APPLYING OHS PRACTICES

No one likes to be sick or injured. Even with the great advances in modern medicine, some of life's diseases still can't be cured let alone prevented.

However injury, illness or even death caused at and through work can and should be prevented. And this is what ***Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)*** is all about. With good work practices injuries, illnesses and deaths at work have gradually decreased.

Note: Some information contained in this session is based on the publication *Officewise – a guide to health & safety in the office* published by ***WorkSafe Victoria*** and is available for download free of charge from their website.

In this session you will:

- ✓ gain an understanding of common risks and hazards in the office
- ✓ gain an understanding of how to set up a workstation ergonomically
- ✓ gain an understanding of exercises you can do while working at a computer
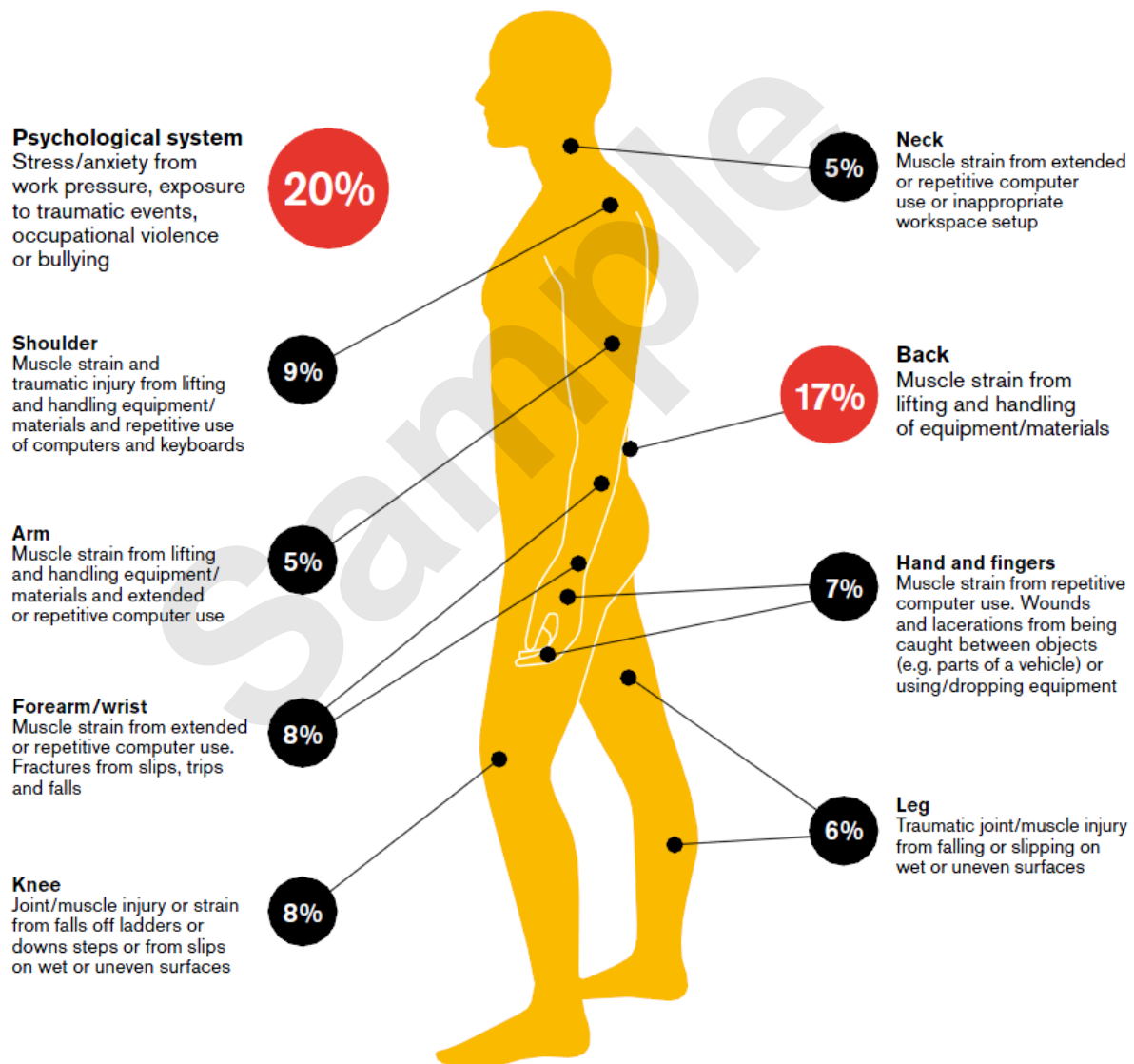- ✓ gain an understanding of factors that contribute to a healthy office work environment.

RISKS AND HAZARDS IN THE OFFICE

The risk of injury in places such as factories, warehouses, and mines where heavy haulage and equipment is used is reasonably obvious. Most businesses and organisations have office-based work and while these environments may seem quieter, cleaner, and less hazardous than factories and mines, they too have their own health and safety risks and dangers.

Typical Office Injuries and Hazards

Under law any injury or illness sustained in the workplace must be reported. Using information collected over time it is possible to determine what the potential risk and injury areas are in an office environment. In June 2008 *WorkSafe Victoria* published the ***Injury Hotspots*** diagram as shown below. It is interesting to note from the diagram the number of injuries caused through the repetitive use of technology such as computers.

Psychological system
Stress/anxiety from work pressure, exposure to traumatic events, occupational violence or bullying

20%

Neck
Muscle strain from extended or repetitive computer use or inappropriate workspace setup

5%

Shoulder
Muscle strain and traumatic injury from lifting and handling equipment/ materials and repetitive use of computers and keyboards

9%

Back
Muscle strain from lifting and handling of equipment/materials

17%

Arm
Muscle strain from lifting and handling equipment/ materials and extended or repetitive computer use

5%

Hand and fingers
Muscle strain from repetitive computer use. Wounds and lacerations from being caught between objects (e.g. parts of a vehicle) or using/dropping equipment

7%

Forearm/wrist
Muscle strain from extended or repetitive computer use. Fractures from slips, trips and falls

8%

Leg
Traumatic joint/muscle injury from falling or slipping on wet or uneven surfaces

6%

Knee
Joint/muscle injury or strain from falls off ladders or downs steps or from slips on wet or uneven surfaces

8%

Many of the injuries above are preventable by adhering to ergonomic workstation design principles, by taking regular breaks and varying activities, by tweaking the office environment (things such as lighting, air flow, temperature, and the like) and in all cases, by a modicum of common sense.

SETTING UP AN ERGONOMIC WORKSTATION

Many of the office-based injuries to the neck, the arm, and the wrist can be prevented by having a properly set up workstation. This section presents some guidelines for you to work with in setting up a safe work computer workstation. However, common sense must always prevail and if you feel any pain or discomfort as a result of using a computer you should stop immediately.

1   *Chair*   The chair should be a gas-adjustable type chair. Adjust the height of the chair so that feet are comfortably flat on the floor, the thighs are approximately horizontal and the lower legs approximately vertical. Position the backrest to the curve of the back – if not comfortable, lower the height several centimetres and try this position.

2   *Arm Rests*   Arm rests are usually not recommended unless they are well out of the way.

3   *Desk*   Having adjusted the chair as above, adjust the height of the desk (where available) so that the top surface is just above elbow height. Ensure that there is ample clearance under the desk and that the desk is not too cluttered.

4   *Keyboard*   The common and preferred setting for the keyboard is where the feet (under the keyboard) are lowered so that the keyboard sits flat on the desk. Place the keyboard as close to the front of the desk as is comfortable so that the top half of the arms are approximately vertical.

5   *Mouse*   Place the mouse directly beside the end of the keyboard. Your forearm should rest on the desk when your hand is on the mouse. Try to use the mouse both left-handed and right-handed and change hands regularly.

6   *Screen*   Position the screen after you have positioned the chair and desk. The top of the screen should be level with or slightly lower than your eyes. It should be at an arm's length away from the user. Position the screen to avoid reflective glare from windows and lights.

7   *Document Holder*   Try to place documents so that they are at eye level and just to the side of the screen.

8   *Laptop Computer*   If you use a laptop for more than 2 hours per day connect a separate mouse and LCD screen and position both as directed above.
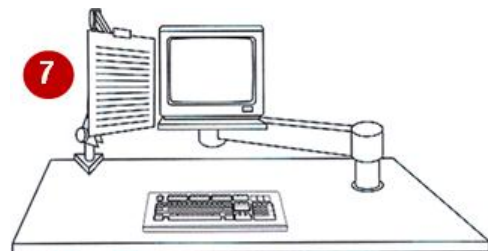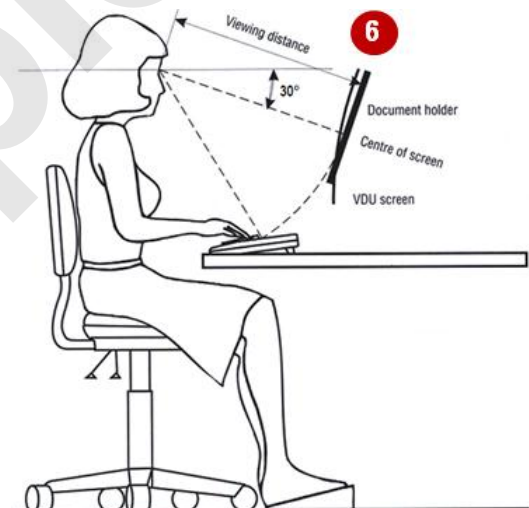
WorkSafe Victoria publishes an excellent handbook for office workplaces titled *Officewise: A Guide to Health and Safety in the Office.* You can download a copy from the download link on the home page of **WorkSafe Victoria** (http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).

BREAKS AND EXERCISES

Prevention is definitely better than cure when it comes to any form of illness or injury. Here are a number of suggestions for rest breaks and stretching exercises for you to try while working at the computer. Make sure that you relax and perform the exercises gently. You should stop immediately if you feel any discomfort.

Rests and Breaks

- Take a rest break away from the computer for 5 to 10 minutes every hour.
- Active rest during a break with some other type of activity, such as walking or stretching, is more beneficial than passive rest – get up off your chair and walk to the printer to collect those print jobs!
- Vary activities where possible interspersing computer tasks with non-computer tasks.
- Try to limit computer time to 5 hours per day – break this time up into segments.

Exercises

1   *Head Rolls*   Gently lower ear to shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Slowly roll chin to chest and up to other shoulder and hold chin for 10 seconds. Repeat several times and be careful not to extend your neck back too far.

2   *Head Turns*   Turn head to look over left shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Turn head the other way and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat several times.

3   *Shoulder Rolls*   Circle shoulders forward several times, then backwards. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

4   *Shoulder Stretch*   Stretch arm above head, cradle elbow with hand and gently pull elbow behind head. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times.

5   *Wrist Stretch*   Interlace fingers, palms outwards, and straighten arms in front. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times.

6   *Upper and Lower Back Stretch*   Interlace fingers and turn palms upward above head, straighten arms then slowly lean slightly from side to side. Repeat movement several times.
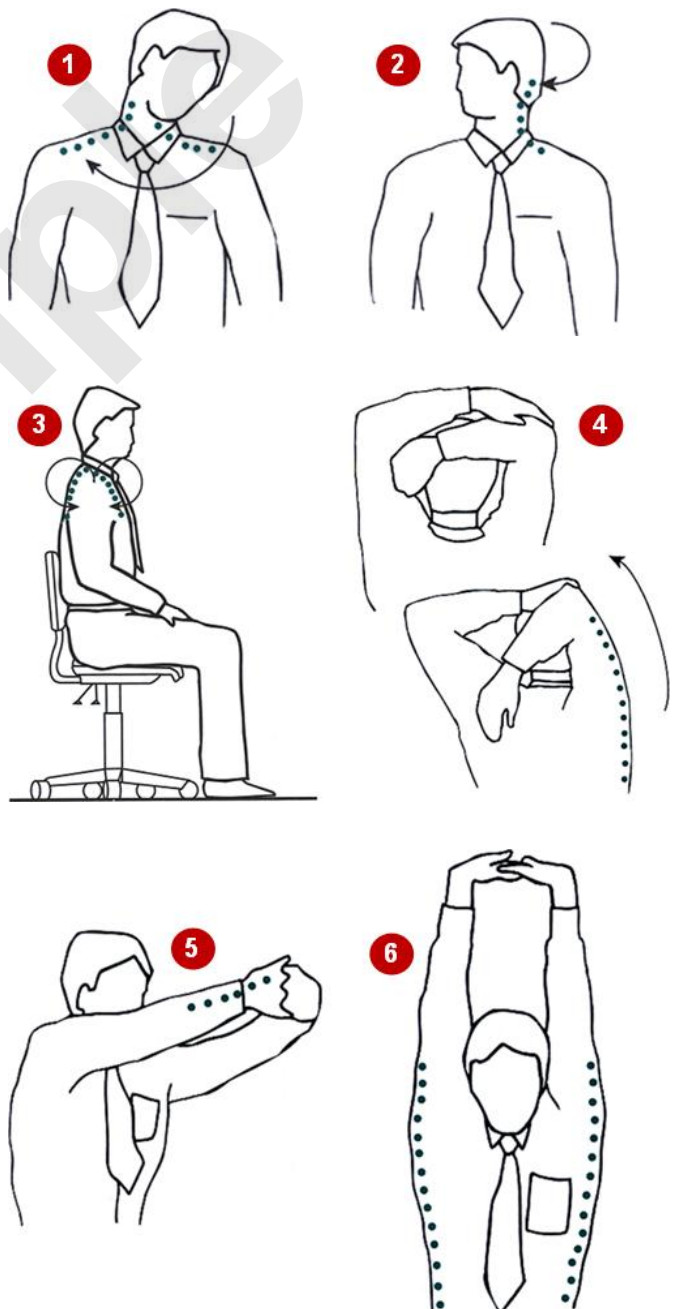
For a comprehensive range of exercises for office workers refer to *Appendix B* in *Officewise: A Guide to Health and Safety in the Office* published by *WorkSafe Victoria*. You can download a copy from the download link on the home page of *WorkSafe Victoria* (http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).

ENSURING A HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

General office environmental factors play a role in determining a safe and healthy office workplace. These factors include, but are not limited to, air quality and ventilation, furniture and storage, lighting, noise levels, and temperature. These factors should be established according to published guidelines to ensure a comfortable office workplace setting.

Air Quality

No-one likes to work in an environment where air is contaminated. In an office, air may be contaminated by the air conditioning system drawing in fumes, odours, or even micro-biological and chemical contaminants. A couple of the more documented contaminants that have resulted in injury or illness include Legionnaire's disease caused by exposure to legionella bacteria, and ozone gas produced by some photocopiers and laser printers.

Guidelines on air quality standards are contained in Australian Standards *AS 1668:2 The Use of Ventilation and Air Conditioning in Buildings: Ventilation Design (2002)*.

Furniture and Storage

The type of furniture found in an office, and where it is placed (office layout), can play a key role in preventing injury. It is recommended that each employee have at least 6 square metres for their desk, chair, filing cabinet, and other necessary equipment.

There should also be adequate walkways and pathways through an office to provide safe access and egress at all times. Emergency exits should be clearly labelled and should never be blocked or have access hindered in any way.

Office storage should be sturdy in construction. Where reaching is required adequate facilities, such as steps or purpose-built ladders, should be provided to reduce unnecessary stretching. Above-desk storage such as shelving should be designed in such a way as to not hinder lighting or ventilation.

Ideally, floor surfaces should be carpeted with a wool-mix blend that reduces the build-up of static electricity. The carpet should be properly laid and maintained. Low pile carpet is preferred in offices where pushing or pulling of equipment is required.

Lighting

Huge tomes have been written on office lighting. Lighting is measured by how much light falls on a surface – this is known as illuminance and its unit of measure is known as lux. As you'd expect the amount of lux in an area can be measured using a lux meter.

The optimum amount of lux in an office varies depending upon the activities being carried out. For example, a staff change room has a recommended lux of 80, waiting rooms have 160, areas of computer usage have 240, while routine office work areas have 400 lux. Areas where more difficult tasks are carried out, such as drawing offices or where proof-reading occurs, have a recommended lux of 600.

It is also desirable to minimise reflections of light from work surfaces. Highly polished floors and large glass-covered posters and paintings can be a nuisance. A constant source of annoyance to office workers is flickering lights which should be fixed immediately.

Noise

Many non-office workplaces have strict guidelines for controlling the amount of noise – excessive noise can damage hearing. In an office it is unlikely that noise will damage hearing. It can however be distracting and annoying.

Office noise is much more subjective than industrial noise. It can include things such as a radio, music on-hold which may be heard by colleagues when you've placed your on-hold call on speaker phone, background music while working on the computer, even people talking.

Generally some consensus should be obtained from work colleagues as to what is appropriate to your office.

Temperature

Temperature, or thermal comfort, in the office is another of those very subjective areas. What may be too hot for some will be just right for others and vice versa. General thermal comfort issues need to be addressed where problems are raised by many staff members. As far as individuals are concerned thermal comfort issues may be addressed by moving staff away from air-conditioning vents or doorways, providing personal heaters, and possibly even clothing.

NOTES:

GETTING TO KNOW MICROSOFT WORD

Microsoft Word is a word processing application that is usually part of a suite of Microsoft applications, known as Microsoft Office.

You can use Word to create all sorts of documents, including letters, reports, faxes, forms, emails, web pages, invitations and certificates.

Before you leap into creating anything, it is worth taking some time to become familiar with the Word window and its features.

In this session you will:

- ✓ learn how to start *Microsoft Office Word 2010*
- ✓ gain an understanding of the *Word 2010* screen
- ✓ gain an understanding of how *Microsoft Word 2010* works
- ✓ learn how to use the *Ribbon*
- ✓ gain an understanding of *Backstage View* in *Microsoft Word*
- ✓ learn how to use shortcut menus
- ✓ gain an understanding of how dialog boxes work
- ✓ gain an understanding of the *Quick Access Toolbar*
- ✓ learn how to exit correctly and safely from *Microsoft Word 2010*.

STARTING WORD

To create a new document, or edit an existing one, the first thing that you need to do is to start *Microsoft Word*. As a standard software application, how *Microsoft Word* is started is largely determined by Windows. For example, it can be started from the Windows *Start menu*, from a *shortcut*, or even by opening a document that was created in Word.

Try This Yourself:

Note

Before you begin, ensure that your computer is switched on and that the Windows desktop is displayed on your screen…

1 Click on the Windows *Start* button at the bottom left-hand corner of the screen to display the menu

It's a round button with the Windows logo...

2 Click on **All Programs**

3 Click on **Microsoft Office**

4 Click on **Microsoft Office Word 2010**

After a few moments a blank document will appear in Word 2010
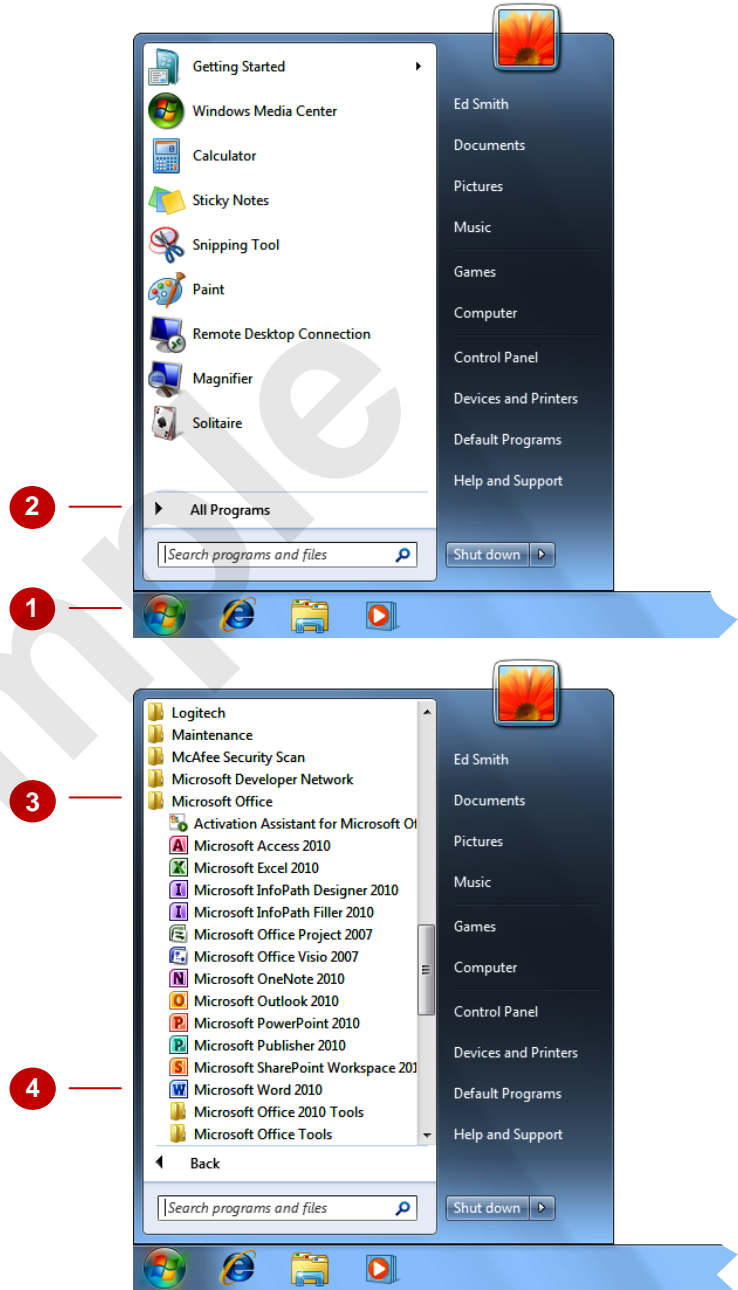
For Your Reference…

To *start Microsoft Word*:

1. Click on the Windows *Start* button
2. Click on **All Programs**
3. Click on **Microsoft Office**
4. Click on **Microsoft Office Word 2010**

Handy to Know…

You can also start Word by:

- Double-clicking on a Word *shortcut*
- Double-clicking on a document file icon in a file listing
- Choosing a document from the *Recent Items* list on the *Start* menu.

THE WORD SCREEN

The Microsoft Word 2010 screen is made up of several key components which are described on this page. Some of these components, such as the *Ribbon* and *Backstage*, are common to all other Office 2010 applications so once you know how they work you won't have to relearn them when you use other applications.
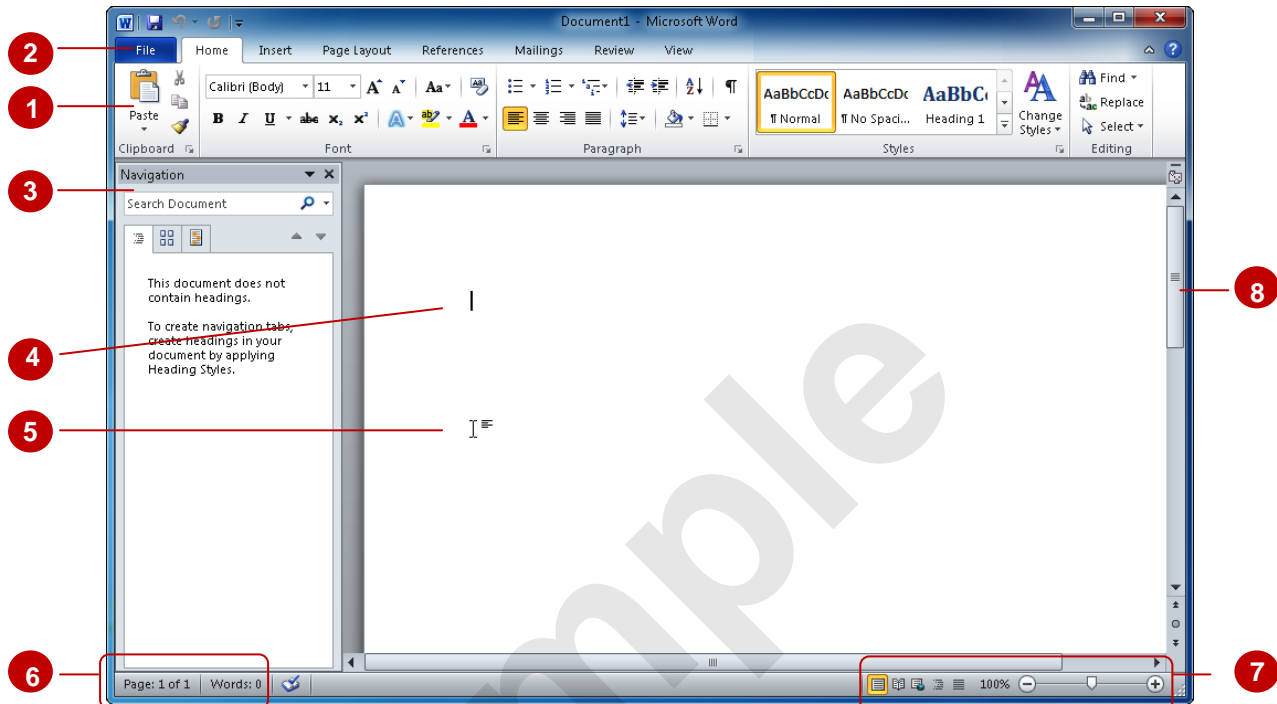
1 The *Ribbon* is the tabbed band that appears across the top of the window. It is the control centre of Word 2010. Instead of menus, you use the *tabs* on the Ribbon to access the *commands* that have been categorised into *groups*. The commands include *galleries* of formatting options that you can select from, such as the *Styles* gallery shown here.

2 The *File* tab is used to access the *Backstage view* which contains file management functions, such as saving, opening, closing, printing, sharing, and so on. *Word Options* are also available so that you can set your working preferences and options for Word 2010.

3 The *Navigation pane* lets you view all of your document's headings and pages; locate and restructure the content by dragging headings; and find all instances of specific words, phrases or items such as figures and tables – without having to scroll through the search results.

4 The *Insertion point* shows where the text will appear if you start typing.

5 The *Mouse Pointer* is used, amongst other things, to move the insertion point to different locations in the document. It may appear as a pointer or an I-bar, as in this example, or any number of other forms, depending upon its function at that position on the screen.

6 The *Status Bar* appears across the bottom of the window and displays the current location of the insertion point, including page number, section number, column, and so on. It can also be used to access navigation commands such as Go To.

7 The *View* buttons and the *Zoom Slider* are used to change the view or to increase/decrease the zoom ratio for your document.

8 The *Scroll bar* indicates your current position in the document and lets you move to other positions in the document by clicking or dragging. The arrows can also be used to move through the document.

HOW MICROSOFT WORD 2010 WORKS

For a new user the Word 2010 screen may seem tricky – particularly the commands area at the top of the screen. The screen comprises three key areas. The data you type is placed on a *page*.

The data can be manipulated using commands on the *Ribbon*. The page is part of a larger entity known as a document or file, and everything you do to the file is controlled in *Backstage view*.

The Page

If you create a new blank document, it will appear as a blank *page* in the document window with a blinking insertion point. When you start typing, the text will appear at this location. You can also create a new document from a template, such as this resume shown to the right, where specific information will appear by default in the page, and you can edit it and add your own data as desired.

The Ribbon

When you need to do something with the data on a page, such as format it, colour it, move it, copy it, and much more, you'll find all of the relevant commands on the *Ribbon*. The *Ribbon* has the commands organised thematically using a series of tabs across the top.
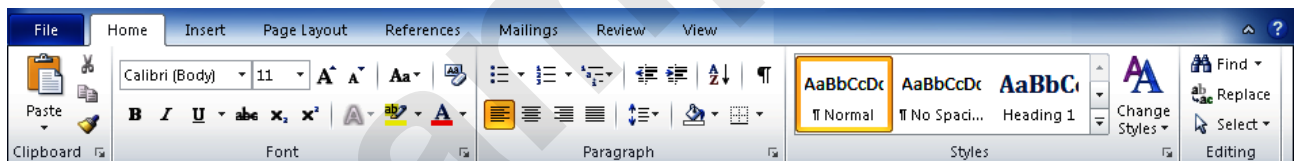
Backstage View

When you want to do something with the data in your document, such as save it so that you can access it again later, print it, share it with a colleague, send it to your boss, protect it from prying eyes, or whatever, you will need to access the *Microsoft Office Backstage view* of Microsoft Word. *Backstage view* is accessed using the **File** tab on the *Ribbon*. Rather than offering you commands on a *Ribbon*, *Backstage* occupies the entire screen and has a series of options down the left side. In our sample to the right, the *Print* option is active, and that is why you can see a preview of the document and a series of print-related options on the right side of the *Backstage view*.
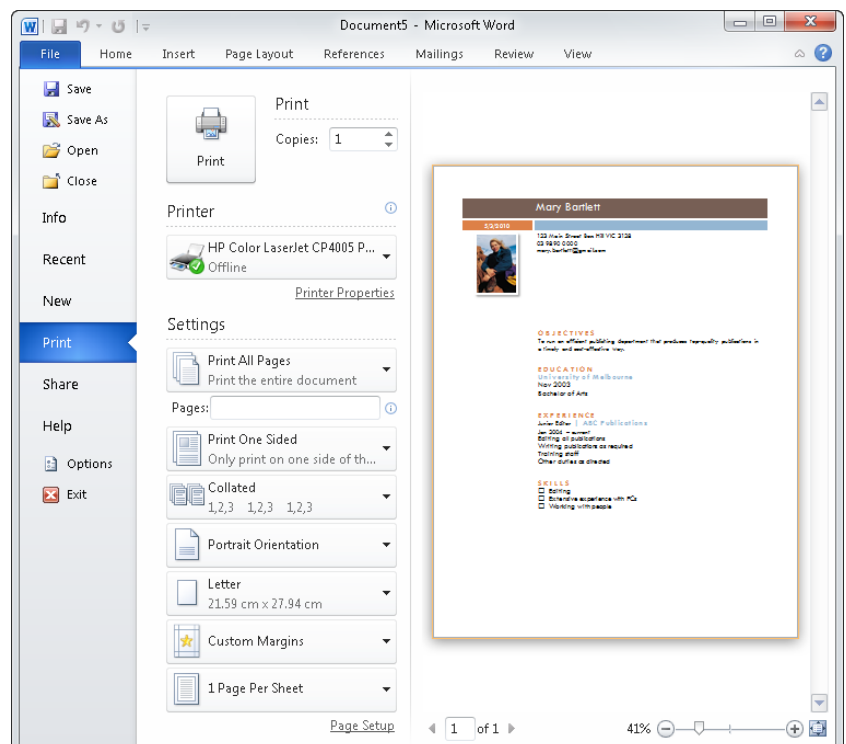
USING THE RIBBON

The **Ribbon** is the command centre for Word. It provides a series of **commands** organised into **groups** that are placed on relevant **tabs**. Tabs are activated by clicking on their name to display the command groups. Commands are activated by clicking on a button, tool or gallery option. Everything you could possibly want to do in Word will be found somewhere on this Ribbon.

Try This Yourself:

Open File

Before starting this exercise ensure you have a blank document open…

1 Examine the groups on the **Home** tab

These are the most commonly used commands,...

2 Click on the **Insert** tab

The commands on this tab are used to create pages, tables, illustrations, links, headers and footers, text objects and equations...

3 Click on **Shapes** in the **Illustrations** group to display the Shapes gallery

This includes a huge range of shapes as well as the menu option New Drawing Canvas at the bottom of the list...

4 Click on each of the tabs and examine the commands

Some of these open dialog boxes...

5 On the **View** tab, click on **Zoom** in the **Zoom** group to open the **Zoom** dialog box

6 Click on **[Cancel]** then click on the **Home** tab
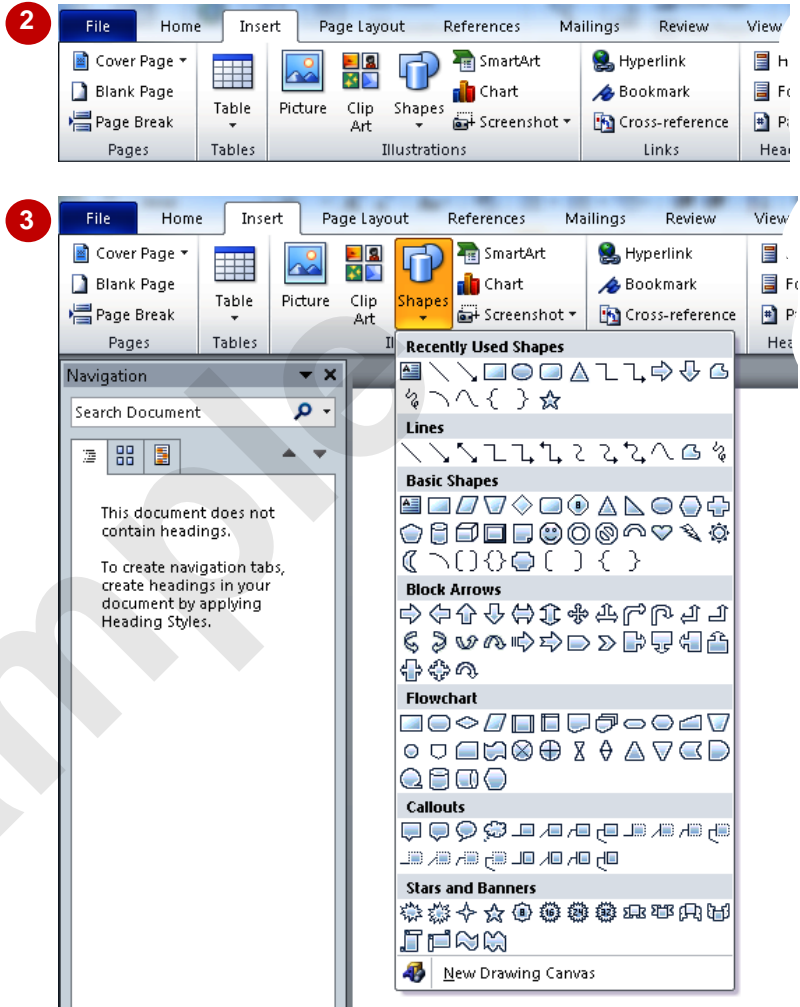
For Your Reference…

To **use** the **Ribbon**:

1. Click on a tab to display the commands
2. Click on a button to activate a command, display a gallery or display a dialog box

Handy to Know…

• Additional tabs known as **Contextual tabs** appear in specific circumstances. For example, if you insert a picture, the **Picture Tools: Format** tab will appear. This provides quick access to all of the tools you may need to modify and work with the picture.

UNDERSTANDING THE BACKSTAGE VIEW

The **Ribbon** lets you work *on the content* in a document – you can add more content, format it, insert pictures into it, copy it, and much more. The **Backstage view**, which is accessed using

the **File** tab, lets you *do something with* the content you create. You can save it to use it later, print it on paper, send it via email, and more, using the options found in **Backstage view**.

The Backstage View

The **File** tab on the **Ribbon** is not a normal tab – as you can tell by the fact that it is coloured. Clicking on the **File** tab launches a mini-program within Microsoft Word known as **Backstage View**. **Backstage**, as it's known for short, occupies the entire screen although the tabs from the **Ribbon** still remain visible across the top.

At the left of the **Backstage** is a navigation pane which is made up of **Quick commands**, smallish buttons which will perform an operation immediately, and largish **tabs**, which display more options and information to the right of the screen.

The whole underlying purpose of the **Backstage** is to let you protect your data, share it with others, and provide you with valuable information both about your data and the status of Microsoft Word.
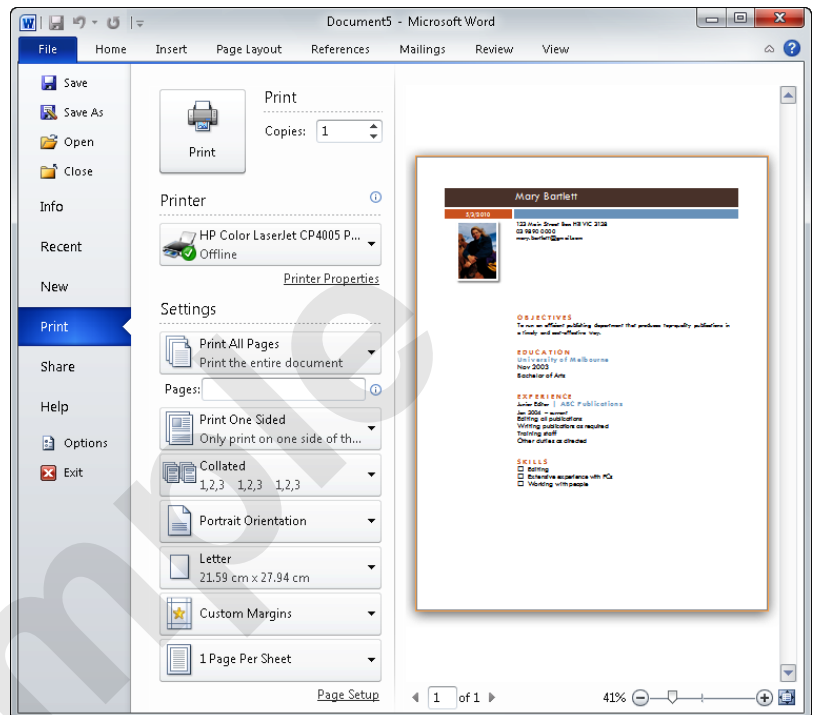
Quick Commands

The **Quick commands** provide immediate access to an operation.

Save	Saves the current document
Save As	Allows you to save the current document under a different name or location
Open	Opens a previously saved document
Close	Closes the current document
Options	Provides access to options that allow you to control how Word looks and works
Exit	Allows you to close and exit Microsoft Word

Backstage Tabs

The **Backstage tabs** provide more options for working with a document

Info	Provides status information about the current document and lets you manage versions and permissions
Recent	Provides a list of recently saved documents
New	Lets you create a new document and provides access to a huge gallery of templates
Print	Lets you print the current document and also previews it
Share	Lets you share your document with other people
Help	Provides access to Microsoft's help network and also provides licensing information about your software