

Save Time with Macros

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to create macros -- shortcuts to commonly used computer tasks -- in Microsoft Word.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

This techtorial contains instructions for Microsoft Word XP, but the steps are similar in other Office XP products, such as Excel and PowerPoint. The techtorial -- with some minor adjustments -- also will apply to most earlier versions of Microsoft Office.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard V.c. in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

WHAT'S A MACRO?

A macro is a mini-program or shortcut you create within Microsoft Office that allows you to perform a task simply by pressing a combination of keys on the keyboard or by clicking a single button on the toolbar. For example, if you frequently type the address of your school in Word documents, you could create a macro to fill in that information automatically whenever you press a particular key combination.

Macros can

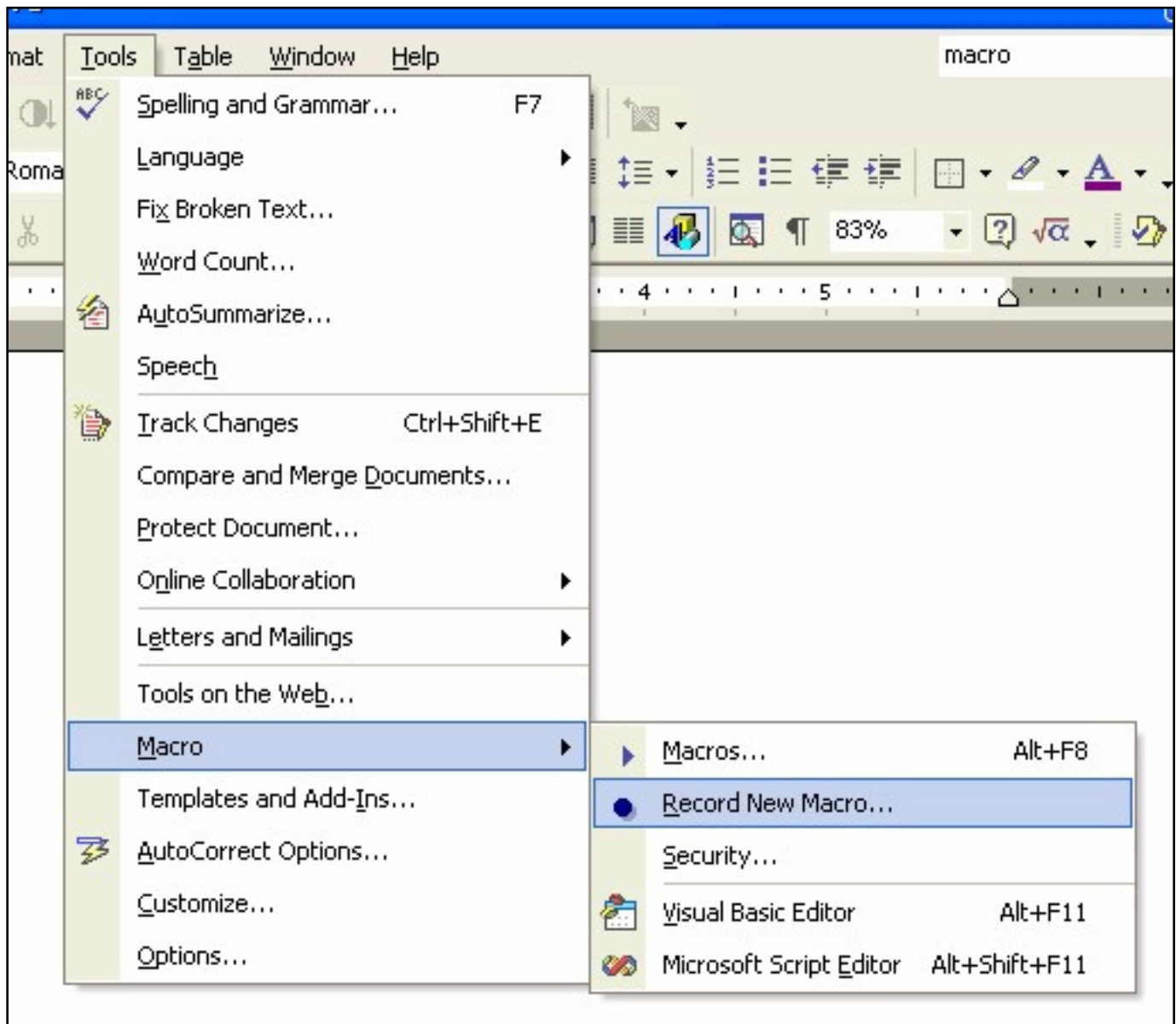
- save time by filling in commonly used phrases.
- help make documents more consistent by always formatting specific text or graphics the same way.
- combine several tasks into one command.

Macros are easy to create. Follow the directions to learn how!

MACRO ONE: FILL IN TEXT

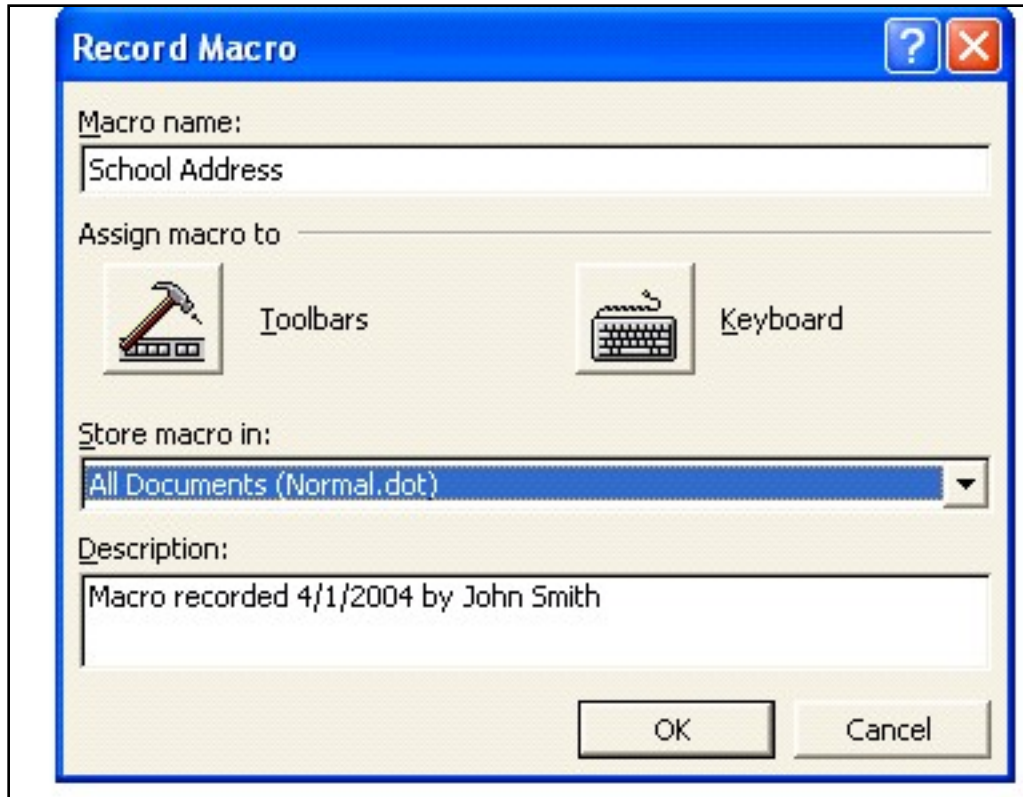
To create a macro that will fill in frequently used text:

- Open a new Microsoft Word document. (Note: The directions below are for Office XP, but they will work, with minor adjustments, in most versions of Word.)
- Go to Tools>Macro>Record New Macro to open the Record Macro window.



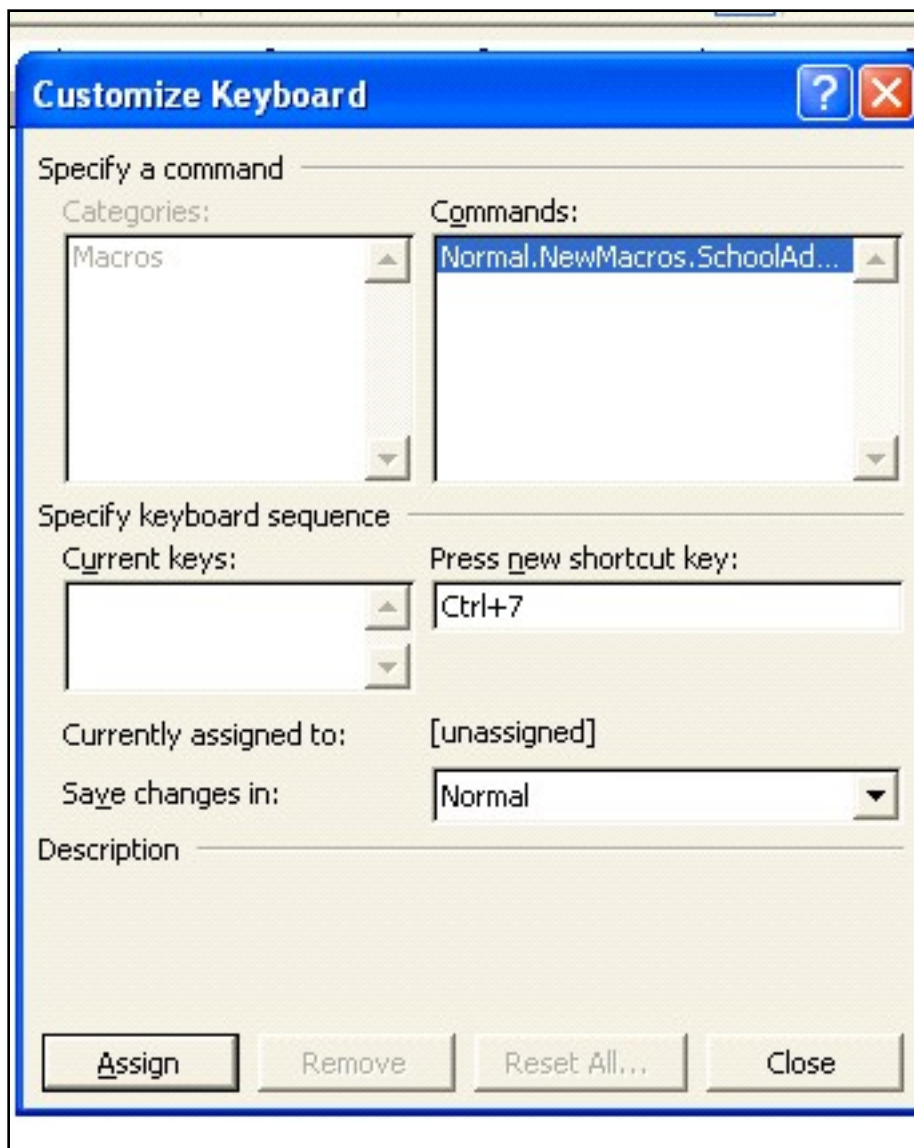
- Type *SchoolAddress* in the Macro Name field. (Note: Macro names CANNOT have a space in them!)

- Be sure the All Documents option is selected in the Store macro in: field, so you can use this macro on any document you create.
- In the Description or Macro name: field, briefly identify the macro and add your name, if you wish.



TEXT MACRO CONTINUED

- Click the Keyboard button in the Record New Macro window to open the Customize Keyboard window.
- At the Customize Keyboard window, click in the Press New Shortcut Keys field, hold down both the CTRL key and the 7 key (or any other key combination you choose), and click Assign.



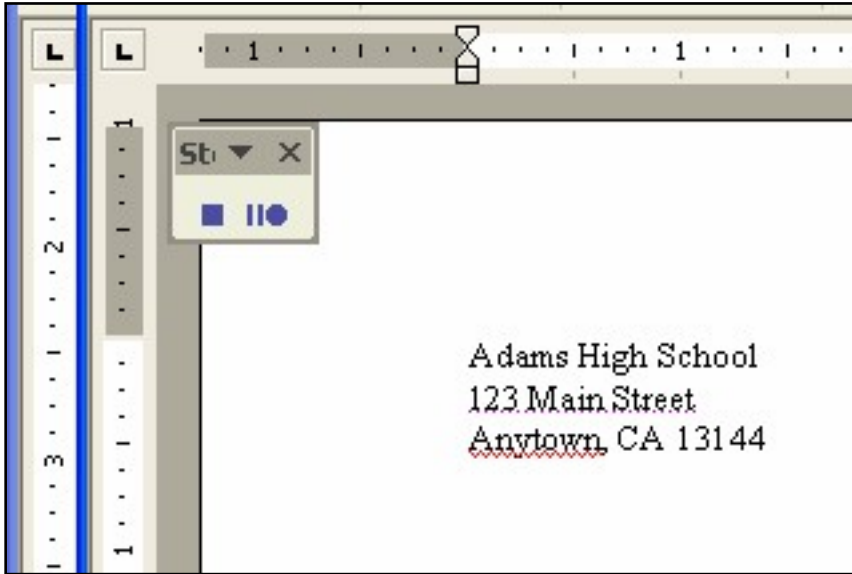
Note: Some key combinations already are assigned -- CTRL S, for example, is the default key combination for saving a file -- and you CAN overwrite default commands. It's best, however, to pick key combinations that aren't assigned already. To learn if the key combination you've chosen already is assigned to a macro, click in the Press new shortcut keys field and press that key combination (CTRL 7, for example). If the key combination you've pressed is Currently assigned to: a task, that information will appear beneath the Press new shortcut keys field.

- Click Close.

TEXT MACRO CONTINUED

Now, you're ready to enter the text you're creating this macro for.

- Type into your Word document your school's name and click Enter; type the street address and click Enter; type the city, state, and zip and click Enter.

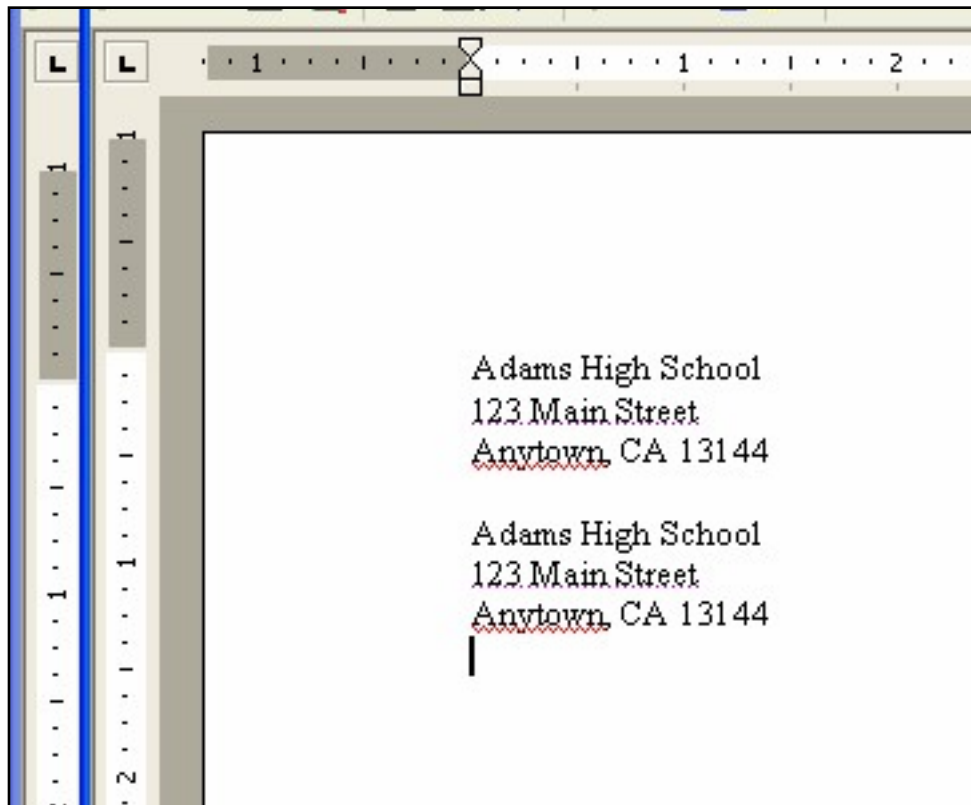


You should notice two new icons on your screen: a box containing a square, two parallel lines, and a circle resembling the control buttons on an audio tape recorder; and, attached to your cursor, an icon resembling an audio tape. Those icons indicate that a macro is being created or "recorded."

- Click the square (or "play" button) in the tape recording icon to stop recording. (Or click Tools>Macro>Stop Recording.)

Now...let's test your macro!

Click Enter, and then press CTRL and 7 (or whatever key combination you've chosen). The school address should be duplicated in your Word document.



Did you make a mistake, or do you just want to redo the macro? Follow the same steps as above. When a dialogue box appears asking if you want to rewrite the macro (save a new one and delete the old one for the same shortcut keys), click yes.

Note that ALL the keystrokes or mouse clicks you make while recording a macro will be duplicated **WHENEVER** you hit the shortcut keys for that macro. So, if when creating the macro, you type your school's name and then decide to save that line of text by clicking File>Save before typing the school's address, then from now on, *every time* you press the key combination for this macro, the computer will enter the school's name, save the file, move to the next line, and enter the street address.

MACRO TWO: FORMATTING YOUR WAY

Teachers and students frequently copy information and other resources from a variety of documents and/or Web sites and then paste them into a single document. Often, those resources represent different fonts, different font sizes, and a variety of other formatting elements. You can, however, create a macro that will convert all those formatting elements into a single style -- one of your own choosing.

Open a new Microsoft Word document and type the following sentence three times: *We hold these truths to be self-evident*. Highlight the first sentence and change the font to Courier, size 8. Highlight the second sentence, center it, and change the font to Times New Roman 16. Highlight the third sentence and change the color of the text to purple. Your document should look like this:

We hold these truths to be self-evident.

We hold these truths to be self-evident.

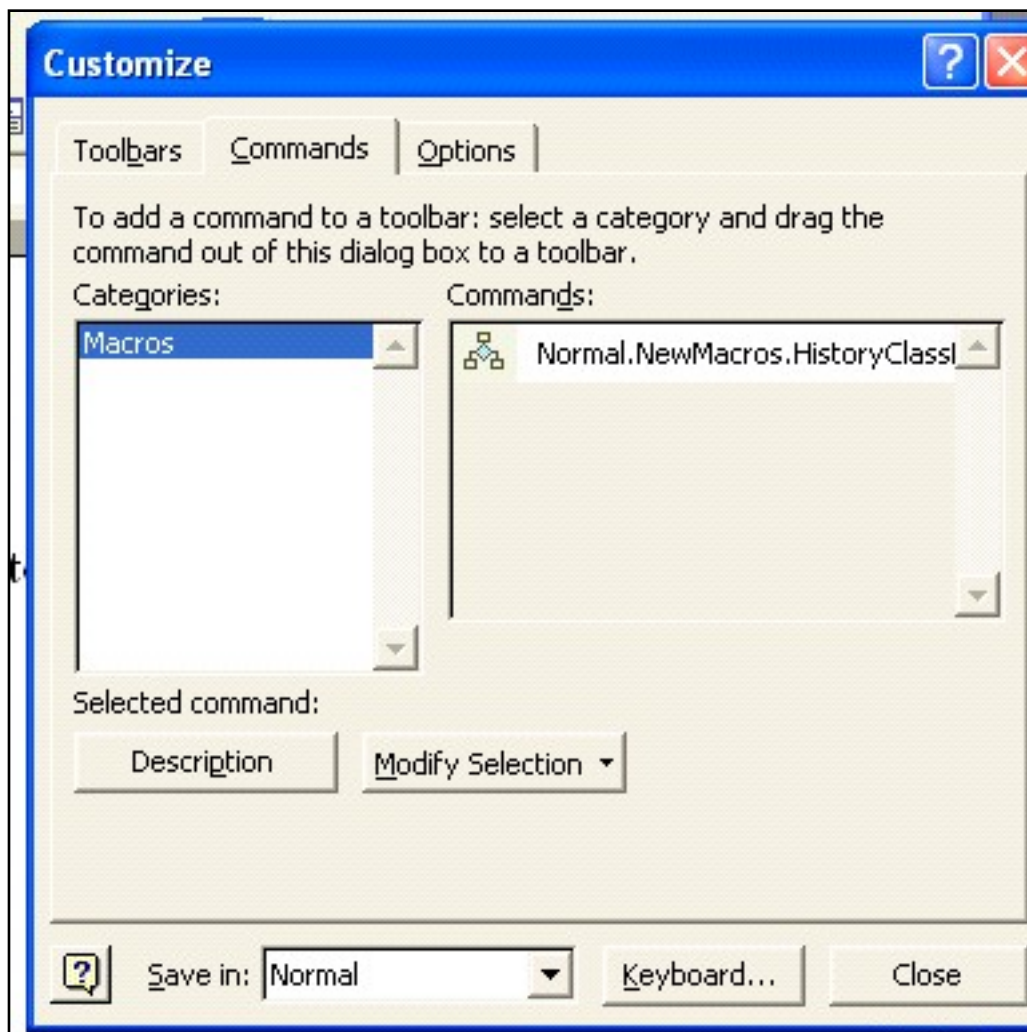
We hold these truths to be self-evident.

|

Now, let's create a macro that will clean up this formatting mess!

FORMATTING MACRO CONTINUED

- Go to Tools > Macro > Record New Macro, to open the Record New Macro window, and then type *HistoryClassFormatting* in the Macro Name field.
- In the Record window, click the Toolbar button to open the Customize window. This time, we're going to assign to our macro a toolbar button instead of a key combination.
- In the Customize window, choose the Commands tab and find the phrase Normal.NewMacros.HistoryClassFormatting.



- Click the three-box diamond icon to the left of Normal.NewMacros.HistoryClassFormatting, and drag the icon to a toolbar at the top of the Word window.



(Note: If the words Normal.NewMacros.HistoryClassFormatting instead of the three-box diamond appear in the toolbar, click Modify Selection in the Customize window and select Default Style. Or, if you want an icon other than the three-box diamond, click Modify Selection > Change Button Style and choose from happy faces, hearts, piggy banks and more!)

- Close the Customize window. (Notice the tape recorder and tape case icons. They mean that you are now recording a macro, so be careful!)
- Complete the following commands:
 - Press CTRL and A at the same time to highlight all the text.
 - Choose Times New Roman.
 - Choose 12 point font.
 - Choose left align.
 - Choose black ink.
 - Click the square in the recording box to stop recording. (Or click Tools > Macro > Stop Recording.)

Now, test your macro: Type any text; change the font, size, color and alignment, and then click the macro icon in your toolbar. The text formatting should change to Times New Roman, 12 point, left align, and black.

MORE ABOUT MACROS

Macros also can be used to

- customize a task in Word that has always annoyed you. For example, this author doesn't like that Word automatically inserts Clip Art in line with text, so you cannot move it freely around the page. So, a handy macro might be to record the steps to adjust the formatting of a picture so that the layout is Tight, meaning the clip art image can be put anywhere on the page!
- create consistent formatting when copying and pasting student work into a cohesive portfolio.

For more about macros, check out [Office XP Tips: More Power From Macros](#), from PC World magazine.