

4

Word processing: for and against

Before you start

1 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you like writing by hand? Why?/Why not?
- 2 Have you ever used a typewriter or word processor? Which word processor?
- 3 What are the differences between handwriting, typing and word processing?

Reading

2 Read the text and underline the advantages of word processing in the first paragraph and the disadvantages in the second. Write the number of each.

Advantages Disadvantages

The case **for** and **against** WORD PROCESSING

People use word processors for writing all kinds of documents, such as letters, school papers and reports. Word processors have many advantages over handwriting and **manual** typewriters. Word processing is faster and easier than writing by hand and you can store documents on your computer, which you cannot usually do on a typewriter. This makes it easier to review and rewrite your documents. You have more formatting choices with a **word processor**, and the spelling, grammar and language tools are useful, too. You can also print copies of your documents, which look neater than handwritten ones. Many language students use word processors to improve their writing skills and because they help them feel proud of their work.

Word processors do have disadvantages, however. First, it is not easy to read long documents on a computer screen. Second, sometimes the printer does not print an exact copy of what you see on the screen. Not all word processors can read each other's files, which is another disadvantage. Finally, word processors do not always work well with e-mail. If you paste a word-processed letter into an e-mail it may lose a lot of its formatting. Many people use a **text editor** for the Internet, which is similar to a word processor but has fewer formatting **features** and cannot use graphics. Text editors, such as Notepad, use a simple **coding system** called **ASCII** (American Standard Code for Information Interchange), as does e-mail.

3 Decide if the sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 You can store letters on a manual typewriter. T/F
- 2 You can change your documents easily on a word processor. T/F
- 3 Printed documents look better than handwriting. T/F
- 4 Improving your writing is more difficult with a word processor. T/F
- 5 Word processors work well with e-mail. T/F

Vocabulary

4 Match the **highlighted** words and phrases in the text with the definitions (1–6).

- 1 by hand, not electronic _____
- 2 the way a program organizes data _____
- 3 a program used for simple text files _____
- 4 the code that e-mail uses _____
- 5 things that a program has, or can do _____
- 6 a program used for text and graphics _____

Speaking

5 Work in groups. Which of these documents would you write by hand and which on a word processor? Say why.

- a formal letter ■ an informal letter
- an invitation to a party ■ a birthday card
- a shopping list ■ an application form
- a note to your teacher/friend/father
- a school report ■ a 'for sale' notice

Writing

6 Write a short paragraph about some of the advantages of writing with pen and paper. Use the following ideas to help you. Add any other ideas you may have.

- pen and paper – cheap
- you can write anywhere (don't need electricity)
- don't need to learn to type
- handwritten letters – friendlier & more personal

▶ **Get real**

Take your paragraph from Exercise 6. Type it into the word processor on the computer you use. Change or add some formatting features, such as the font, bold, italic or underline. Copy and paste the formatted letter into a text editor such as Notepad. Report back to the class on which formatted features did not appear.

Before you start

- 1 What information can you store on a computer?
Where can you store your documents or files?

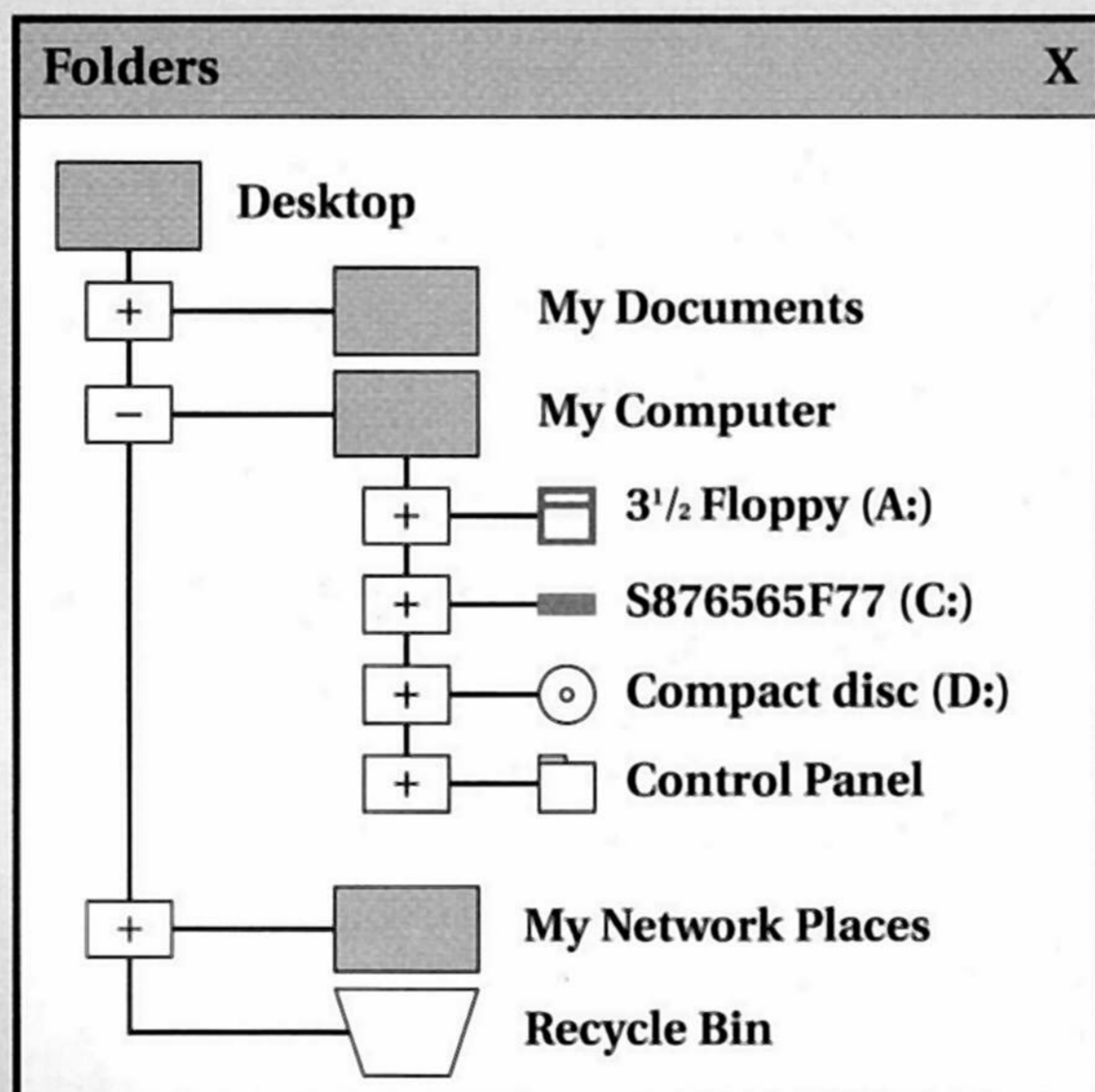
Reading

- 2 Read the text quickly. Write the number of the paragraph that tells you about:

- a computer directories
b organizing personal files
c where you can store data

1 Computers store letters, reports, pictures, music and video as data. You can store data on floppy disks but they are too small to hold most pictures or videos. You can store these on a CD-ROM but you need a CD-re-writer to copy the data. People often use portable removable disks, which can store up to one gigabyte of data and do not need any expensive hardware. Most computer owners store their data on the hard disk but because computers can crash, they often use other disks to make back-up copies.

2 Computers store program files on the hard disk, which is usually the C: drive in the Windows OS (operating system) or the Macintosh Hard Disk in Apple computers. Computers store program files in folders and organize these folders in a directory (see below). The plus sign (+) means that the folder contains other folders or files. Clicking the plus sign next to the icon opens the other folders and files in it. Clicking the minus (-) sign closes the folder.



3 It is important to organize your files. Windows has a folder called My Documents to help you do this. It contains other folders called My Music, My eBooks, My Videos and My Pictures. Saving files on your hard disk without any order makes them difficult to find.

- 3 Write short answers to these questions.

- 1 Name four ways you can store computer data.
a _____ c _____
b _____ d _____

- 2 Name the open folder in the diagram.

- 3 How many folders are in My Computer in the diagram? _____

- 4 What is the hard disk called in Apple Macintosh computers? _____

- 5 Where will you find My Videos in the Windows OS? _____

- 4 Match the questions (1–5) with the answers (a–e).

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Why can't a floppy disk store videos? | a Portable data storage disks. |
| 2 What are removable disks? | b Other folders or files appear. |
| 3 Where do computers store program files? | c So that you can find them easily. |
| 4 Why do you need to organize your files? | d On the hard disk. |
| 5 What happens if you click the plus sign? | e Because it can't hold a lot of data. |

Vocabulary

- 5 Find the words in the text that mean:

- 1 computer information (paragraph 1)

- 2 when computers stop working (1) _____
- 3 a second copy of a file (1) _____
- 4 to put in neat order (2) _____
- 5 a list (2) _____

Speaking

- 6 Work in pairs. Look at the files below. How would you organize them so that you can find them easily? Add more files to the list.

music files ■ history essays ■ games
■ pictures of my friends ■ videos
■ photos of my family ■ my science reports
■ letters to my friends ■ letters to my family
■ my English language lessons
■ desktop pictures ■ screen savers

Get real

Ask people in your family or your friends' families who have their own computers how they organize their personal files. Ask them what categories they use and how they decide what files go into each category. Make a class list of the types of data they store.