Work Faster in Microsoft Word: 10 Secrets

These hidden Word tricks and techniques will add punch to your documents and speed up your workflow.

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Not everything that Microsoft Word 2010 can do is obvious from a quick look at the tools on the main ribbon toolbar. Some features are buried in the Options menu or in dialog boxes, and others take the form of keyboard shortcuts or simply aren't easy to see.

Would you like to be able to insert a cent symbol or type the accented *é* characters in *résumé*, directly from the ribbon toolbar? How about adding your company's specialized terminology to the built-in Word dictionary? You can have these and other options for working faster and smarter in Word at your fingertips if you know where to find them and how to set them up.

1. Create Lines for a Blank Form
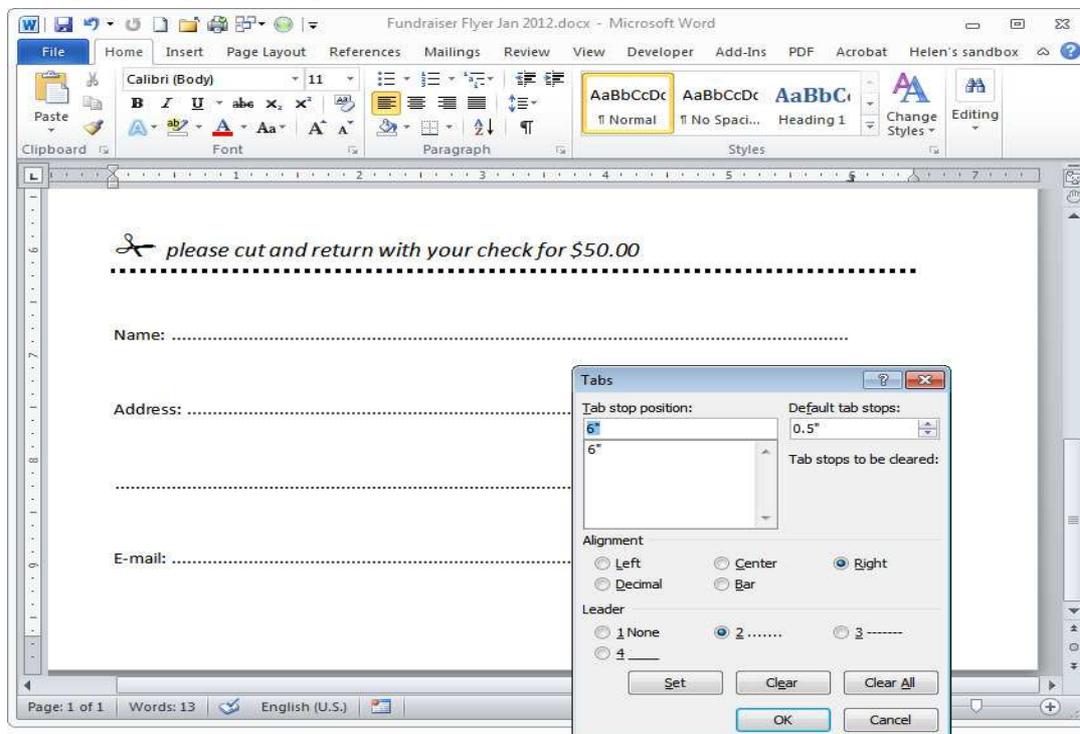
Creating a form? Custom dot leader tabs let you easily create the blank lines.

When a printed document--such as a form--needs typed or handwritten information added to it, you can use tabs to draw the blank lines. Start by typing the text (such as **Name:**) that prompts the form's reader to enter information on the blank line that you will draw; then press the spacebar, and select the *Home* tab on the ribbon toolbar.

To set the margin at 6 inches in a letter-size document with 1-inch margins, for example, type **6"** into the Tab Stop Position box, choose *Right* for the Tab Alignment, and choose *2* as the Leader to get a dotted line. The click *Set* and finally *OK*.

Back in the document, place the cursor where you want to draw the line; press the **Tab** key on your keyboard, and a dotted line will appear drawn from the blank space all the way to where you set the right tab. Press **Enter** twice, type the next prompt (such as **Address:**) and press **Tab** again. Every time you do this, a new dotted line will appear. When you're ready to return to normal editing, press **Enter** once and then press **Ctrl-Shift-N** to return to Normal paragraph style; and the default tabs will immediately reappear.

2. Label Items With Sequential Numbers
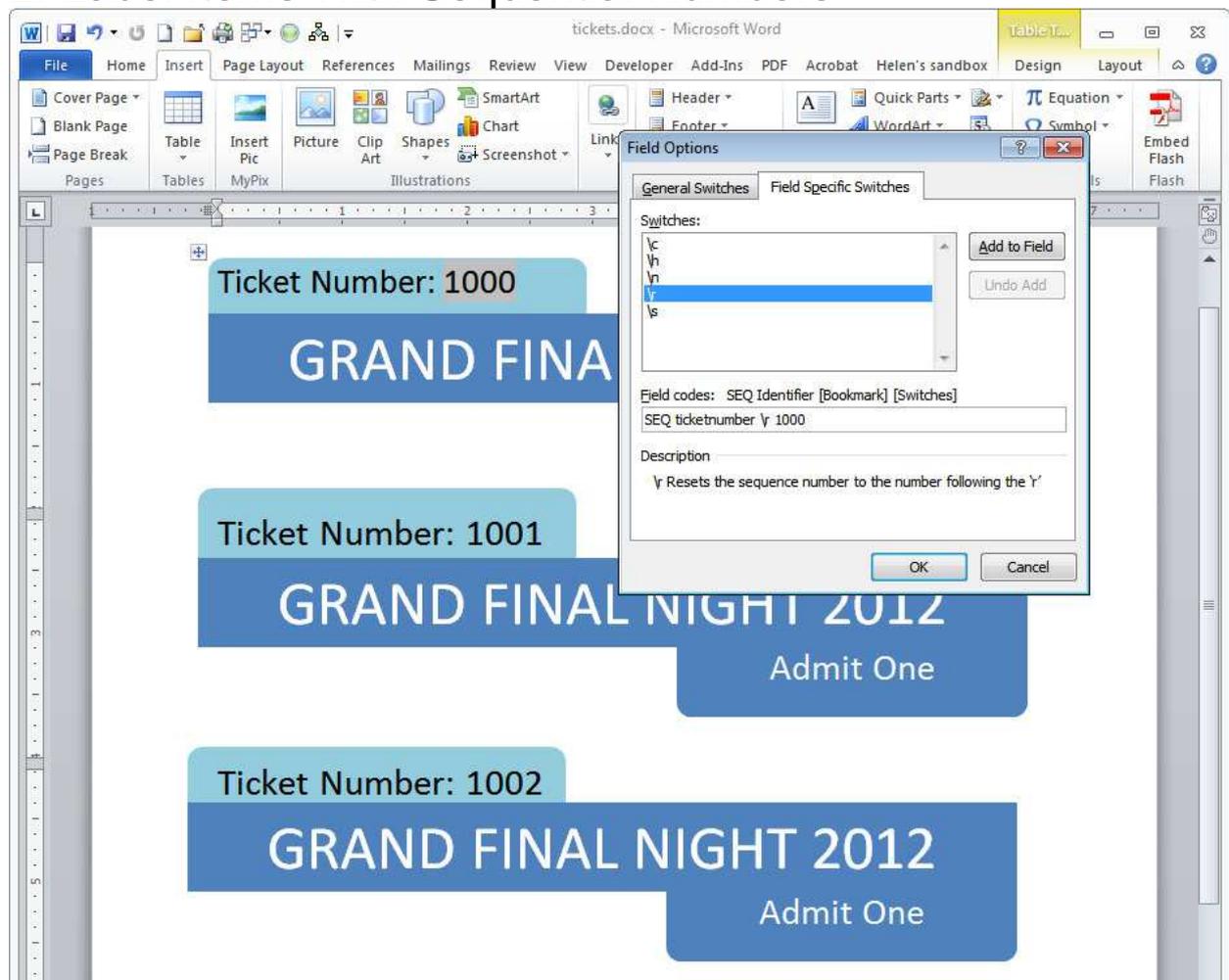
Use field codes to number tickets and coupons automatically and sequentially.

Word lets you create elements within documents that appear in numeric order, such as printed coupons or event tickets. You can automatically create sequentially numbered items by using field codes. First design the coupons or tickets; and, you can place multiple tickets on a page inside table cells, if you like.

Click the location where the first ticket number should appear and select *Insert, Quick Parts, Field* from the Categories list. Then select *Numbering*, and from the list below choose *SEQ*. Next, click *Options* followed by the *Field Specific Switches* tab. After the letters SEQ in the Field Codes box, type a bookmark name that only you will see, such as **ticketnumber**, followed by a letter space, the marker **\r**, another letter space, and then the starting ticket number. Thus, to start at the number 1000, you would use this field code:

SEQ ticketnumber \r 1000

Click *OK* twice when you're done. Starting at the location where the next number should appear, repeat the process, this time using this field code:

SEQ ticketnumber \n

Click *OK* twice. The next-larger number (1001) should appear in the designated place. Copy this field code and add it everywhere you need an incrementally larger number. You can perform this operation as many times as you need to. If the numbering doesn't automatically increase incrementally, force it to do so by pressing **Ctrl-A** to select the document and then pressing **F9** to update the fields.

At any time, you can change the start number by clicking the first field code you added and then pressing **Shift-F9** to view the field code. Replace the number 1000 with your new starting number, and then press **Shift-F9** again to hide the field code. To update all of the codes to reflect your new starting number, press**Ctrl-A** followed by **F9**.

3. Reverse the Page Print Order
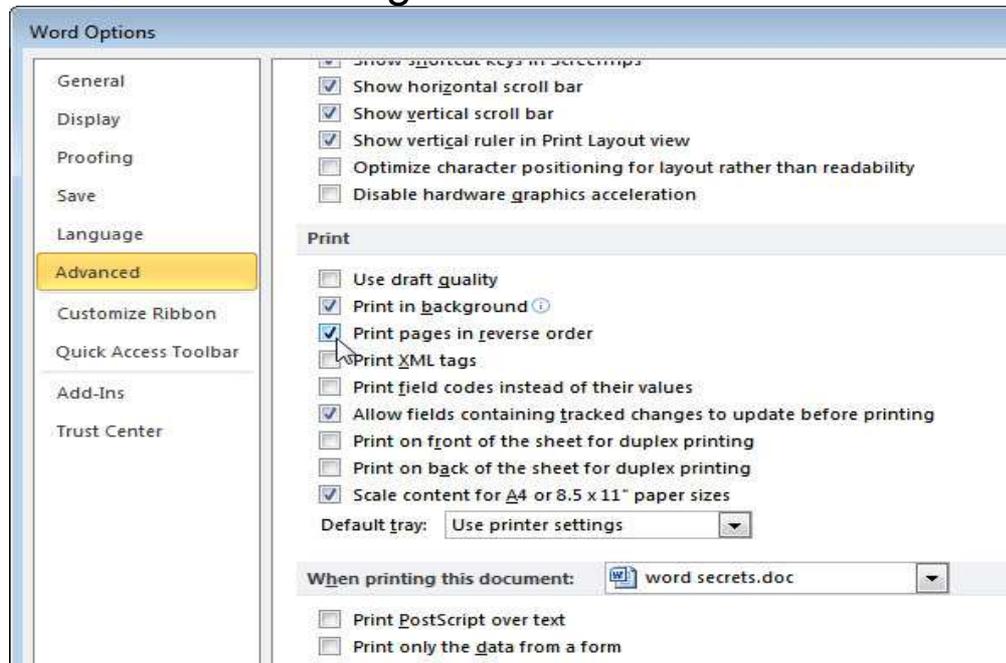
Reverse the order in which pages of a document print, and save yourself the trouble of sorting pages manually.

If the pages in your document are printed the wrong way around, you can reverse the print order by selecting *File, Options, Advanced*, and then scrolling to find the Print group of options (these are different from and in addition to the Printing Options in the Display settings). Locate and change the setting of the *Print Pages in Reverse Order* checkbox; if it was enabled, disable it, or vice versa. Finish by clicking *OK*. In the future, documents will print in reverse order, saving you the trouble of having to reorder them. This setting will remain in place the next time you open Word, and it will apply to all documents.

4. Save Images as Building Blocks
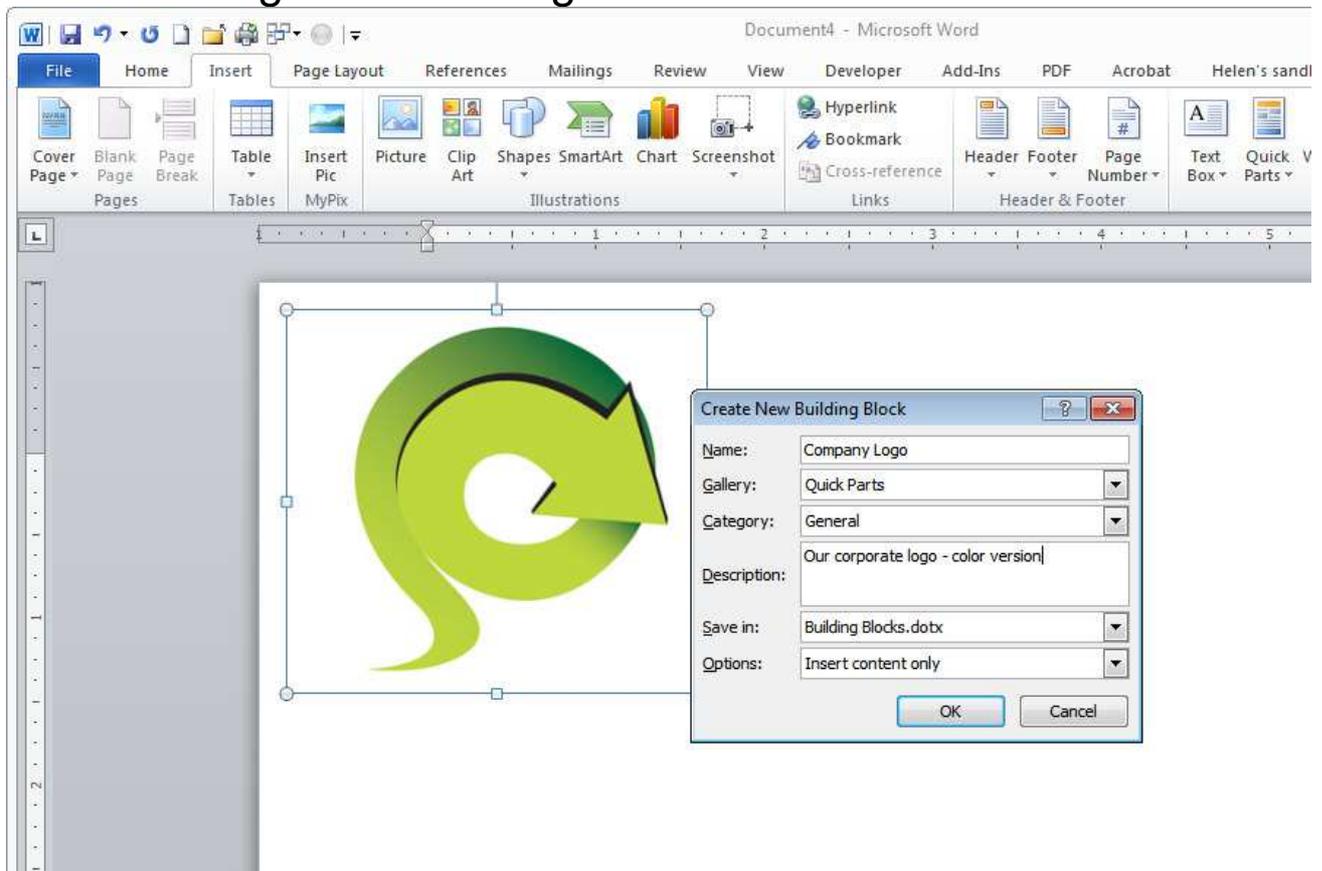
When you save an image as a Quick Part, you can add it to any document at any time.

When you need to add a repeating image (such as a logo) to your documents, you can save it as a building block for easy insertion.

First, insert your image into a document and format it to look the way you want it to. Click the image to select it, choose *Insert, Quick Parts*, and then choose*Save Selection to Quick Part Gallery*. Type a name for the image, and select a gallery to add it to (Quick Parts is a good choice); then change the Category setting to *General* or add a new category if you wish. Type a description of the image, and select it to save it in *Building Blocks.dotx*, a file that Word automatically creates during this process. End by clicking *OK*.

The image will be stored permanently in your building blocks collection, and you can add it to any document by choosing *Insert, Quick Parts* and clicking to select it from among the items displayed there.

# 5. Create One-Click Icons to Insert Symbols
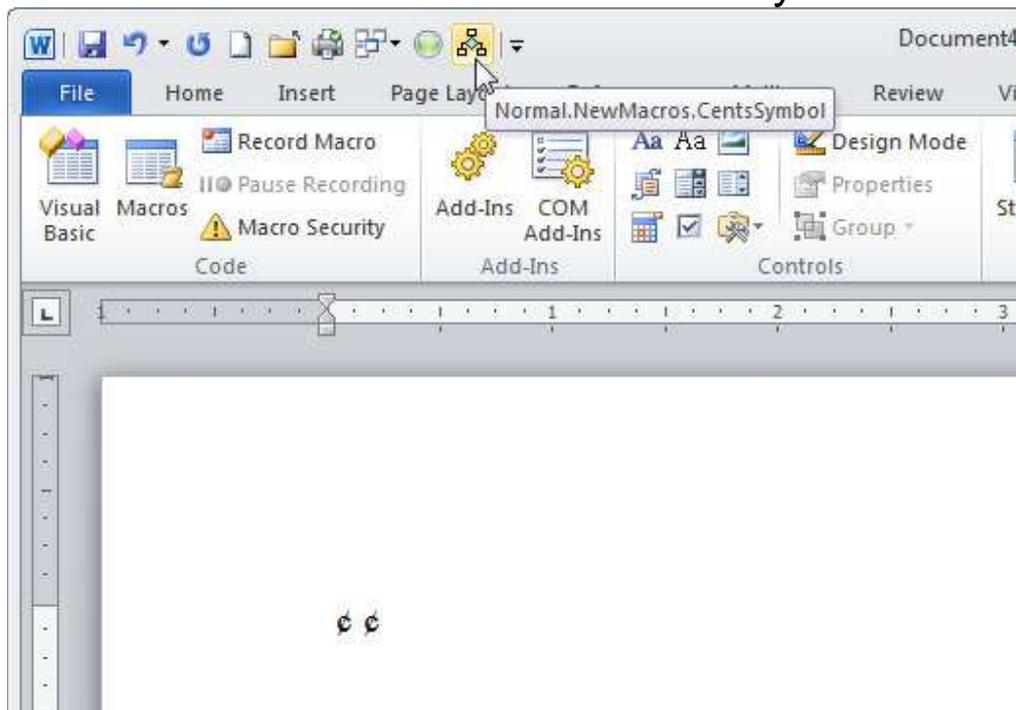
Record a macro to insert a symbol, and then add it to the Quick Access Toolbar.

If you repeatedly need to use a particular symbol, such as the cent sign or a foreign-language character, you can add it to the ribbon or to the Quick Access Toolbar (which appears in the upper left corner of Word, with such icons as a disk for Save and an arrow for Undo). This step is a somewhat advanced move that requires you to record a macro.

First, open the *Developer* tab from the ribbon toolbar, and click *Record Macro*. Type a name, such as **CentsSymbol**, and select that name to store it in *All Documents (normal.dot).* Click the *Button* option. Locate the Normal.NewMacros.CentsSymbol (or your macro name) in the panel on the left, and click *Add*. To choose an image for your symbol, click *Modify* and then *OK*. Because Word records what you're doing, choose *Insert, Symbol*, and then locate and insert the symbol you desire--in our example it's the cents symbol. Click*Insert* and then *Close*. From the Developer tab on the ribbon, select *Stop Recording*. In the future, to add this symbol to your document, simply click the new button on the Quick Access Toolbar.

6. Add Words to or Remove Them From Your Dictionary
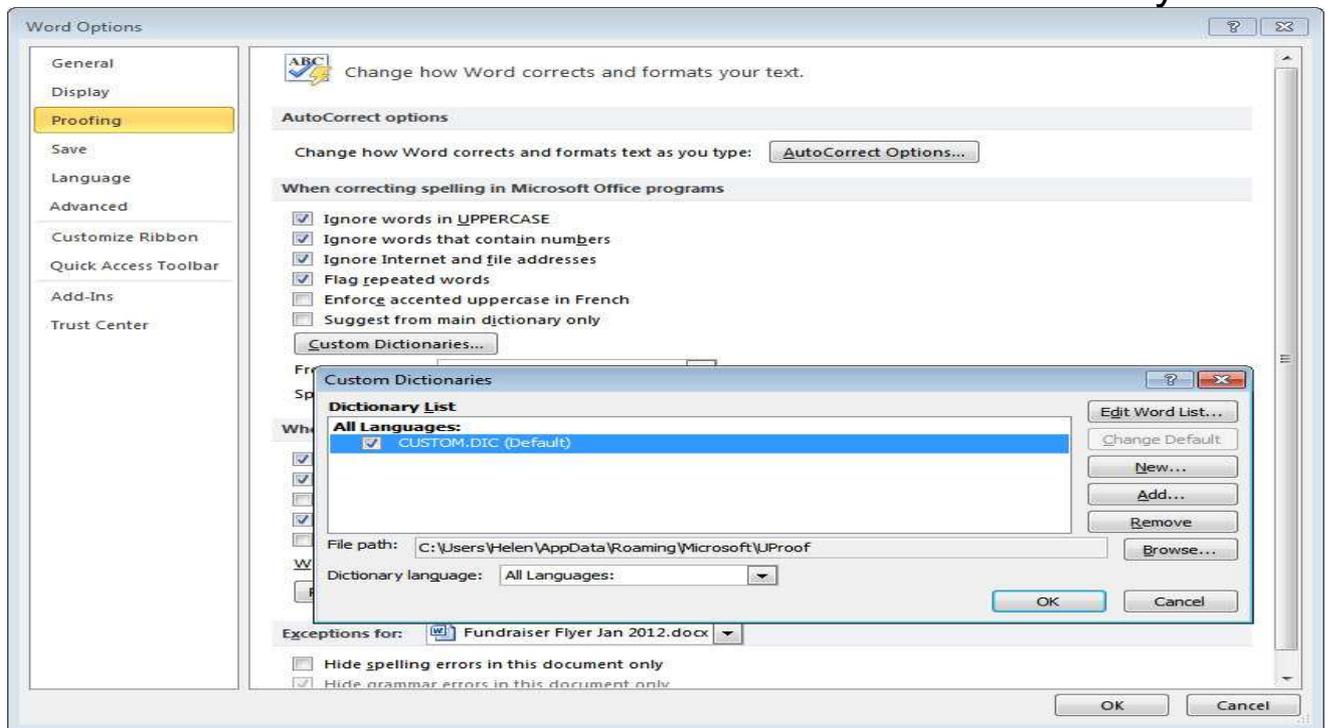
Word's options include a tool for working with your dictionary--or you can use a plain text editor.

Word offers a tool for managing its built-in dictionary, but it requires you to make changes one word at a time. To find the tool, select *File, Options, Proofing, Custom Dictionaries*. Next, select the dictionary--it typically appears as *custom.dic*--and choose *Edit Word List*. At this point, you can add or remove words one at a time.

If you want to work with the entire list of dictionary words, you can do so by searching for and opening the custom.dic file in any text editor, such as Notepad or WordPad. You can remove existing words and add new ones to the list, one word per line. You don't have to add the new words in alphabetical order--Word sorts the list automatically. Use capital letters only if the word is a proper name or if for some other reason it should always appear with the capital letters in place (as in the case of an abbreviation like GHz). Avoid adding hyphenated words and words containing fancy characters. Save custom.dic as a text file; then close and relaunch Word to start using the updated dictionary.

7. Clean Up Excess Spaces in Web Text

When you copy and paste content from a Web page or email message into a Word document, you may find that the text doesn't appear neatly left-aligned in Word. That may happen because spaces you weren't aware of precede each line of text, or because the original text had a line down the left side or was pulled from a table. You can strip out these spaces by selecting the text and pressing **Ctrl-E** and then **Ctrl-L**. These commands center the text and then align it to the left, thereby removing the unwanted spaces.

If the text that you've pasted from a website into Word has a line down the left margin of the page, you can remove that line by choosing the *Review* tab from the ribbon toolbar and then, from the 'Accept' drop-down list, selecting *Accept All Changes in Document*.
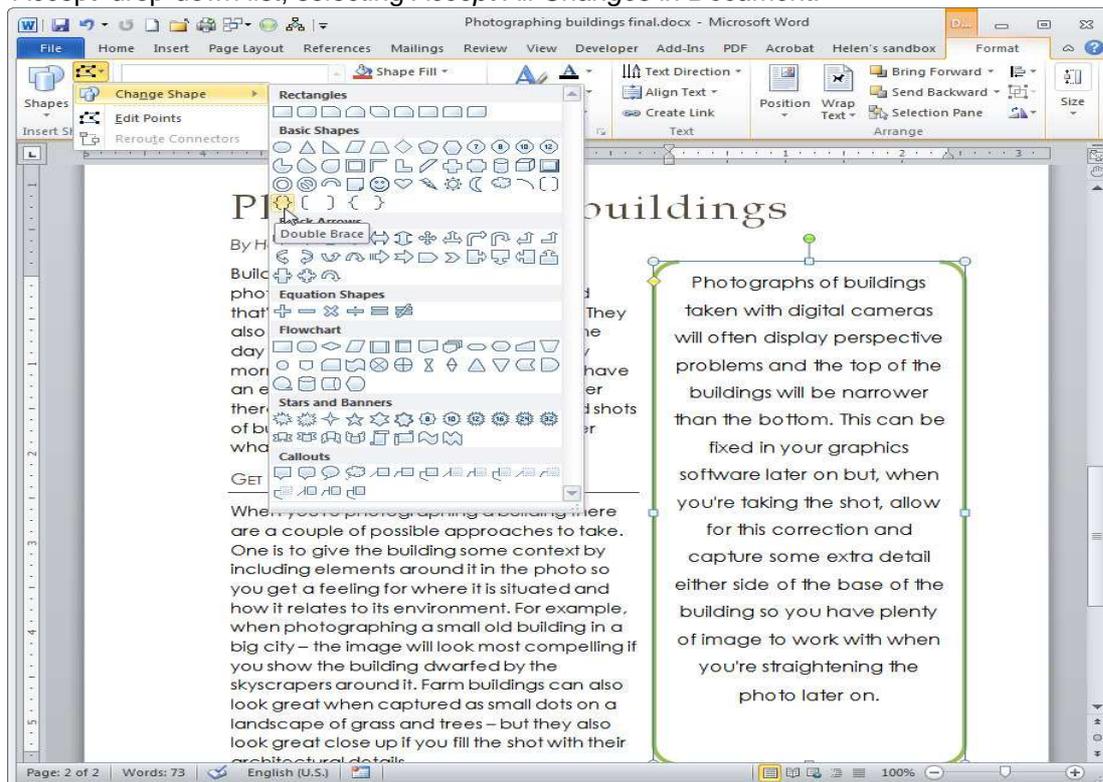
You can change the shape of text boxes anytime by choosing a different shape from the shapes collection.

To extract text from a table that appears in a Web page so that you can paste it into Word without table formatting, start by selecting the table. In the *Table Tools, Layout* tab, select *Convert to Text*. Choose to separate text with *Paragraph Markers*, and click *OK*.

8. Choose Your Own Shape for Text Boxes

If you're creating a pull quote for a newsletter, Word lets you get creative with the layout. First choose *Insert, Text Box* to add a text box to a document to accommodate the pull quote. To change its shape or its color, select the text box and then, from the *Drawing Tools, Format* tab, select the *Edit Shape* option you want to use. Then choose *Change Shape* and choose any shape to restyle your text box--which is essentially a shape filled with text. You can, for example, change the

double-bracket text box to a curly double brace or to a callout. You may need to resize the text box or the size of the font if the text does not fit neatly.

9. Repeat the Last Command With One Click
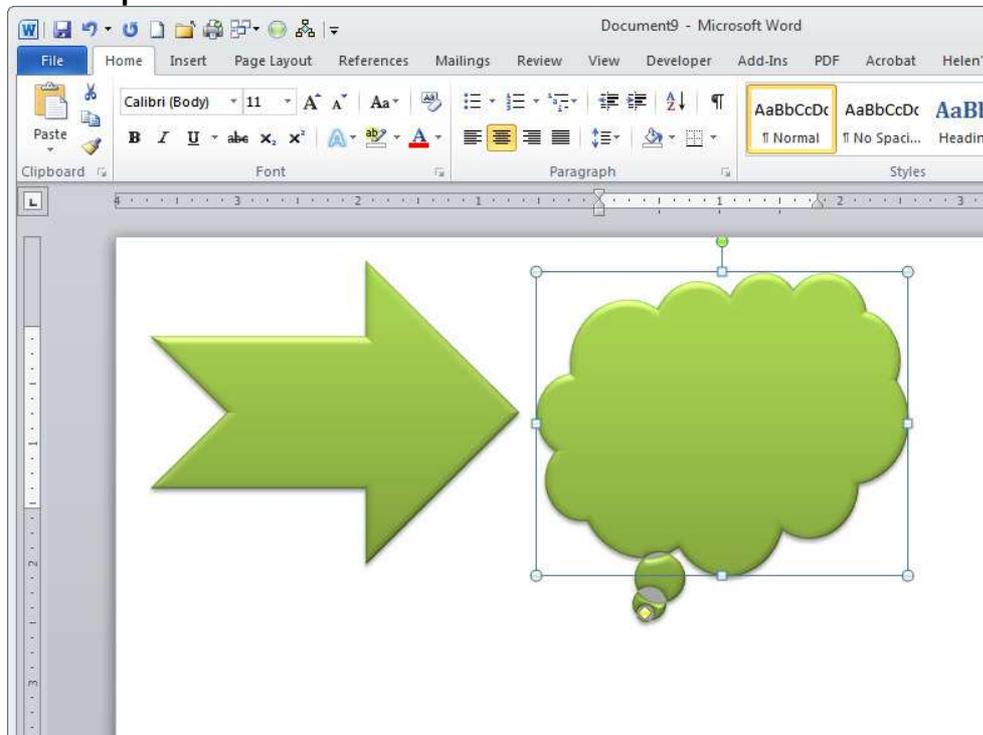
Word's Format Painter formats text as well as images and shapes.

One of the handier and lesser-known shortcuts in Microsoft Word is the F4 key on your keyboard. This repeats the last formatting command you've made. For example, you can delete a line from a document, select another line, and then press **F4** to repeat this last command and delete the newly selected line. You can also use F4 to style text: Select some words and apply a style to them; then select more text and press **F4** to apply the same style. In these and many other situations, the F4 key can help you avoid having to make multiple tedious mouse clicks to apply straightforward formatting or to perform other types of repetitive tasks.

10. Use Format Painter to Format Images

Though historically Word users have employed the Format Painter tool to paste one text format onto another block of text, you can also use it with shape and picture styles. Select a shape or picture that has a formatting style you like, click *Format Painter* on the ribbon toolbar's Home tab, and click on another shape to apply the same format to it. The shape itself won't change, but the formatting specified in the Shape Fill, Shape Outline colors and effects settings--and even the image border-- will be painted on.