Student Skill Activity:
Using a Word Processing Program

Why Learn This Skill?

Students are often asked to submit essays in a professional format. There are several ways to create a professional-looking printed document. The most common method today is to use a word processing program—a software program that allows you to input text and manipulate the style and appearance of the text on the page.

Learning the Skill

When you open most word processing programs, the screen presents you with a blank document. To begin writing the new document, simply begin typing. To begin composition of another new document, find the button or menu on the toolbar that lets you select a "New" document. The following tips will help you format the document to make it look the way you want:

- Text formatting can be modified to change the appearance of the text. Text is frequently formatted as *italicized,* **bold,** or <u>underlined</u>. These formats can be set by highlighting the text (either by double clicking on it or dragging the cursor over the text with the left mouse button depressed), then choosing the options mentioned above (typically under the "Format" menu).

- Text alignment can be modified to determine where the text appears on the page. Most word processing programs let you choose left-justified, right-justified, or centered.

- Choices of text font and sizes also come standard with your word processing program. Some common fonts are **Times New Roman** and **Helvetica.**

- To insert new text in a line, move the cursor to the point where you want the text to go, and type. The word processing program moves the existing text to the right to make room for the new text. If you wish to type over the existing text, switch to the "overtype" mode.

- To move several lines of text, select the copy using the drag method and click the **Cut** button on the toolbar (or use the keyboard shortcut for the program you are using). Then position the cursor in the location that you want to move the cut text and click **Paste** (or use the

keyboard shortcut). The text reappears at your cursor. (If you accidentally drag or paste text to the wrong place, click the **Undo** button in the toolbar.)

- Use a template, or a blueprint of a document, to create professional letters, résumés, memos, or reports easily. In the résumé template below, for example, the document is already formatted. To create a résumé, you would only have to enter your information in the fields provided.

<div align="center">

[Your Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State Zip Code]
[Phone number]
[E-mail]

</div>

Objective
[Describe your career goals or ideal job.]

Employment History
[Job Title]
[Company Name]
[City, State]
[Dates of employment]
- [Job responsibilities/achievements]
- [Job responsibilities/achievements]
- [Job responsibilities/achievements]

[Job Title]
[Company Name]
[City, State]
[Dates of employment]
- [Job responsibilities/achievements]
- [Job responsibilities/achievements]
- [Job responsibilities/achievements]

Education
[School Name]
[City, State]
[Dates of attendance]
- [Degree earned]
- [Awards/achievements]

Other Experience
[Describe additional experience or skills.]

References
References are available upon request.

- To learn about other word processing features, click the **Help** button on the toolbar.

Practicing the Skill

Create a résumé using a template similar to the one above. Most word processing programs provide templates of commonly used documents. Click on **New** under the File menu. Then select **Template,** select the résumé option and click **OK.** Enter your information in the appropriate fields, then save the document.