

Using the Thesaurus in Microsoft Word

Level: OBS

Goal: To become familiar with using the built in electronic thesaurus in Microsoft Word 97 in order to make sentences more interesting without changing the meaning of the sentence.

Learning Outcomes:

- ◆ Use the built in electronic thesaurus to replace nouns, adjectives and verbs
- ◆ Use the built in electronic thesaurus to make writing more interesting to the reader

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Prerequisite:

- ✓ Basic understanding of Computers
- ✓ College Preparation Communication (CPC) – Unit # 1 or above

Using the Thesaurus in Microsoft Word

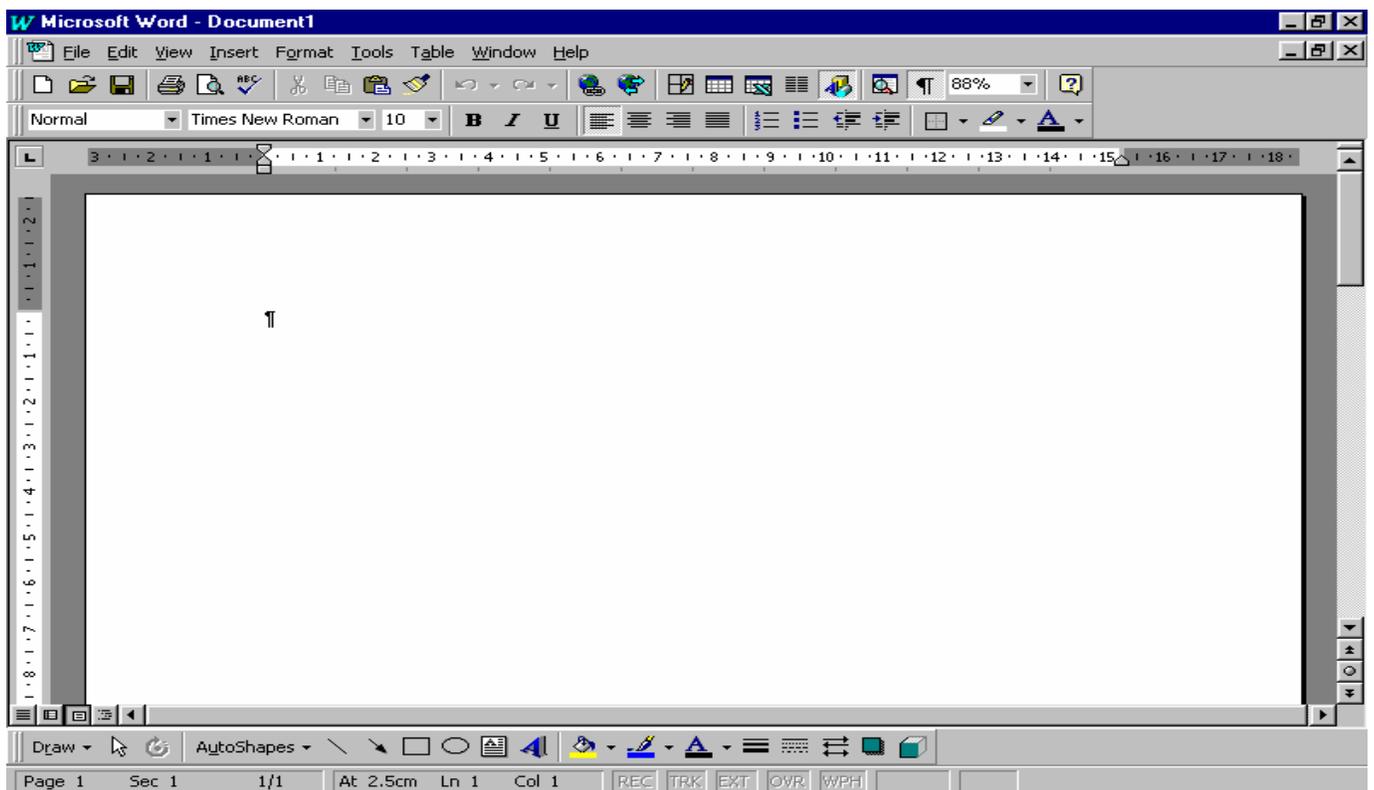
Getting Started

Overview of Microsoft Word 97

Word is used for word-processing (creating essays, resumes, newsletters, brochures, ransom notes etc...) and is very popular throughout the world. Word is a very powerful program that allows the user to type things, format them (i.e. "dress" them up), make changes, check the spelling and much more. It also lets the user view a document on the screen (to make sure it's exactly the way it's suppose to be) before printing the final copy.

Starting Microsoft Word 97

Microsoft Word (also referred to as "Word") is a member of the Microsoft Office Group. To open ANY PROGRAM on the computer use the mouse and click on the "Start" button in the bottom left corner of the screen. For Microsoft Word, move the pointer up to "Programs" which will display a new menu of options. Move the pointer across to the new menu and position the pointer over "Microsoft Office 97." This will cause yet another menu to appear. Again, move the pointer across to the new menu and position the pointer over "Microsoft Word." Click the left mouse button and Microsoft Word is now open with a blank document awaiting input. Your screen should look similar to the one below.



Introduction to the Built In Electronic Thesaurus

What is a Thesaurus?

A thesaurus by definition is a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms.

What can a Thesaurus Do?

A thesaurus allows the writer to **find** words that have the same meaning as the word they are using (synonyms), or they can also **locate** words with the opposite meaning of the word they are using (antonyms). Note that **find** and **locate** are synonyms.

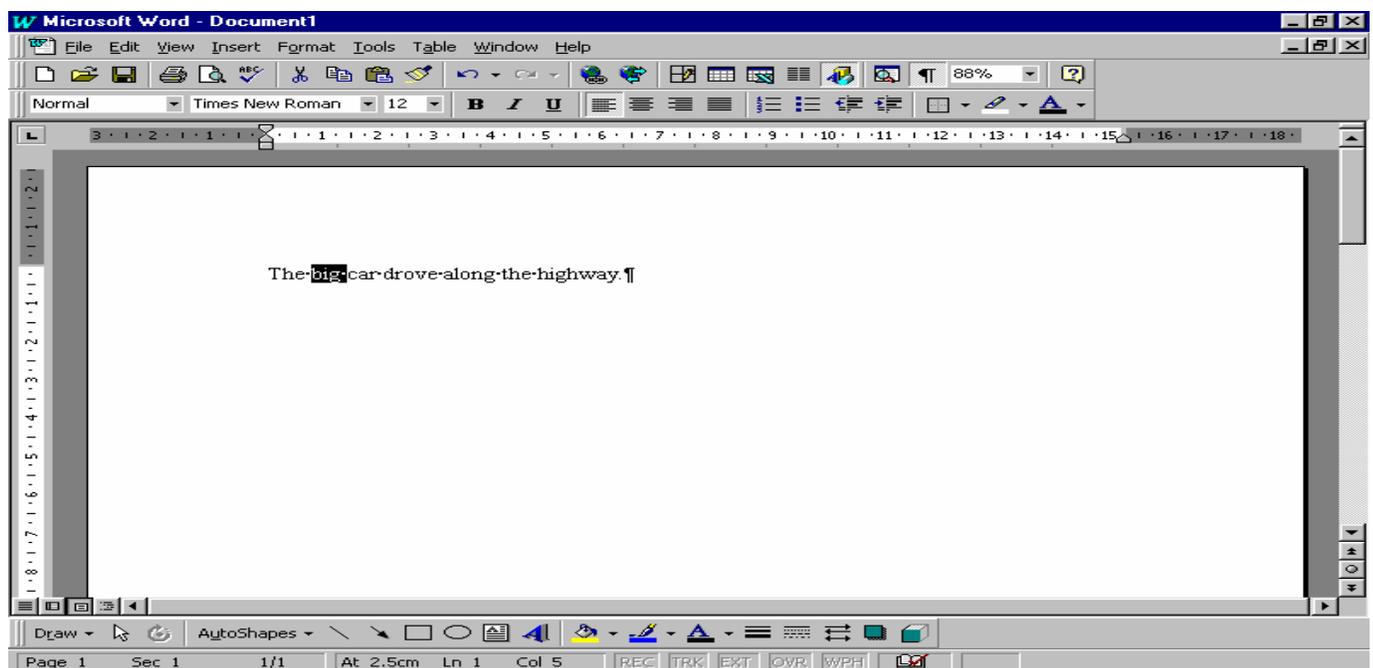
Using the Built In Electronic Thesaurus

Selecting the Word for the Thesaurus to Look Up

In order to use the built in thesaurus, we need to have a word in mind that we wish to change. Type the following sentence on the blank document that was opened previously:

The big car drove along the highway.

The word “big” is a good adjective for car but using the thesaurus, we will attempt to locate a more interesting synonym for “big”. Using the mouse, position the pointer (it will look like a capital I within your document) at the beginning of the word “big”. Either hold the left mouse button down and move the pointer to the end of the word “big”, or double click at the beginning of the word “big”. The result should be that the word “big” is highlighted in black. Your screen should look similar to the one below.



Opening the Thesaurus Dialogue Box

The Thesaurus is located in the Tools menu located across the top of the screen. Click on the word Tools and a menu of options will appear called a drop down menu. Move the mouse pointer down to the selection, “Language”, and a new menu will appear. By moving the pointer in to the new menu and clicking on the “Thesaurus” option, the Thesaurus dialogue box will open. Your dialogue box will be similar to the one below.



Replacing Selected Word with a Synonym

The word “large” is highlighted (in blue), and it tells us that it’s an adjective (adj.). We can also observe that “large” is a synonym since the phrase **Replace with Synonym:** appears in the upper right corner of the dialogue box. Click on the Replace button and the word “big” is replaced by the word “large” in your document.

Replacing Selected Word with an Antonym

Antonyms are words that have opposite meaning. Highlight the word “large” and open the thesaurus again. The dialogue box will look similar to the one below.



Click on the word *Antonyms* in the list under the heading **Meaning**: The box should now appear similar to the one on the next page.



Notice that the phrase in the upper right corner now reads, **Replace with Antonym:** The highlighted choice is “small”. Click Replace, and the sentence should read as follows:

The small car drove along the highway.

Using the Look Up Option

In the upper left part of dialogue box you can find a heading **Looked Up:** By clicking on the Look Up button, the Thesaurus will find alternate meanings for the word that is listed under the **Looked Up:** heading. Highlight the word “small” and open the thesaurus one more time. The screen should now look similar to the one below.



Press the Look Up button and a new list of synonyms appears under the heading **Replace with Synonym:**

Click on the word “miniature” in the list and then click on the Replace button. Your sentence will now appear as follows:

The miniature car drove along the highway.

A Word of Warning When Using the Thesaurus

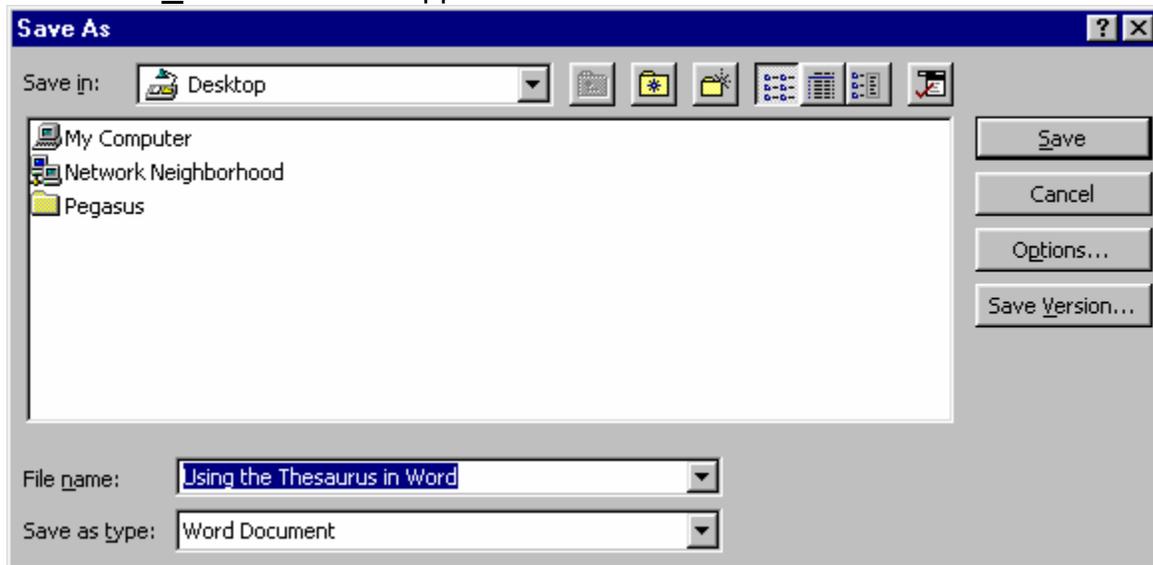
The most important thing to keep in mind when using a thesaurus is this:

Just because you find a word in the thesaurus listing doesn't mean the word will fit the sentence. Make sure the word fits with your sentence before inserting it into your sentence.

*Before using the thesaurus, it is helpful if you know the **meaning** of the word you are looking up as well as what **part of speech** the word is (adjective, noun or verb?).*

Saving Your Work

Now is a good time to save what we've done so far. Left click on the File menu from the toolbar and select Save. A box will appear similar to the one below.



Type Thesaurus1 and click on the Save button. Your work is now safe should there be a power failure or the computer “crashes” for some unknown reason.

Demonstrations (exercises to be handed in)

Demonstration # 1

Type the following sentence and, using the built in thesaurus, replace the words in bold. Save as "Demo1" and show it to your teacher.

If you're **hobby** is to **find** words to **increase** to your vocabulary, you don't need to **search** any further than your **own** life.

Demonstration #2

Type the following paragraph. Then, using the built in thesaurus, make the passage more interesting by changing nouns, verbs and adjectives. You must change/add at least 2 words per sentence.

The hot sun made it hard to walk along the sidewalk. An energy problem had shut down power to the city during the hottest time of the year. Having no air conditioners or fans was almost unbearable for the people of this small town in New Mexico. Water was being conserved, so a cool bath or shower was against the law. It seemed as though a miracle was needed. Then it happened. Snow began to fall in New Mexico. The temperature fell 25 degrees very quickly. People took to the streets to cool off. Their prayers had been answered.