

Beginning Windows XP

Lesson 7

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Lesson 7 – XP and Files

Introduction

This lesson discusses the Windows XP file structure, and it reviews and describes how to retrieve, copy and move, files or folders.

Exercise 7 — Retrieving Documents and Accessing Files

Retrieving a Previously Saved Document

First Method

1. Insert your floppy disk into the drive and then open the WordPad application by clicking on the desktop shortcut.
2. Click the Open icon on the WordPad toolbar. The resulting dialog box is nearly identical to the Save As box from Lesson 6 because to open an existing file you must provide the computer with the same information, i.e. the file name and its location.
3. Click on the down-arrow in the “Look In” box and select the floppy disk. The computer will access the disk and display the disk contents in the window. In this case the disk should have only one file: My First File.

4. Click on My First File to highlight it, and then click on the Open command button. Notice that your file is now displayed and ready for printing or editing.
5. Close WordPad.

Quicker Method

Another way to access any document is to go directly to where it is filed. Try this:

1. At the desktop double click on My Computer, then on the floppy disk icon. The resulting window will display all of the files on your floppy disk (in this case: My First File.rtf).
2. Double click on My First File.rtf and notice that WordPad opens with My First File already loaded.

File Extensions

How did the computer know to open My First File with WordPad instead of some other application? The trick is in the **file extension**. Notice that the computer added something to the end of the file name, i.e. My First File.rtf. The period and the three letters “rtf” are the file extension. File extensions let the computer know what kind (or format) the file is — in this case it is a Rich Text Format (rtf). When you click on a rich text file the computer knows to open it with WordPad. Some other file extensions that you may encounter are:

- .doc = a Microsoft Word document
- .pdf = Portable Document Format — a “universal” document form.
- .bmp = an image file (photo or other artwork)
- .jpg = another image file (photo or other artwork)
- .exe = an application (or program) file such as WordPad.
- .mp3 = an audio (music) file
- .wmv = a video (movie) file

There are other extensions unique to each format, but too many to list here.

Saving an Existing Document

Having initially used Save As to give your document a name and a place, you do not need to use it the next time as long as you plan to use the same name and location. For example, if you make some changes to My First File, you can save it back to the floppy by clicking on the Save icon on the WordPad tool bar (it

looks like a floppy disk). In fact, after using “Save As” once to name and locate your document, it’s a good idea to click on Save every few minutes while you’re working just in case a power failure or some other catastrophe comes along in the middle of your work.



If you forget, the computer will even remind you to save a modified document before closing the application. Try this exercise:

1. Make some changes to the text in your My First File document.
2. Now click on the X in the upper right corner of WordPad to close the application.
3. Notice that a popup window appears asking if you want to save the changes before closing WordPad. Click on “Yes” to save your changes or “No” if you want to discard them and retain your original version.

Introduction to My Computer & My Documents

Keeping track of files is a primary task of the Windows XP operating system. This includes storing, retrieving, deleting, moving, and copying files of all types on all storage devices connected to the computer. **Navigating** throughout your computer is an essential skill, and you use windows such as My Computer, My Documents, and others to “see” and control the contents of the hard drive, the floppy drive, the CD and other devices.

An overview of your computer and its contents is presented in the My Computer window as described in the earlier lessons, and you have already used this facility to access files on the floppy drive. Let’s explore a bit more.

Double click on My Computer then on the Floppy Disk icon to open the Floppy Disk window. Click once on the file My First File.rtf to select or highlight it. Notice that the top part of the Task Pane changes to a list of functions that you may perform on the selected file.

1. Click on “Copy this file” in the Task pane and a “Copy Items” dialog box similar to that shown here will pop up. Click on My Documents in this window. You may have to use the scroll bar on the right to locate My Documents. Once My Documents is highlighted, click on the “Copy” action button. This copies the My First File.rtf document from the Floppy to the My Documents folder on the hard disk.

2. Return to My Computer by clicking on the left-most (Back) button on the tool bar. This returns you to the My Computer window.
3. Double click on the My Documents icon to view the contents of this folder. You will see the My First File.rtf copy and two folders: My Music and My Pictures.
4. Double click on My Music to examine the contents of this folder. (It may or may not have any music files). Click on the Back button to return to My Documents.
5. Click on the Back button again to return to My Computer. Notice how you can “chain” up and down among the folders.
6. Close My Documents and return to the Desktop.



Homework 7

ÿ Review Lesson 7 and read through Lesson 8

Appendix A – Storage Devices

The following table lists the several types of storage devices found on most of today's computers.

Drive Type	Capacity in Bytes*	Type of Storage
Hard Disk (Fixed, non-removable)	Typically 40 or more Gigabytes (billion bytes)	Magnetic — Read/Write much like a tape recorder.
Compact Disk (CD) (Removable)	Typically 700 Megabytes (million bytes)	Read Only — Most CD's can be recorded once and then read many times (like a music CD or phonograph record). But most of them cannot be erased and used again.
Floppy Disk (Removable)	1.44 Megabytes	Magnetic — Read/Write like the Hard Disk, but with a significantly reduced capacity.
Flash Memory (Removable)	Typically 128 Megabytes up to 4 Gigabytes (4000 MB)	Solid-State — A unique device that uses micro-chips to store information.

*A "byte" is roughly equivalent to a single character such as a letter or digit. A megabyte is equivalent to about 100 pages of text, and a gigabyte to something like 100,000 pages of text.

Why all the different types? Good question, but it has a simple answer: They serve different purposes. The Hard Drive is an essential part of the computer because it not only stores files (documents) that you create, but it also stores all of the software programs needed by the computer to perform its functions. It has a massive storage capacity because today's computer programs are very large — many of them using several hundred megabytes. Also, the hard disk is fixed inside the computer — you cannot remove it and take it to another computer like you can with all of the other types.

CD's are relatively large capacity storage devices typically used to distribute software programs to your computer. Also, if so equipped you can "burn" (i.e. "record") CDs with, say, digital picture albums or music files and send them to friends or relatives who can then insert them in their computers and "see" the

pictures or files you have sent. You can also backup (i.e. save) critical files on a CD and place it in a safe place should something happen to destroy files on your hard drive. Most computers also come with a sound system, and you can play music CDs by simply inserting them into the computer's CD drive.

Floppy Disks are beginning to disappear due to their limited capacity, but they remain a simple, cheap way to transfer files from one computer to another.

The Flash Memory devices are fast replacing floppies because they are removable and have a large capacity but are small and very easy to use. They are used to move files from computer to computer and to serve a backup function.

The so-called **Drive Letters** are an arbitrary assignment used within the computer structure to identify individual drives. Thus, the Hard Drive is typically referred to as "Drive C:" Drive letters always have a colon (:) appended to them. The sequence of drive letters may vary depending on how a computer is equipped. Here are typical drive letter assignments.

Drive	Description
A:	Floppy Disk
B:	Second Floppy Disk (if present)
C:	Hard Disk
D:	CD Drive (or 2 nd hard disk if present)
E:	CD Drive if 2 nd hard disk present, or perhaps a DVD (video disk) drive, or one of the Flash Memory devices mentioned above.

Appendix B – The File Specification

The following information is provided for those interested in the more technical aspects of computers.

File names that you see on your computer screen are actually only one part of the entire “file specification” or “filespec” because the computer normally hides that portion called the “path.” Internally all files are identified with the entire filespec which includes the path and the file name. Here are some examples.

The filespec for My First File.rtf document stored on the floppy disk is:

A:\My First File.rtf

Where A: is the floppy drive letter followed by a backslash\ (i.e. the “path”) and then the file name with its extension.

The same file located in the My Documents folder on the hard drive is actually identified as follows.

C:\Documents & Settings\Student\My Documents\My First File.rtf

Where C: is the hard disk drive, Documents & Settings is a folder on disk C:, Student is a folder within the Documents & Settings folder, and My Documents is a folder within the Student folder. Finally, My First File.rtf resides within the My Documents folder. Everything up to the final file name is considered the “path.”

Thus, as you can see, the structure of a filespec (that is, the entire file name) has the general format:

Drive Letter:\Folder\Sub-Folder\Sub-Folder\etc.\filename.ext

But most of the time you only see the filename and extension. Internally the computer always uses the entire filespec because that is the only way it can keep track of where everything is stored.

The backslashes set apart the various folder names, and that’s the reason you cannot use backslashes as part of a filename.