

Point 'n' Click special feature:

Windows shortcuts you might not know

By Al Fasoldt for the Point 'n' Click podcast

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Think you know all the Windows shortcuts? Or maybe most of them? Or, ahem, *some* of them?

Let's find out. My partner in crime, the one and only Mark Yafchak, will help me talk about some of the ones that are most important and most unusual while we demonstrate them. You might want to download the Windows Shortcuts file – this document – from the Point 'n' Click website so you can follow along on your own screen.

Are you ready, Mark?

(Quick quiz for Mark: Why do we have SHIFT keys on keyboards? And, why are the keys arranged in such a goofy order?)

Onto the task at keyboard. Er, at hand.

Two things to keep in mind.

- First, please note that these are official Windows 10 and Windows 11 shortcuts. However, many of them work on older versions of Windows too.
- Second, don't assume that these shortcuts are used only in Microsoft Word, the standard word processor that's used around the world. They're regular shortcuts in a lot of non-Microsoft software, too, such as Libre Office Writer, and most of them work perfectly in the "junior" word processor in Microsoft Office called WordPad. By learning the most important shortcuts here, you're equipping yourself with an arsenal of powerful tools that will make your life easier any time you're writing or editing.

Let's take a quick retreat into the dustbin of old memories before our train leaves the station. Here are three of the standard Windows shortcuts that you should know by heart.

- **Copy text: Select something, then press Ctrl-C.**
- **Delete text: Select something (ditto), then press Ctrl-X. Or press the Delete key.**

- **Paste text: Press Ctrl-V. Note: If something is selected, the pasted text will replace it.**

With those three simple shortcuts, you can do almost all your standard writing and editing.

Be a good friend and tell your parents or grandparents about these three shortcuts. (Tell your kids, too, in case they think Facebook is all the word processor they'll ever need.)

OK, time out. I'll bet that many of you have been muttering something like "You're kidding, you stupnagle! Everybody knows these shortcuts!" Think again. After 40 years spent teaching professionals how to use simple word processors, I can assure you that a LOT of apparently savvy adults don't know about them. So stop your snickering.

Ready for the big list?

(I'm including well known shortcuts for completeness. You might even find some of them a surprise. The lesser-known ones are shown in underlined italic boldface.)

- **Open the Start Menu: Ctrl-Esc**
- **Open the secret Start Menu: Win-X**
- **Make selected text bold: Ctrl-B**
- **Make selected text italic: Ctrl-I**
- **Make selected text underlined: Ctrl-U**
- **Insert a hyperlink: Ctrl-K**
- **Do a Search in a document: Ctrl-F**
- **Do a Replace after a Search: Ctrl-H**
- **Change the size of a font: Ctrl-Shift <**
- **Open the Task Manager: Ctrl-Shift-Esc.** (Much more direct than Ctrl-Alt-Delete)
- **View what's in the Clipboard: Win-V.** (Also called the Clipboard History)
- **Expand all folders in path: Ctrl-Shift-E.** (Use in a list view in Windows Explorer)
- **Open Settings Menu: Win-I**
- **Open Access Menu: Win-U**
- **Open Display Menu: Win-P**
- **Open Dictation Menu: Win-H**

- **Open Screen Capture menu:** Win-Shift-S
- **Open Xbox Game Bar:** Win-G
- **Open Action Center:** Win-A (*Quick Settings on Win 11*)
- **Open Notification Center:** Win-N (Win 11 only)
- **Activate Narrator:** Win-Ctrl-Enter
- **Select System Tray:** Win-B
- **Switch keyboard layout:** Win-Spacebar
- **Zoom in or out in Explorer:** Win + or Win -
- **Cycle through open windows:** Alt-Esc (in the order they were opened)
- **Show or hide folders or files:** Select item to show or hide; right click on it, click on Properties; in General tab check or uncheck which Hidden attribute to change, then click OK.
- **New File Explorer window:** Ctrl-N
- **Create new folder:** Ctrl-Shift-N
- **Rename a selected item:** F2
- **Expand all folders in path:** Ctrl-Shift-E
- **Delete to Recycle Bin:** Ctrl-D
- **Delete permanently:** Shift-Delete
- **Open Properties menu:** Select, then press Alt-Enter
- **Navigate sideways in Explorer:** Alt-Left or Right Arrow
- **Focus on search bar:** Ctrl-E

That's it!

By the way, Mac users, you're not getting a free ride. We'll have a list of known, unfamiliar and, you can be sure, unknown shortcuts for Macs soon.