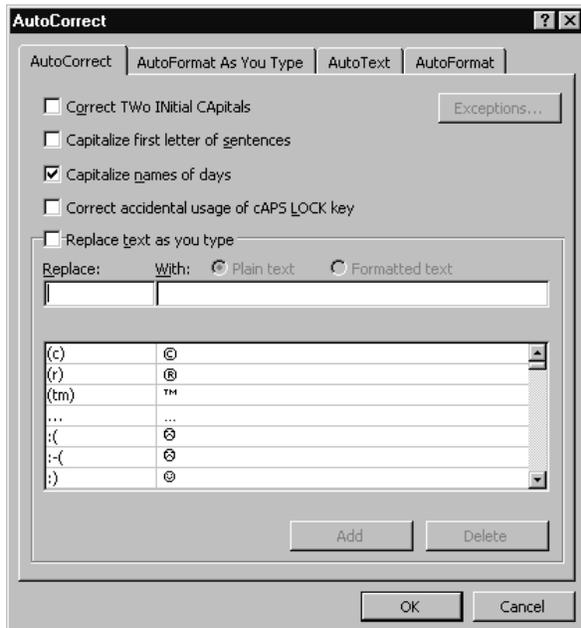


AutoCorrect, AutoFormat, and AutoText

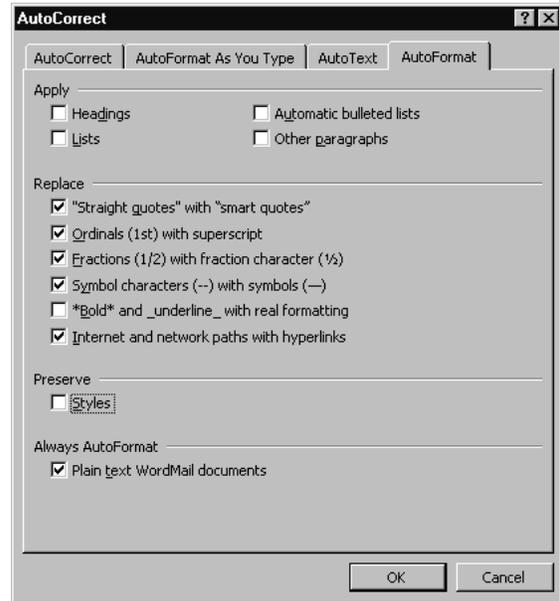
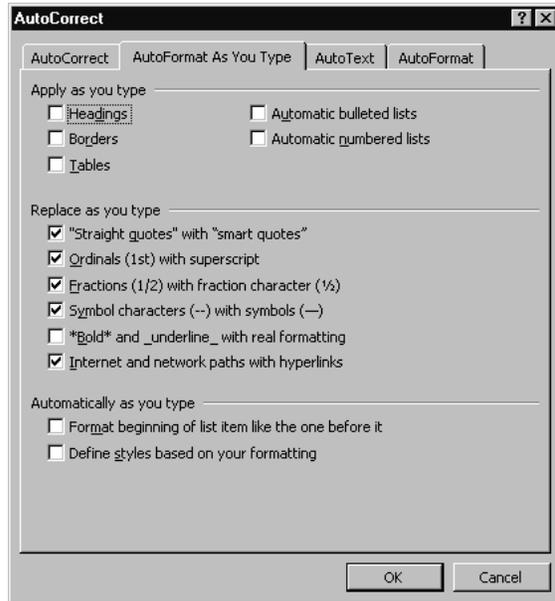
Turn off features from AutoCorrect, AutoFormat, and AutoText unless you know that you use them. I believe that most of these seemingly clever bits of automation cause more trouble than they are worth, especially with acronyms and lists.

In the AutoCorrect tab, uncheck everything except the harmless Capitalize names of days.

You may choose to keep the Replace as you type feature on if you want to use symbols like the copyright ©, registration ®, or trademark ™ symbols. Even then you can use Ctrl-Alt-(a character) to generate most common symbols. If you keep this feature, learn to add and delete from the list.



You need to uncheck items from both the AutoFormat as you type and AutoFormat tabs to eliminate the nuisances. I especially dislike automatic numbered or bulleted lists. In the AutoFormat as you type tab, be sure to uncheck the Define styles based on your formatting. This misguided feature causes people to accidentally corrupt their style guides.

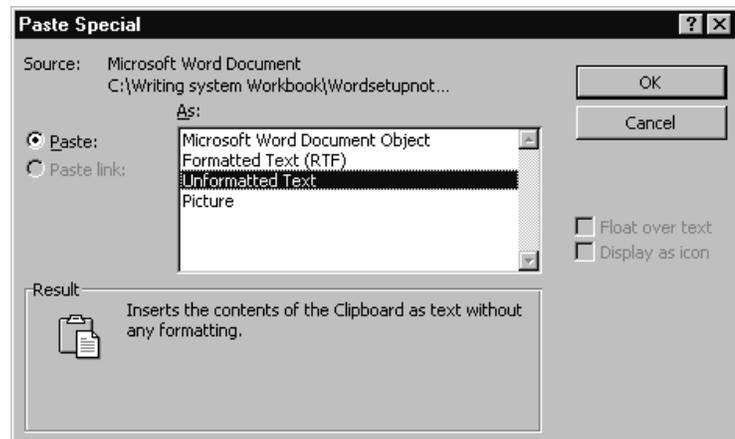


The AutoText feature is harmless, but just as useless. You start typing your own name and the machine offers a pop-up window offering to type the rest of your name automatically. If you are a painfully slow, hunt-and-peck typist, the AutoText feature might save time.

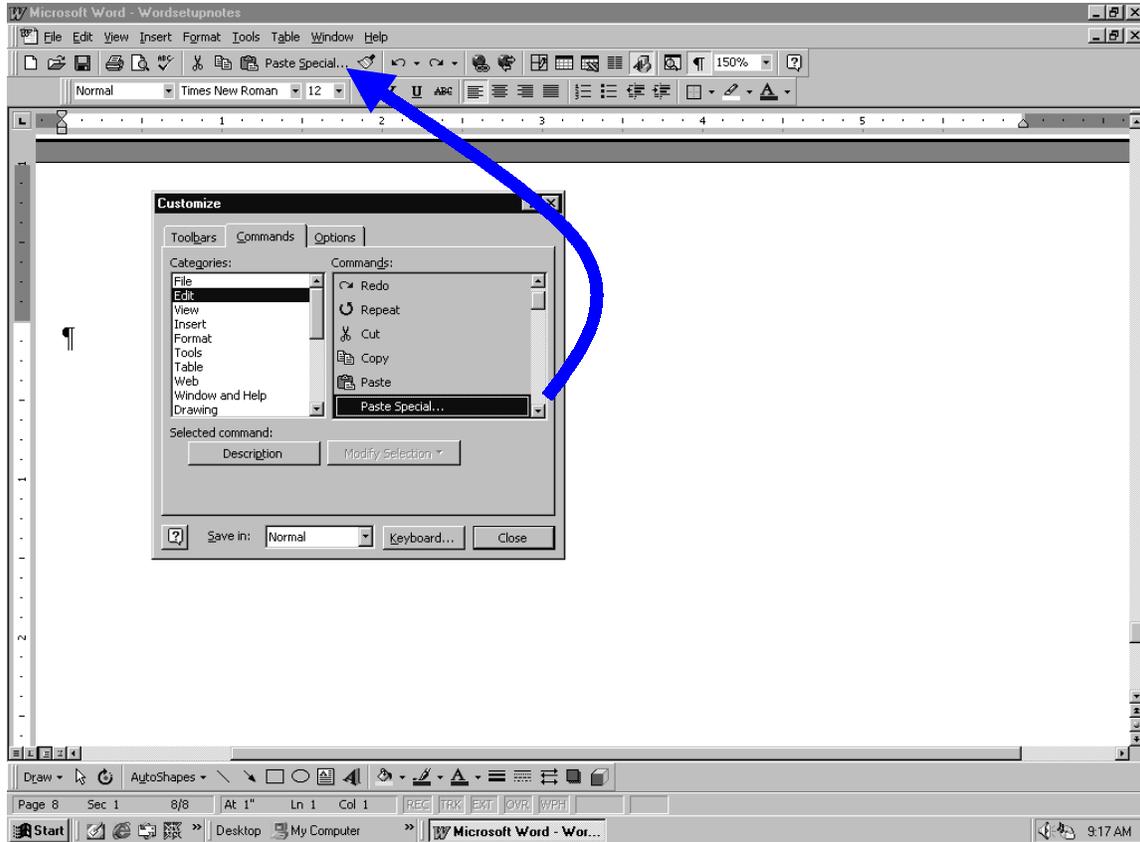
Copy and Paste from Document A to Document B

Be careful when you copy and paste, or you might corrupt the style of your document. To select material to copy from Document A, most of us drag-paint the text and right-click the mouse to select Copy. If you simply put the cursor in Document B and right-click the mouse to select Paste, you paste the text *and* you corrupt the style. This simple miscue can cause formatting errors to ripple through your document.

Instead, go to Edit and select Paste Special. From the pop-up window, select Unformatted Text. You paste the text from Document A without corrupting the style of Document B.



If you anticipate that you need Paste Special often, you may create a Paste Special icon for your tool bar. Go to View and Toolbars. Select Customize. Select Edit. The pop-up window shows you the icons you can use for Edit. Scroll down a bit until you see Paste Special. Click on Paste Special and drag it up to your tool bar next to your Paste icon.



The obnoxious and ubiquitous Office Assistant

Word's Office Assistant is obnoxious. As soon as you type the words, Dear So-and-so, the ubiquitous Office Assistant pops up with the obvious, "Looks like you're writing a letter." *Ya think?*

What were they thinking when they gave us a choice between an animated paperclip, a cartoon Einstein, a perky red ball, and other outrages to waste our time? Let's get rid of them—for good.



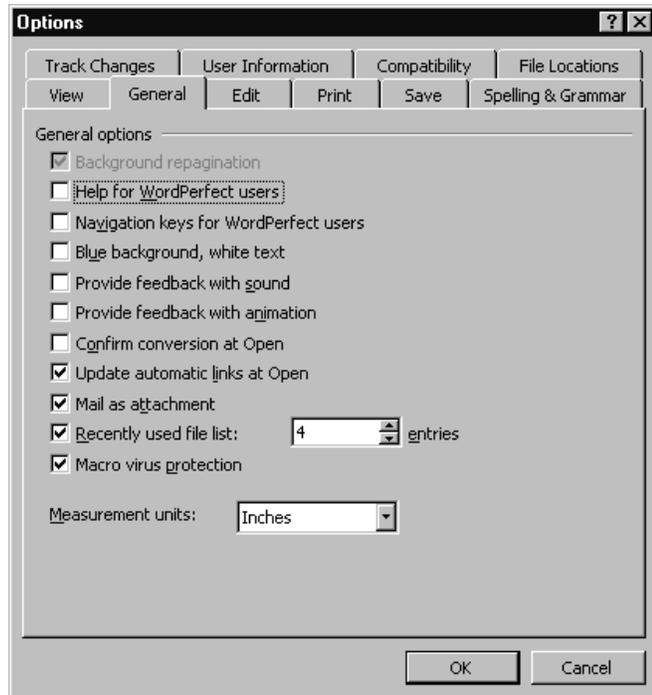
In Word 2000, click Options and uncheck Use Office Assistant.

In earlier versions of Word, you must follow two steps to banish the Office Assistant.

Step 1

From the tool bar, go to Tools, then Options. Select General.

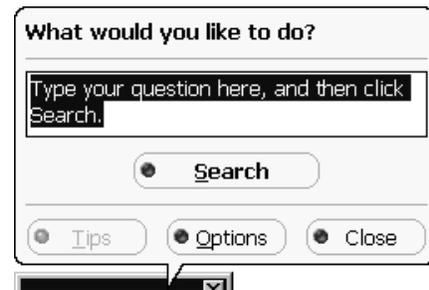
Uncheck Provide feedback with sound and Provide feedback with animation. (By the way, the word shift from Office Assistant to Provide feedback impedes our effort to find and change these settings. This lousy bit of documentation is a good example of the damage caused by shifting key words. See *The Writing System* page 80.)



Step 2

Click the Question mark icon from your tool bar to get the Office Assistant dialogue box.

Select Options.



Uncheck everything except the Respond to F1 key and Move when in the way.

You can still call the Office Assistant when you have a question, but the little animated nuisance won't pester you.

