

Chapter 5

Working with Files

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Chapter overview

In this chapter your students will learn how best to name files, where to store files, and how to use files. It emphasizes how to use Windows Explorer to maintain an orderly set of files.

Chapter outline

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Technical notes

Your *Practical Computer Literacy* book includes an action-packed **multimedia Book-on-CD**. Each page of the Book-on-CD looks exactly like its corresponding page in the printed book and contains interactive elements such as pop-up definitions, interactive animations, and interactive end-of-chapter material. The Book-on-CD is easy to use at home, at school, or at work. For more information on the Book-on-CD, please reference the preface of this book.

The following Materials Needed section is the same for each chapter of *The Practical Computer Literacy*. This information is repeated in each chapter for your convenience.

Materials needed



Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, or XP installed on the lab computers. *The Practical Computer Literacy* Book-on-CD is optimized for use with Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows Me, Windows 2000, and Windows XP. Note that *The Practical Computer Literacy* Book-on-CD will *not* work acceptably on computers installed with Windows 3.1.

Tracking Disk. You can have students create a Tracking Disk, which records their scores on the Skill Sets, so that you can monitor their progress. When you start a Skill Set, the program checks drive A: for a Tracking Disk. If you want to create a Tracking Disk, insert a formatted floppy disk, then click **Create Tracking File A:\TRACKING.TRK**. You'll be prompted to enter your name, student ID, and section number, all of which will be stored on the Tracking Disk. If you don't want to save your results, just click **Continue without a Tracking Disk**. This option allows you to try a Skill Set review without saving your results. For more information on the Tracking Disk, please reference the preface of this book.

Project Disk. For many of the projects, your students must create a Project Disk, onto which they copy project files and save their completed work. Students create their own Project Disk by inserting a blank, formatted floppy disk in drive A (or the appropriate drive), clicking Project Disk menu option on the Welcome screen of *The Practical Computer Literacy* CD-ROM, clicking the menu option for the assigned project, and then following the instructions to copy the project file to the blank floppy disk. A second method is to click the Copy It! button on the first page of the project to copy the file for that project to their floppy disk.

You can specify whether students submit the disk for your review, submit their printed completed project, or send you their completed file as an e-mail attachment. For e-mail submission, students will need your e-mail address.

This chapter assumes your students have access to a lab (or home) computer and have previously used a mouse.

Content and Certification. With the increasing presence and use of computers in both school curriculum and the workplace- there is a growing need to evaluate and measure computer skills through a set of certification standards. *Practical Computer Literacy* integrates computer concepts, Office applications, and Internet concepts making it the perfect solution for your introductory computer needs.

The content of the text and Book-on-CD maps to the certification standards for IC3 (Internet and Computing Core Certification). This certification is a set of 3 exam modules including: Computing Fundamentals, Key Applications, and Living Online.

Even if you don't use IC3 certification, *Practical Computer Literacy* is a good fit for many other certification standards developed by industry, your state, or your school. For more information on how *Practical Computer Literacy* can work with your course or for more information on certifications such as IC3 and ICDL, contact your Course Technology Sales Representative, or go to www.course.com.

Instructional notes

Key terms

Backup (82): A copy of one or more files that is made in case the original files become damaged.

Copy Disk utility (79): A Windows utility that quickly and easily makes a copy of a floppy disk.

Data file (71): A file that contains words, numbers, and pictures you can manipulate.

Default (73): A standard setting that always goes into effect unless you manually change it.

Details View (74): A view in Windows Explorer that shows the file name, size, type, and date modified.

Device letter (75): A letter that identifies each storage device on a PC.

Disk formatting (80): A process that creates the equivalent of electronic storage bins on the surface of a disk.

Executable file (71): A program module containing instructions that tell your PC how to perform specific tasks.

File (71): A collection of data that has a name and is stored on a computer disk, tape, CD, DVD, or USB flash drive.

File extension (73): A set of characters added to a file name to indicate the file's type or origin.

File format (73): The format in which a file is stored.

File properties (71): Properties that describe a file's name, type, location, and size.

Folder (75): A storage device that allows you to group files for easy retrieval.

Hidden file (71): A file that does not appear in file lists and cannot be used unless you know its name and location.

Icons View (74): A view in Windows Explorer that shows a medium-sized icon for each file along with its name.

List View (74): A view in Windows Explorer that shows the name of each file along with a small icon that indicates its type.

Path (75): A device letter, folder, file name, and extension that provide the information necessary to store a file in a certain place, then locate it again.

Read-only file (71): A file that cannot be modified or deleted.

Recovery CD (82): A CD you can use if your computer's hard disk fails.



Search wildcard (76): Helps you create search specifications when you don't know an exact title or phrase for a file.

Subfolders (75): Folders contained in other folders.

Thumbnails View (74): A view in Windows Explorer that shows tiny version of graphics files.

Tiles View (74): A view in Windows Explorer that shows a large icon for each file, plus the file's name, type, and size.

Windows Clipboard (78): A temporary holding area in a PC's memory.

Windows Explorer (74): A part of the Windows operating system that's designed to help you find and organize the files on your PC.

Lecture notes

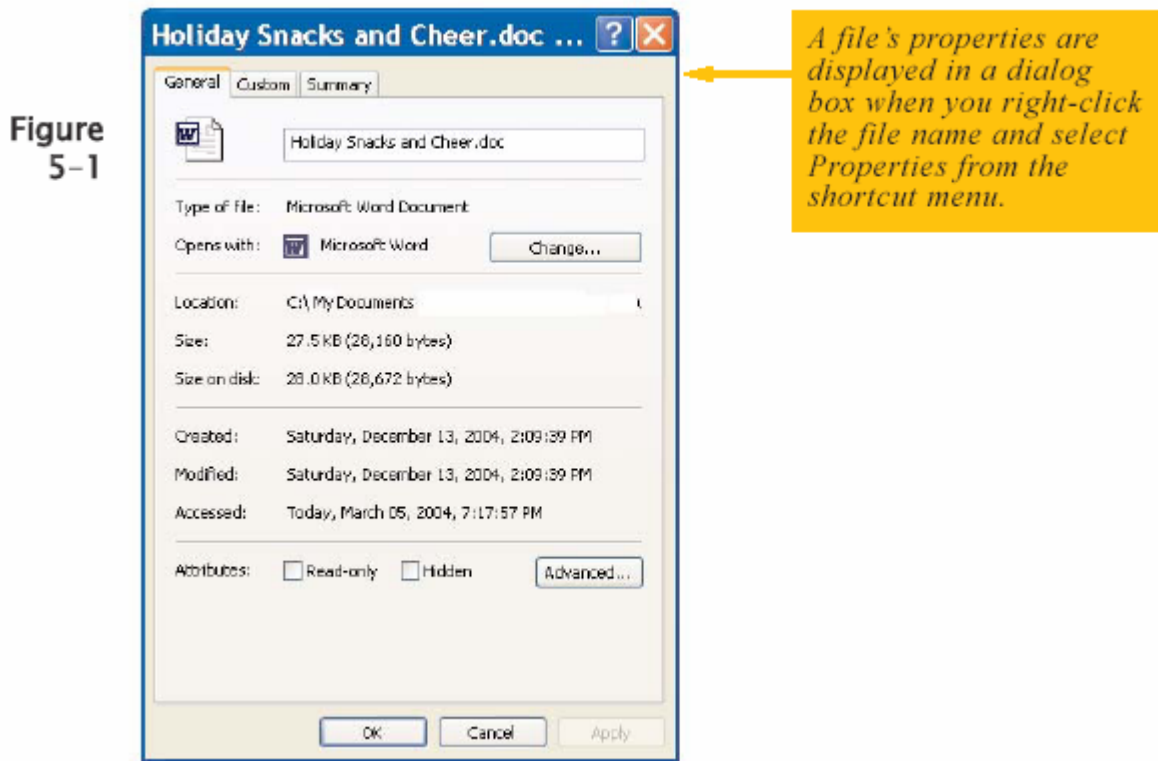
What's a file?

A file is a collection of data that has a name and is stored on a computer disk, tape, CD, DVD, or USB flash drive. Explain to students that all the documents, pictures, and music created with a PC are stored as files.

Files can be divided into two categories: executable files, which are program modules containing instructions that tell a PC how to perform specific tasks, and data files, which contain words, numbers, and pictures that can be manipulated.

TIP: Use the All Programs menu and Windows Explorer to show students examples of each type of file.

Every file has file properties that describe its name, type, location, and size. A file's properties are displayed in a dialog box when you right-click the file name and select Properties from the shortcut menu. The dialog box is shown in Figure 5-1 below.



Can I use any name for a file?

When you are ready to save a file, you must give it a unique name. Although older operating systems and programs limited the length of file names, you can now give files more descriptive names. These longer file names allow you to control capitalization. Most people tend to use the same capitalization for file names as the would use for a title, using uppercase for the first letter of every word except articles and prepositions.

Refer to Figure 5-2 on page 72 of the text for a summary of the file naming rules for various versions of Windows.

What's a file extension?

A file extension is a set of characters added to a file name to indicate the file's type or origin. Each software application typically has a default file extension. The file extension indicates the file format in which it is stored.

Refer to Figure 5-3 on page 73 of the text for a list of the most commonly used file formats.

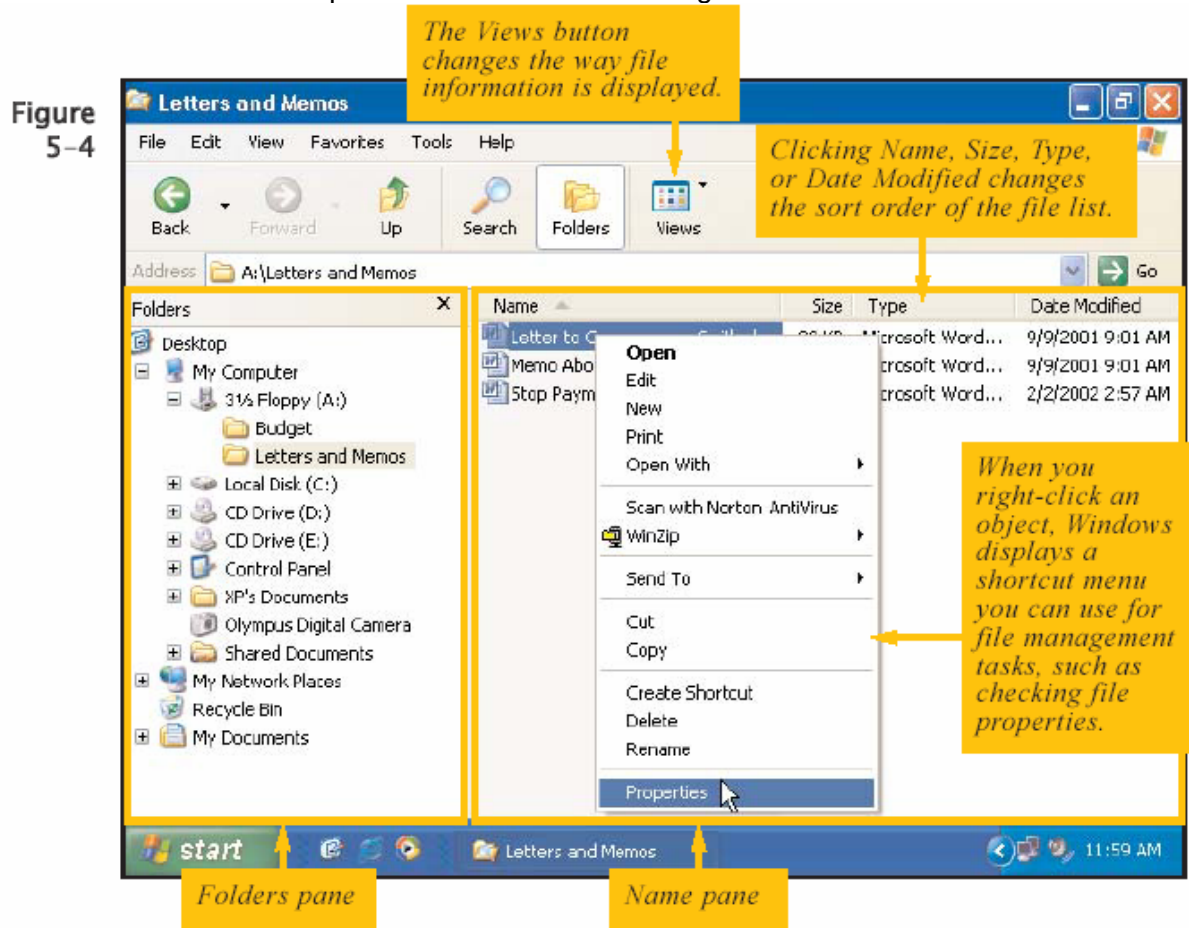
TIP: Demonstrate a default file extension by saving a new file.

How do I get a list of my files?

Although Windows offers many ways to view files, Windows Explorer provides the most complete list of files as well as a full set of tools for organizing files. Windows Explorer is a part of the Windows operating system that's designed to help you find and organize the files

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on a PC. The Windows Explorer window is shown in Figure 5-4 below



The Views button and View menu allow you to change the way files are displayed in the Windows Explorer window.

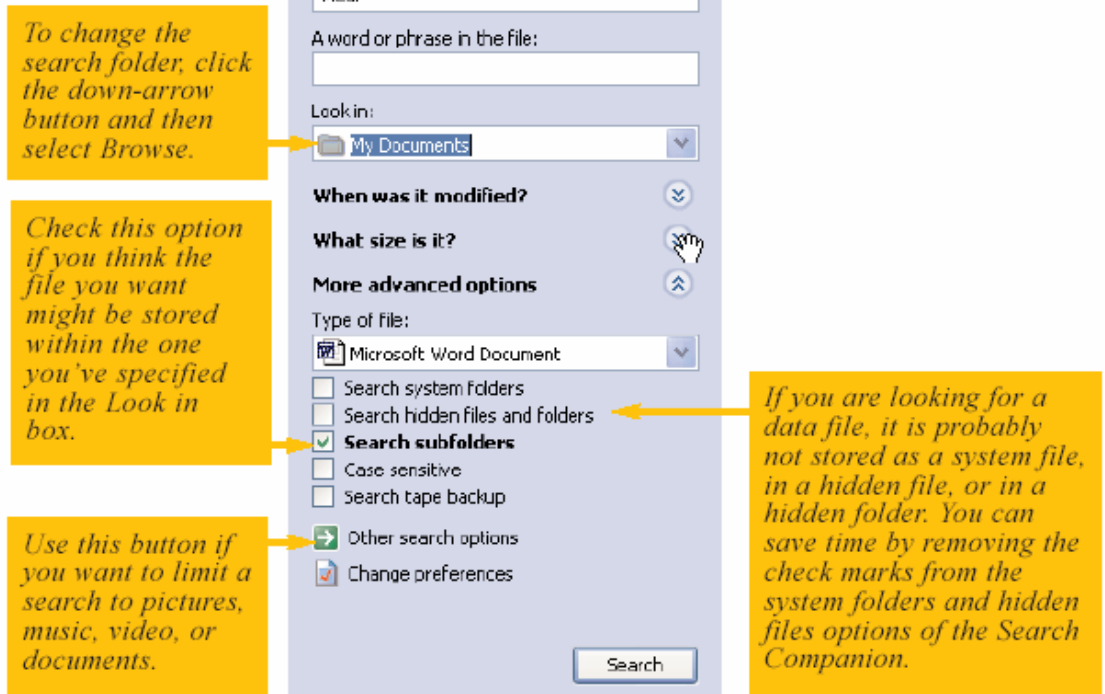
As can be seen in Windows Explorer, each storage device on a PC is identified by a unique device letter. The storage devices usually contain folders (or “directories”), which allow you to group files for easy retrieval. Folders can also contain other folders, which are called subfolders. Explain to students how folders and subfolders can be named and organized to keep files organized.

How do I find a specific file?

If you don’t know where to find a file, you can use the Search Companion, accessed by clicking the Search button on the Windows Explorer toolbar. Note that in some early versions of Windows, the Search button is labeled “Find.”

The Search Companion allows you to search for a file by name or by a phrase contained in the file, as shown in Figure 5-6 below.

Figure 5-6



A search wildcard helps you create search specifications when you don't know an exact title or phrase for a file. The * wildcard stands for a series of unknown characters. The ? wildcard stands for a single unknown character.

How do I change the name of a file?

You can use Windows Explorer to rename files. One method for renaming a file is to click it, then click it again. After a brief pause, you can type the new name directly over the old one. You can also initiate a name change by right-clicking the file name, then selecting Rename from the shortcut menu.

TIP: Caution students that if file extensions are displayed, they must include the file extension in the new name. If file extensions are not displayed, Windows automatically retains the old file extension.

What's the best organization for my files?

Explain to students that the key to organizing files is creating a clearly structured set of folders. When the number of files in a folder grows unmanageable, it's a good idea to create subfolders and move files into them. Subfolders can be created and used to further compartmentalize files. Folders can be moved in the same way that files are.

The following are tips for improving the organization of files:

- Always store data files in a folder.



- Group files by project or type.
- Create subfolders of the My Documents folder to hold data files. Use descriptive names for all your folders.
- Try not to store data files in the folders that contain program modules for application software.
- The first level under a device should contain only folders, not files.

TIP: Demonstrate moving files and folders in Windows Explorer.

How do I copy files and folders?

Typically, you copy a file when you want to create a duplicate. You can copy a single file, multiple files, or an entire disk of files as well as folders. When you copy a file, Windows places a duplicate of the file on the Clipboard. The original file remains in its present location. After you select a location for the copy, Windows pastes the file from the Clipboard to the new location.

Explain the Copy Disk utility to students and demonstrate making a copy of a floppy disk.

How do I delete files and folders?

Explain the benefits of deleting unnecessary files and folders, such as helping the hard disk work more efficiently, avoiding clutter, and accidentally working with outdated files.

Explain that when a file is deleted, it is actually sent to the Recycle Bin, where it can still be retrieved. Files are not gone forever until the Recycle Bin is emptied.

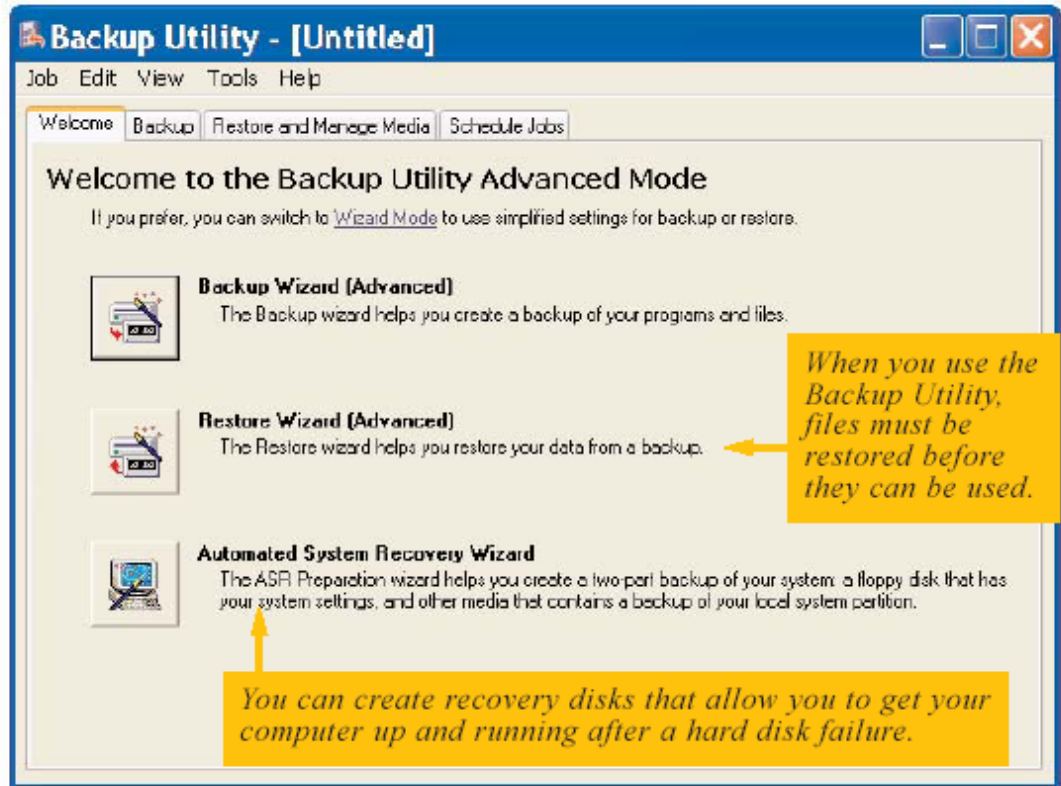
TIP: Demonstrate deleting a file from Windows Explorer and then open the Recycle Bin to show that the file has been added. Demonstrate emptying the Recycle Bin if possible.

How do I back up important files?

Advise students that regularly backing up files is an important step in protecting and preserving files. Explain that backups can be stored on any type of storage device, from another hard disk to a CD. As an alternative to copying files for backup, students can use the Windows backup Utility. Caution students that backups created from this utility must be restored to a hard disk before being used. They cannot be used directly from the backup disk.

The Backup Utility is shown in Figure 5-12 below.

Figure 5-12



Solutions to QuickChecks ↴

Solutions to QuickCheck **A**

1. executable, data
2. format
3. Shift
4. * (asterisk)
5. path

Solutions to QuickCheck **B**

1. A
2. I
3. J
4. H
5. G

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