

# **Capsule 14 – Introduction to Windows**

## **Goal: Getting around with Windows XP**

### **Introduction**

The public access computers in libraries, community centres and other organizations typically are IBM or IBM-compatible computers (no Macs).

To use these computers with ease, you should learn the basic functions of Windows XP. Windows XP is the interface which facilitates the work of the users with graphic elements such as windows, icons and menus.

The following little course will allow you to learn or review Windows XP's basic functions. Enjoy!

## **Getting around with Windows XP**

### **The case, drivers and ports**

- The case
- The CD-ROM drive
- The floppy disk drive
- The port to insert a USB key

### **Desktop and workstation**

#### **Icons**

#### **Mouse**

- Point
- Click
- Double-click
- Drag & Drop
- Right-click

#### **Windows**

- Moving a window
- Hiding a window and retrieving it
- Modifying a window's dimensions
- Closing a window

### **Drop-down menus, keyboard shortcuts and pop-up menus**

#### **The copy-paste function**

#### **The unit of measurement**

#### **Saving a file**

#### **The Start button**

#### **Dialog boxes**

#### **The Recycle bin**

## **The case, drivers and ports**

### **The case**

The case is the box, usually put on the floor or a table, which contains all the electrical components of the computer. One could say that the case contains the computer's brain. This "brain" is basically made of a motherboard (back bone), a processor (brain) and memory. It is not necessary to know or understand everything about a computer's inner functions to be able to use it well, just like you do not have to fully understand how a car's engine works to use an automobile.

### **The CD-ROM drive**

The CD-ROM drive is located on the front of the box. You can insert CD-ROMs and audio CDs in it. A CD-ROM is a machinable medium on which you can write data: files, programs, games, etc. A CD-ROM drive only allows you to read the data written on a CD-ROM or listen to audio CDs. You cannot write data unless you own a CD-ROM writer.

### **The floppy disk drive**

The floppy disk drive is also located on the front of the box. Just like the CD-ROM drive, it allows you to read the contents of a machinable medium (in this case, the contents of a floppy disk). Unlike the CD-ROM drive, however, the floppy disk drive can also be used to save data. It is a huge advantage, even though floppy disks have very little storage space.

### **The port to insert a USB key**

The port to insert a USB key is sometimes located on the front of the box, but it usually is in the back. A USB key is used the same way as a floppy disk, to save data. The main advantage of a USB key over a floppy disk is its largest capacity of storage.



## Desktop and workstation

The desktop is the first screen displayed after Windows has been launched:



The above desktop image, also called “background”, is the default display in Windows. In other words, it is the background which is displayed automatically when Windows opens if the computer’s owner has not chosen another background. Most people replace this background with another image: the logo of their company, a photo, a one-colour background, etc.



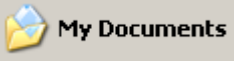

The desktop is the main location to access the files and programs located either on the computer (i.e. on the hard drive), or on an external support (a floppy disk, a USB key, a CD-ROM, a DVD, an external hard drive, etc.). You can access this data by first clicking the **Workstation** icon.

Clicking this icon will display the contents of the **hard drive**, represented by the letter **C:**.

The external support drives that are installed are also displayed, for example a **floppy disk drive** (represented by the letter **A:**), and CD-ROM/DVD drives, etc., represented by different letters.

## Icons

Icons are small images. They can be used to represent many items, such as:





a section of the computer	
a program	
a folder	
a file	

Icons always come with a name, which helps to identify the item they represent. There are thousands of different icons.

Every file created with a program is automatically tagged with this program's icon. Thanks to this system, you can know which program was used to create the file just by looking at its icon.

For example, if you create a file using Microsoft Word and you save it, the file will be tagged with Microsoft Word's icon, and its name will be the one you specified while saving (see the icon above for the file named "Lettre à Randstad.doc").

Here are more examples of files tagged with the icon of the program which was used to create them:

Programs	Microsoft Publisher	Microsoft Excel	Microsoft Access	Acrobat Reader
Files	 flyer.pub	 mybudget.xls	 mycds.mdb	 poster.pdf

Here are some icons you will find on the **Workstation**:

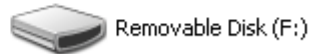
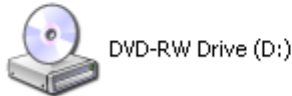
#### Hard Disk Drives

---



#### Devices with Removable Storage

---



## Mouse

A standard mouse has 2 buttons (left and right) and a scroll wheel in the middle. You can do the following 5 actions using a mouse:

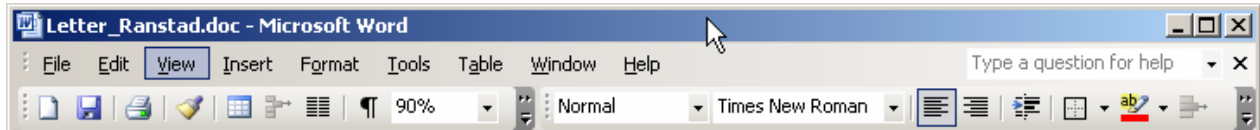


1. **Point:** Moving the arrow of the pointer (which indicates the location of the mouse on screen) to an object or a specific location on screen.  
**Exercise:** Move the arrow to the **Workstation** icon.
2. **Click:** Pressing the left button of the mouse once.  
**Exercise:** Click **Workstation** (notice that it becomes highlighted).
3. **Double-click:** Pressing the left button of the mouse twice.  
**Exercise:** Double-click **Workstation**. As you can see, this opens the workstation window.
4. **Drag & Drop:** Pressing the left button, and dragging the mouse without releasing the button (keeping it pressed). This function is most often used to move objects or text. This also allows to highlight objects or apply certain commands.  
**Exercise:** Press on a folder, move your cursor to the bottom of the window and then release the button. You just moved an icon using drag & drop!
5. **Right-click:** Pressing the right button of the mouse.  
**Exercise:** Right-click the icon of a folder. A menu is displayed, offering multiple functions: it is a contextual menu (also called a pop-up menu). Notice that the functions available vary from one pop-up menu to another (See *Drop-down menus and pop-up menus*.)

# Windows

## Moving a window

To move a window, just point on the title bar at the top of the window, press the left button of the mouse and keep it pressed to move the window to the right, the left, the top or the bottom (by “dragging & dropping”, in other words).




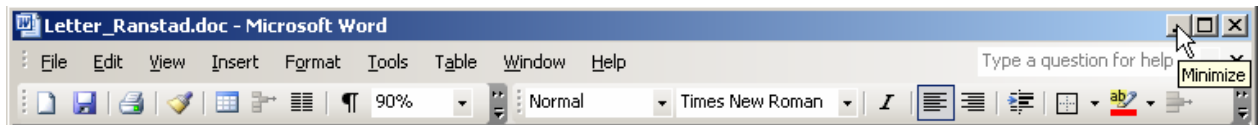
**Exercise:** Point your cursor on the title bar of an open file and press the left button of the mouse. Keep the button pressed. Then, move the window to the right. It’s done! You moved a window!

**Note:** You cannot move a window with this technique when it is displayed in full screen mode (see *Modifying a window’s dimensions*).

## Hiding a window and retrieving it

Temporarily hiding a window clears the screen so you can do something else. When using this function, you are not closing the file’s window or the program: you are simply hiding the window. Everything remains open, and you do not lose your work.

To hide a window, point on the  button located on the right of the title bar and click:



The window is minimized automatically and displayed as a button in the task bar. The name of this button is the window’s name. To retrieve the hidden window, click the button with its name: the window will reappear on screen.





## Modifying a window's dimensions

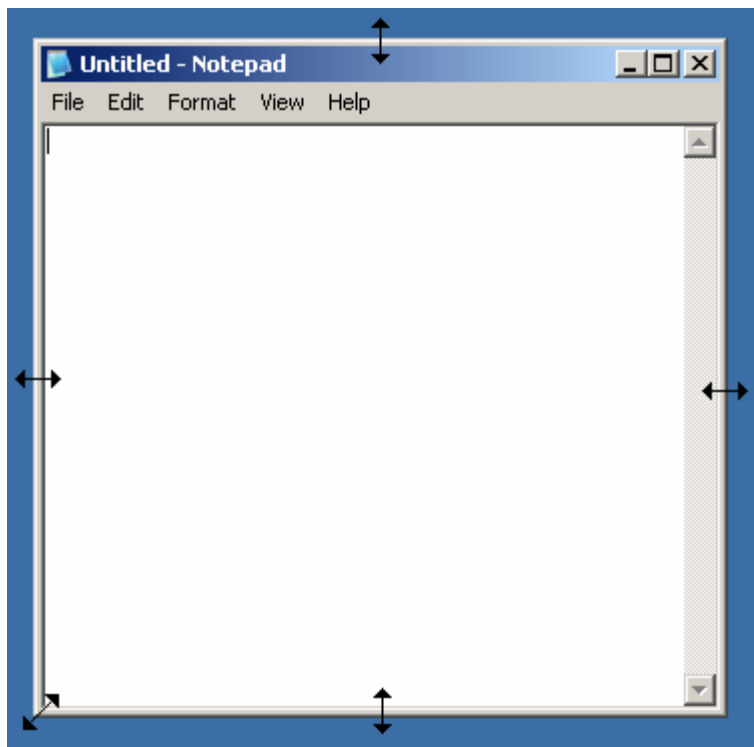
There are 3 ways you can modify a window's dimensions.

1. You can modify a window's dimensions by clicking the button in the middle of the 3 buttons located at the top right corner of the title bar. This button allows to either maximize the window to full screen format, or reduce it to a smaller size. When it is at its inferior smaller size level, a window is said to be restored.



**Exercise:** Open a file. Point the  button of this file's window and click. Notice that the window is now displayed full screen. To go back to the window's initial size, click the  button. Notice that when you restore a window to its previous level, it goes back to its previous dimensions.

2. You can also modify a window's dimensions by moving its borders or corners. To do so, you should first point a vertical or horizontal border of a restored window, or one of its corners. You should point very slowly, until a black bidirectional arrow appears on the border or corner you are pointing. When the arrow appears, you can drag & drop until the window reaches the desired size.

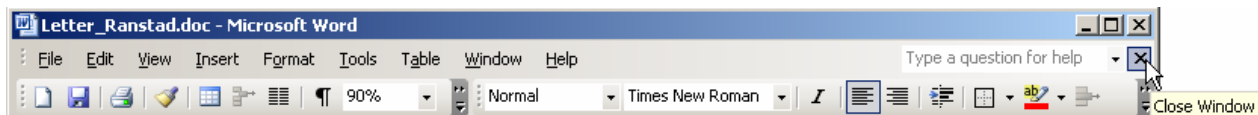


3. You can also go from a restored window to a full screen window and vice versa simply by double-clicking on the title bar located above the menu bar of the window.

## Closing a window

### Closing a file's window

To close a file's window, simply click the close button identified with an **X** and located on the top right corner of the window:

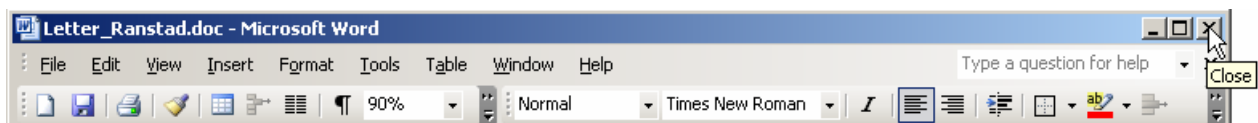


You can also close a file by selecting the **Close** function from the **File** drop-down menu. Notice that, when closing a file's window, you only close the file itself: the program remains open.

**Exercise:** Point the close button of a file's window, and then click. There! The window is closed! And so is the file. Reopen this file. Then click the **File** menu and click **Close**. Once again, you closed the file's window – and the file itself.

### Closing a program's window

To close a program's window, simply click the close button identified with an **X** and located on the top right corner of the title bar:



You can also close a program by selecting the **Exit** function from the **File** drop-down menu. Notice that, when closing a program's window, you also close the program itself.

**Exercise:** Point the close button of a program's window, and then click. There! The window is closed! And so is the program. Reopen this program. Then click the **File** menu and click **Exit**. Once again, you closed the program's window – and the program itself.

## Drop-down menus, keyboard shortcuts and pop-up menus

### Drop-down menus and keyboard shortcuts

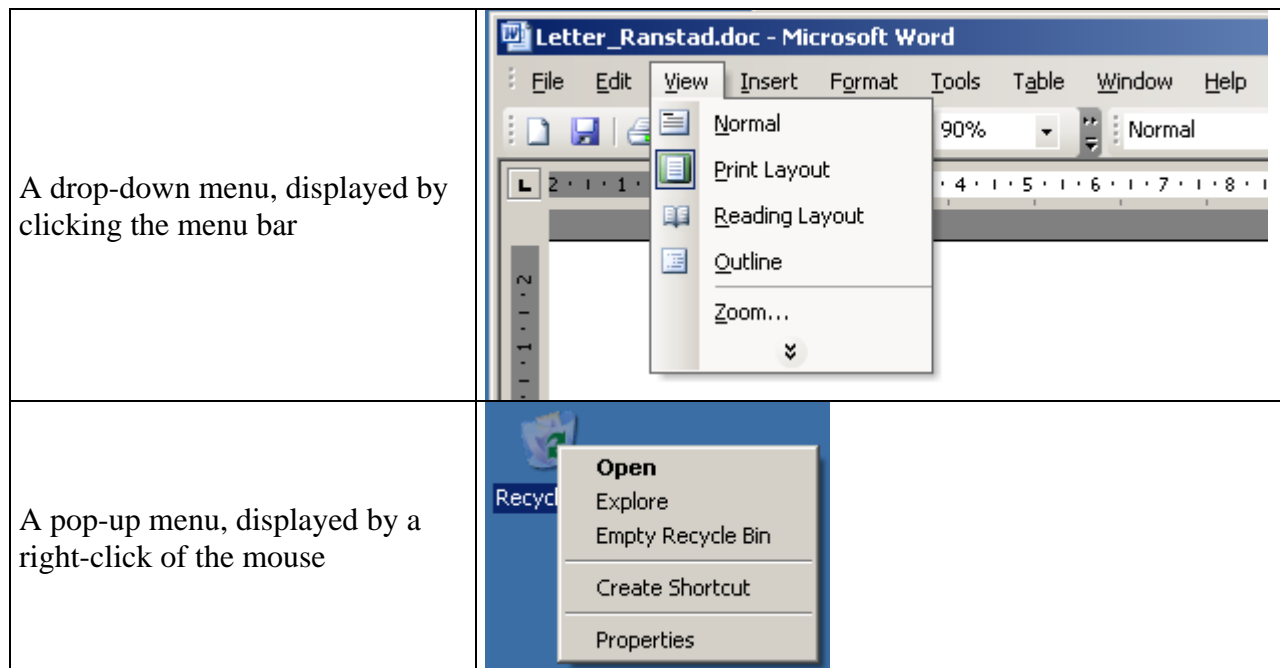
The bar located below the title bar is called the menu bar. This bar holds all the drop-down menus, containing all the functions available within a program.

When clicking **File**, for example, the functions/commands drop-down menu is displayed. Just move the pointer to the desired function/command and click it to execute.

To save time, you can also use keyboard shortcuts for certain functions. For example, instead of opening the **File** menu and clicking **Save** to save a document, you can use the **CTRL+S** keyboard shortcut, i.e. pressing simultaneously the **CTRL** and **S** keys of the keyboard. Keyboard shortcuts are displayed in the drop-down menus, to the right of their corresponding functions.

### Pop-up menus

As we saw earlier in this capsule (see **Right-click**), pop-up menus are displayed when you click the right button of the mouse, no matter where the mouse is: on an icon, an object, text, an image or any part of the screen. As indicated by their name (pop-up menus are also called contextual menus), pop-up menus offer functions/commands that can be executed within a particular context: the precise context at the moment when you clicked. Pop-up menus allow you to work faster than with drop-down menus.



## The copy-paste function

The copy-paste function is essential when using a computer. It allows you to temporarily copy data (text, images, files, etc.) in a section of the computer's memory called **Dashboard**, to then paste it somewhere else.

Among other things, this function is very useful to recopy parts of text, filenames or web site addresses while avoiding potential typing errors.

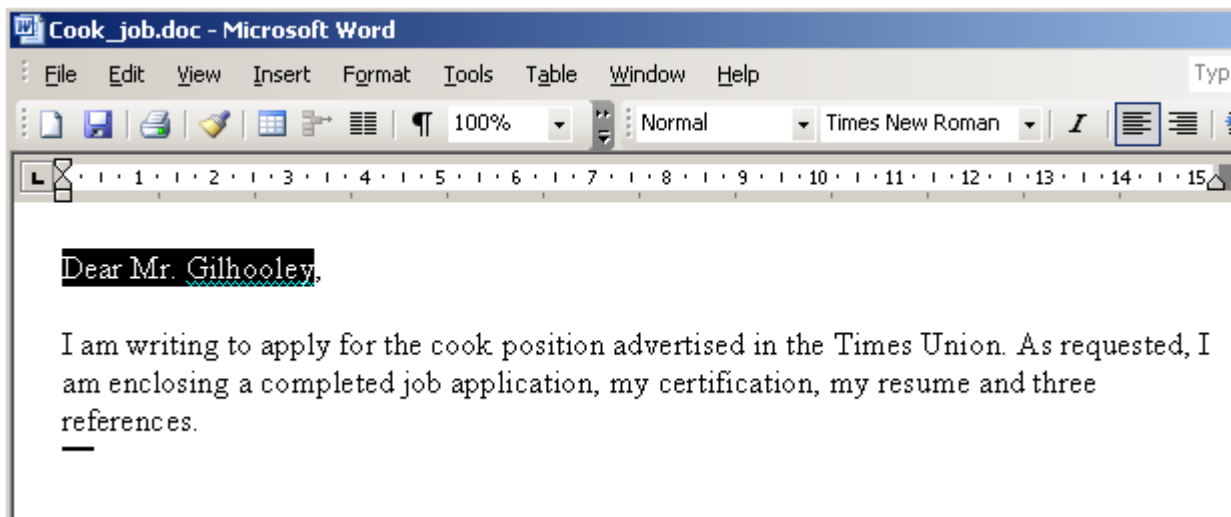
This operation can be done in 4 steps:

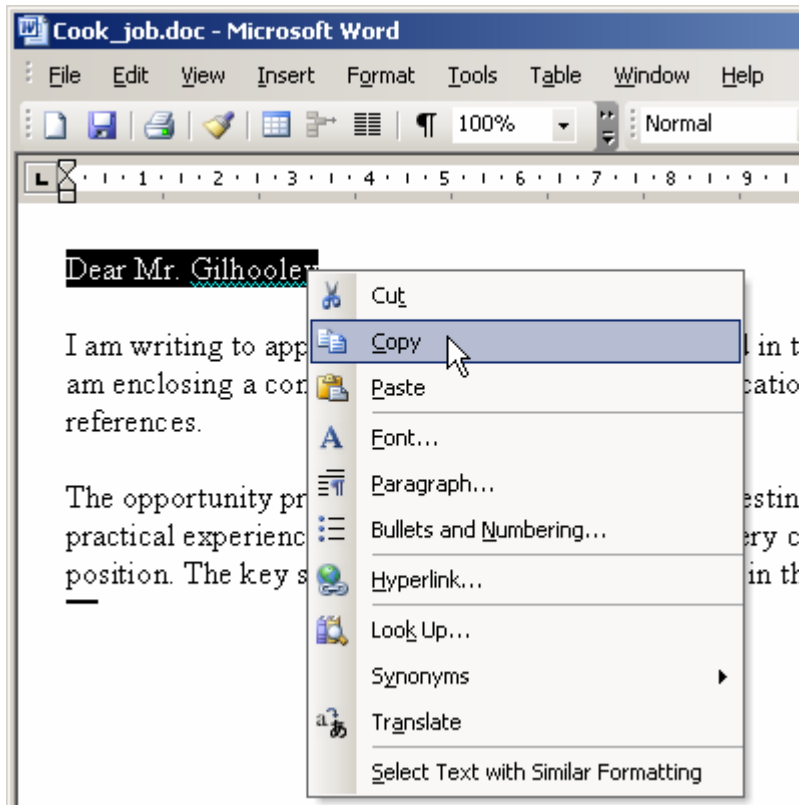
1. Selecting the item to copy;
2. Copying this item to the Dashboard;
3. Selecting the location to which the item should be copied;
4. Pasting the selected item.

Let's go through these steps one-by-one, by "copying-pasting" some text from a Word document:

### 1. Selecting the item to copy

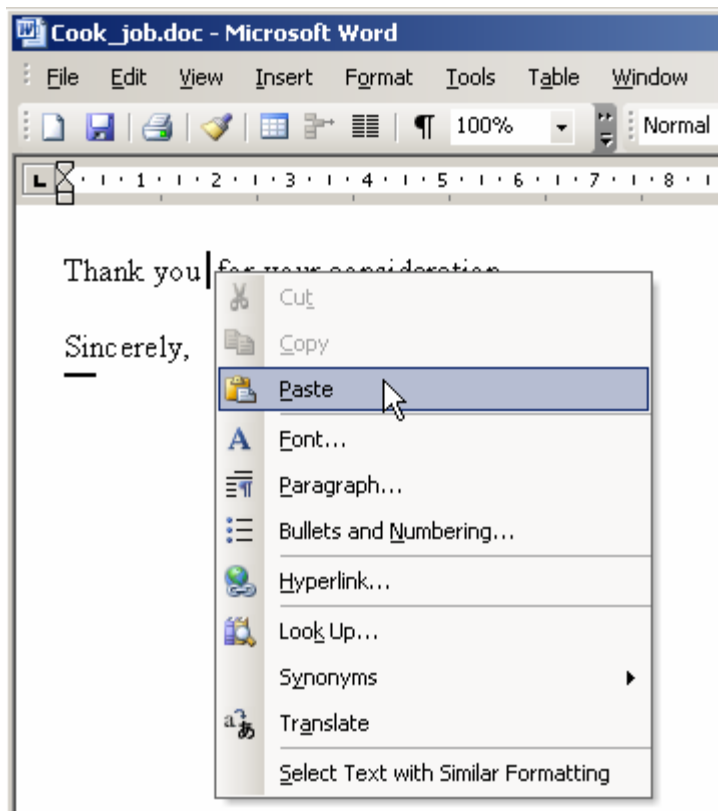
Select the text to copy by pressing and dragging (see *Mouse*). The selected text becomes highlighted:





## 2. Copying this item to the Dashboard

Once the text is selected, right-click to display a pop-up menu. From this menu, select **Copy**: the selected text will be copied temporarily to the Dashboard.



## 3. Selecting the location to which the item should be copied

Place the mouse pointer where you wish to paste the text:

## 4. Pasting the selected item

Right-click to display a pop-up menu. From this menu, select **Paste**:

There you go! Your text has been pasted where you wished it to be: **changer**

The cut-paste function is another function very close to the copy-paste function. This function allows to delete (to “cut”) an item from one location to paste it somewhere else. It is run the same way as the copy-paste function, but you should select **Cut** instead of **Copy** from the pop-up menu.

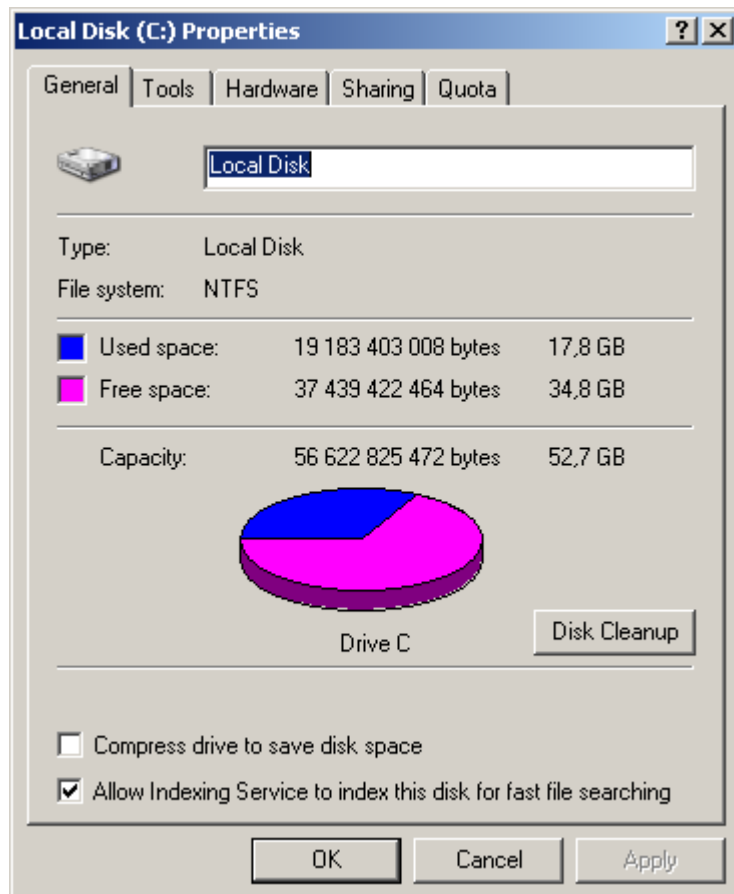
## The unit of measurement

The microcomputers' basic unit of measurement is the byte. It is used to measure the available space on data storage supports (hard drives, floppy disks, USB keys, etc.). It is also used to measure the size of the files and programs that are saved on these supports.

This information is essential when transferring data from one support to another. For example, before saving a file to a floppy disk, you should make sure that you have enough space left on this floppy disk to store the file. Therefore, you should know the size of the file.

Since a byte is very small, we mostly use its multiples:

Unit	Abbreviations	Value
byte		The byte represents one character (a letter, a number or a symbol).
kilobyte	Kb	Unit of 1 024 bytes
megabyte	Mb Meg	Unit of 1 024 Kb (1 024 x 1 024 bytes = 1 Mb)
gigabyte	Gb Gig	Unit of 1 024 Mb (1 024 x 1 024 x 1 024 bytes = 1 Gb)



The available space on a hard drive depends on the model. The first microcomputers had hard drives with a capacity of only 5 Mb. With today's technology, hard drives have a capacity ranging from 40 to 300 Gb.

**Exercise:** Check the capacity of your hard drive. To do so, double-click the **Workstation** icon. Then right-click the hard drive's icon: a pop-up menu will appear. From this pop-up menu, click **Properties**: a dialog box is displayed. In this dialog box, you will see the total capacity of your hard drive, as well as used and available space.

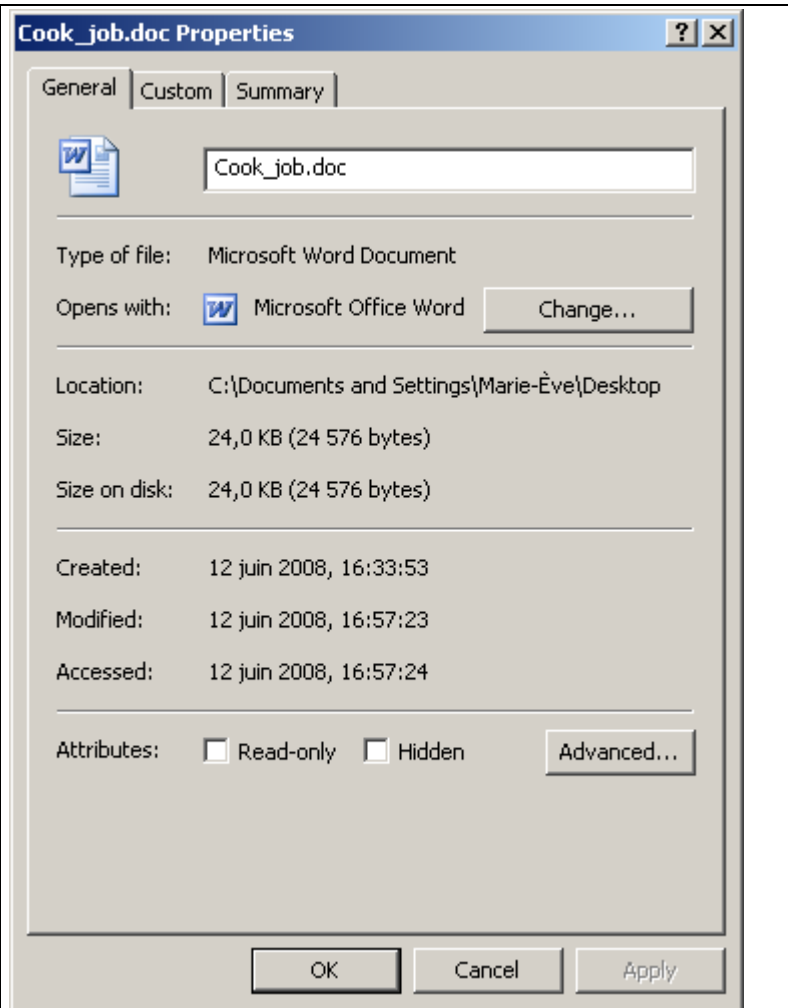
Here is an overview of the available capacity of the supports that are most-often used:

<p><b>Floppy disk (3½'') - Drive A:</b></p>		<p>1.44 megabytes (Mb)</p>
<p><b>Hard drive – Drive C:</b></p>		<p>Hundreds of gigabytes (Gb)</p>
<p><b>CD and CD/RW</b></p>	 <p>52X</p>	<p>About 700 megabytes (Mb)</p>
<p><b>DVD DVD/CD-RW</b></p>		<p>4.7 gigabytes (Gb) and 8.5 gigabytes (Gb)</p>
<p><b>Backup cartridge</b></p>		<p>Can hold up to 500 gigabytes (Gb)</p>
<p><b>USB key</b></p>		<p>Can hold from 128 Mb to 8 Gb</p>

To check the size of a file (to know, for example, if it can be saved on an almost full floppy disk), simply point this file, right-click and select **Properties** from the displayed pop-up menu.

A dialog box is displayed, where the file size is specified, among other things.

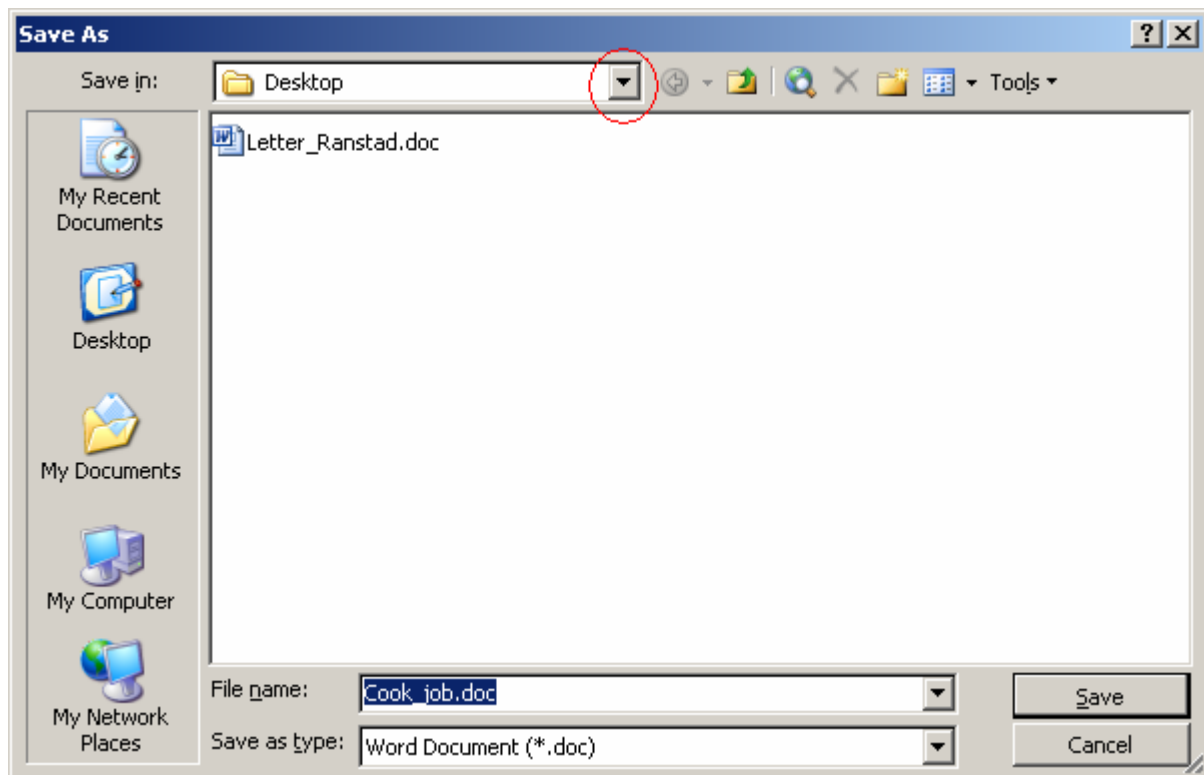
In the example on the right, the dialog box specifies that the “Lettre à Randstad” file takes 24.0 Kb on the disk.



## Saving a file

To save the work you have done, you should save it on the computer or on a removable support (a floppy disk or a USB key, for example).

To do so, click the **File** menu, and then click **Save As**. A dialog box is displayed. You should enter 2 things in that dialog box: the name of the file you wish to save and the location in which to save it: **à changer**



it001.png

First enter the name of the file in the **Filename** field located at the bottom of the dialog box (in the above example: “Lettre à Randstad.doc”).

Then select the location in which to save the file. To do so, click the small black triangle at the top of the dialog box next to the **Save In** field (the small triangle circled in red in the above example). A drop-down menu appears which will allow you to select the location in which to save your work.

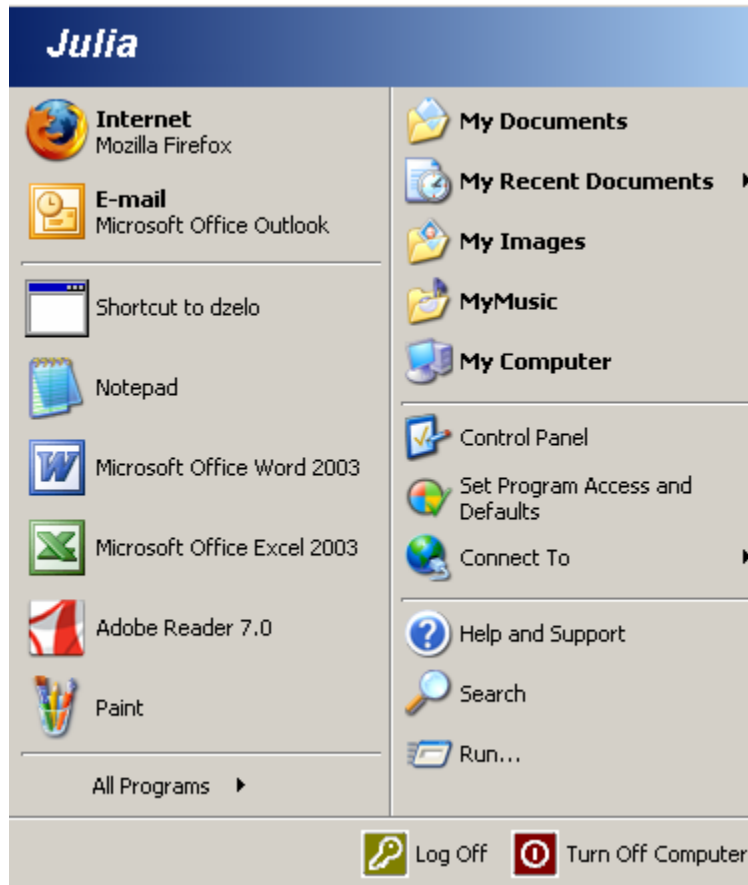
If you click **Desktop**, for example, then click the **Save** button located on the bottom right corner of the dialog box, the file will be saved on the Desktop. It's true: you will see an icon with the name of the saved file appear on the Desktop.

## The Start button

The **Start** button is located on the bottom left corner of the screen:



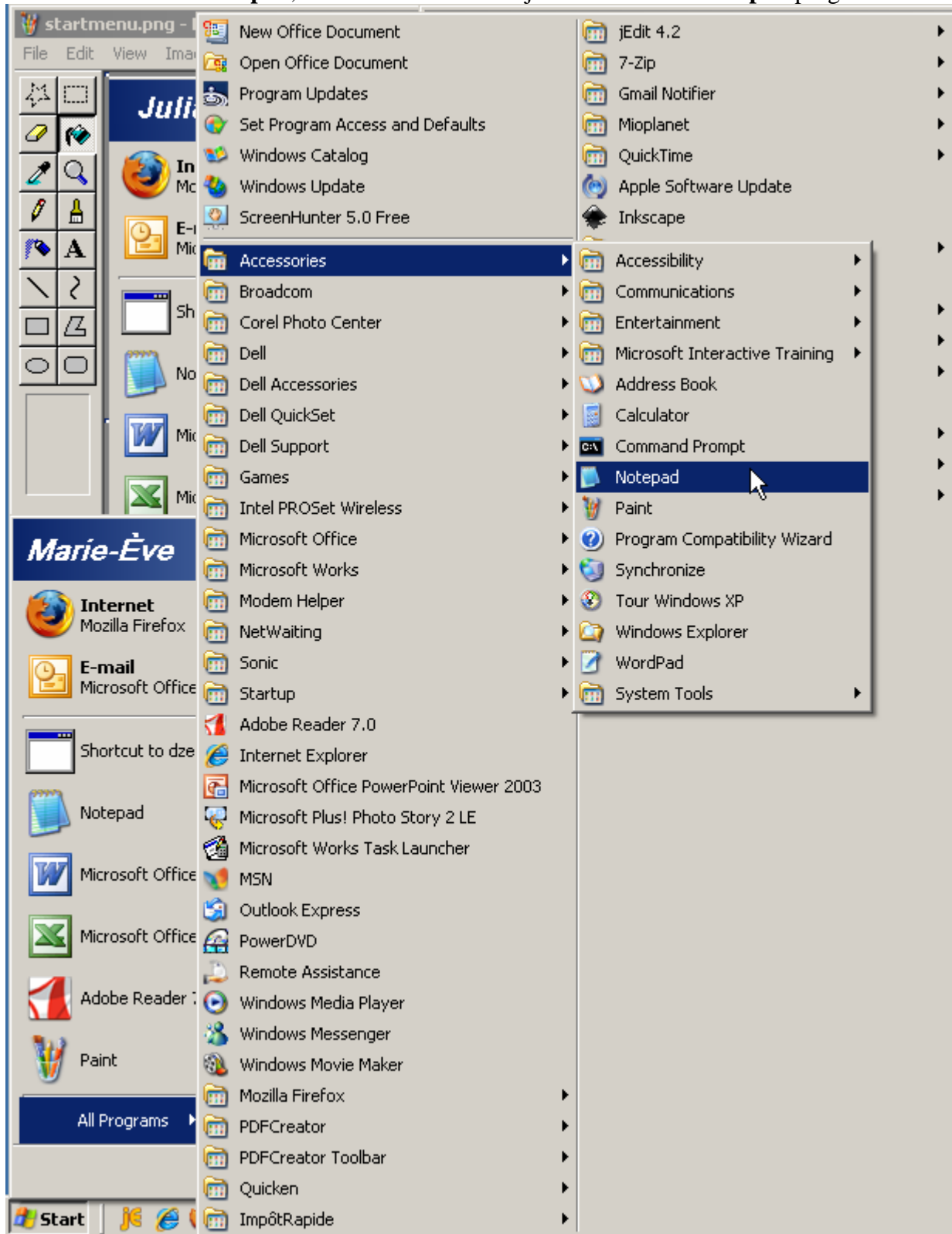
When you click it, icons appear. These icons are grouped in sections:



<b>Left section</b>	<p>This section allows for quick access to the programs installed on a computer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The top part displays the icons of the most recently used programs on that particular computer, for a quick access.</li> <li>- The <b>All programs</b> icon allows for access to all the programs installed on that particular computer.</li> </ul>
<b>Right section</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The top part of this section allows for quick access to the <b>workstation</b> or certain parts of the workstation (<b>My documents</b>, etc.).</li> <li>- The bottom part of this section allows for quick access to the <b>Help and support</b> and <b>Search</b> functions, as well as certain functions for the more experienced users.</li> </ul>
<b>Bottom section</b>	<p>Among other things, this section contains the <b>Turn Off Computer</b> button. Please note that you should <i>always</i> shut down the computer using this button, and <i>never</i> by using the switch of the computer's box.</p>

**Exercise:** Click the **Start** button. Point **All programs** (left section): a drop-down menu will be displayed. Move your pointer to the right and move up the menu until you reach **Accessories**: another drop-down menu will be displayed. By carefully staying on the same line as **Accessories**,

move your pointer again to the right to place it at the top of the new drop-down menu, then move down this menu until **Notepad**, and click. There! You just launched the **Notepad** program.



## Dialog boxes

Dialog boxes are windows that get into a “dialog” with a computer user. Some dialog boxes allow to make changes or execute functions. Others give information or send warnings.

Dialog boxes are pretty much everywhere. For example, in the **File** drop-down menu, the ellipsis after some commands mean that, by selecting one of these commands, you will open a dialog box. This box will then allow you to execute a variety of functions. We already used one of these boxes, the box for the **Save As...** command, when we learned how to save a file (see *Saving a file*).

You will see that the following 3 functions are very often used in dialog boxes:

<b>OK</b>	Executes changes that were made and closes the dialog box.
<b>Cancel</b>	Closes the dialog box without applying changes.
<b>Apply</b>	Applies changes without closing the dialog box.

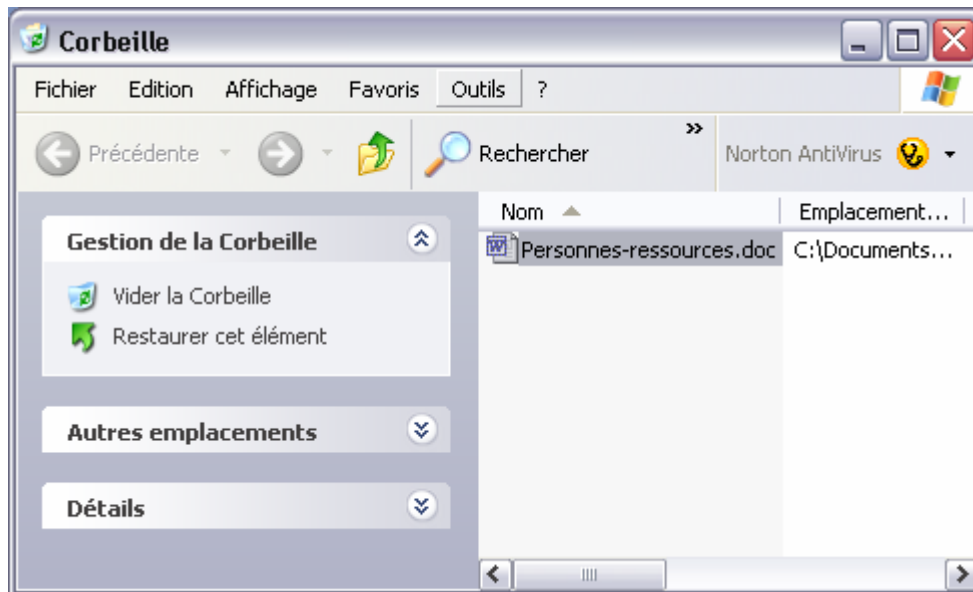
## The Recycle bin



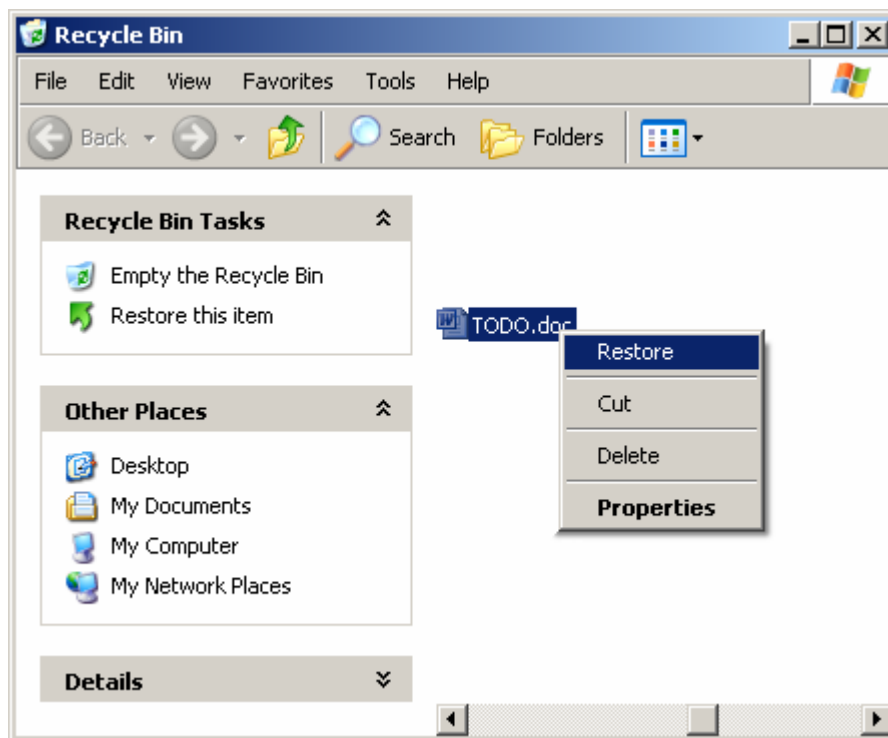
The Recycle bin is the place where the computer stores deleted items.

If you mistakenly “threw away” an item, you can “take it back out” from the Recycle bin, as long as you have not yet emptied the Recycle bin. This is what we call “restoring” an item.

There are 2 ways to proceed. In both cases, you should first double-click the **Recycle bin** icon. A dialog box will then be displayed and you will see the contents of the Recycle bin. You can then either select the icon of the item you wish to restore and click **Restore item** from the left bar: **a changer**



or right-click and select **Restore** from the pop-up menu that appears:



**Important:** The Recycle bin only keeps in memory the items that were deleted from the hard drive. If you delete a file from a floppy disk, for example, or a USB key, that file will be lost with no possibility of retrieving it. That being said, it is totally impossible to delete an item stored on a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM.