

WORD PROCESSING

People use word processing software as a tool to help them prepare text documents. They enter, revise, and print faster and more accurately with this software than with a typewriter.

Word processing is a powerful tool, but it cannot automatically produce a good product. It cannot think creatively or logically or decide how to express an idea clearly. While a word processing package can make the mechanical job of writing and revising easier and more efficient, it does not replace the thinking and planning of the writing process.

The elements of word processing include entering information (the input stage), processing that information (the processing stage), and ultimately printing that information (the output stage). The input stage involves key entering or scanning information into a computer file. The processing stage includes arranging the information, cutting, pasting, copying, and so forth. The output stage deals with sending the document to a printer, to a storage medium, such as a floppy disk, or to a screen.

Word processing is helpful at all three stages of the writing process—planning, writing, and publishing. In the planning stage, before they start to write, students can use the computer to take notes and build outlines. Then students can print their ideas so that they can discuss them, or they can save the ideas onto disk and expand them later. In the writing process, students use the word processing software to put their thoughts down immediately without worrying about errors. The real power of word processing is that it gives students the ability to revise rapidly and efficiently. Publishing revised documents in a clean and professional-looking format enhances the pride of students in their finished work.