



Software Educational Resources Ltd

Using manuals and solving problems

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Using Manuals

A manual is referred to as a “guidebook”. Three types of manuals are listed below:

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| Instructional Manual | provides step by step instructions on how to use a particular feature or object, in a logical sequence (eg Software Publications “Learning Series” books). |
| Reference Manual | provides information on a particular feature or object, usually in alphabetical order (eg the manual supplied with your computer program). |
| Procedures Manual | contains formats of documents and procedures used by a company/organisation. |

The manuals published by Software Publications are “instructional” manuals, which also contain some reference pages. Each feature you learn is taught with step by step instructions and allows additional exercises for consolidation of learning and accumulation of knowledge.

A manual consists of different parts as follows:

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| Title page | The cover page of the manual which displays the topic and use for the manual. |
| Copyright page | Displays the year the manual was first published, name of publisher, ISBN number, and other information relating to the manual. |
| Table of Contents | Lists the topics found within the manual in order of page number. |
| Chapters or Sections | Manuals are usually divided into Chapters/Sections relating to different topics. This makes the manual easy to follow and the topics easy to find. |
| Glossary | A list of special/technical words and their meanings relating to the manual. Can be at the front, or the back of the manual. |
| Appendix | Reference information relating to additional topics not covered directly in the manual or lists of features, eg quick key tables. |
| Index | An alphabetical listing of key words and topics and their page reference. This is usually found at the back of the manual. |

When you purchase a computer program, you will receive a CD ROM (or disks) and a set of manuals (or maybe only one!). The main manual is usually a “reference” manual and the other an instructional manual (tutorial). Use the instructional manual first as it is usually designed to teach the basics of a program. If you do not have an instructional manual, sometimes the first half of a reference manual teaches you the basics of the program, although not necessarily step by step. Often there are references to other sections.

Many computer programs now only have a small simple manual. Reference information regarding your computer program in this instance is accessed through the Help feature.

How is your Computer Controlled

Your computer is controlled by the use of menus, quick keys, buttons and the use of the mouse. New technology recently has introduced effective voice and touch activation programs.

Where can you find information about your software application?

Information is located on the inside cover of the manual supplied with the software OR by choosing [Help] About (eg in Word choose [Help] About Microsoft Word). The version of the program, the licence number and name of the company/person the program is licensed to. This information is usually required if you dial the program's telephone support line.

Solving Operational Problems

Finding information in manuals

- Look in the **Index** first - each topic or related key word that is in the manual will be listed here. The Index is listed alphabetically and should be easy to find. Each topic or key word should either have a page number or a reference to another topic with a page number.
- Look in the **Table of Contents** - sometimes the topic you are looking for may be an entire section/chapter.

Help feature

If you do not have a manual use the Help feature in the computer program you are using. Here are a few tips if using Help from a Windows program.

- Type your question or topic into the speech bubble on the Office Assistant (if available) then click on Search.
- If you are looking for a general topic - something simple eg Fonts, choose [Help] then Contents (or Help Topics). Contents is like a Table of Contents, giving general topics or functions that are used in the program.
- If you are looking for a specific feature, eg Bold, choose [Help] then Answer Wizard or Index or Find. Type in the question or key words of the topic you wish to find.

Application Tutorials

Online Tutorials are often contained within the Help feature of a program and sometimes listed on the Help menu, sometimes called Introduction to....., Quick Demos or Tutorial. They can vary from screens of information to interactive exercises.