One of the most useful functions of a PC or of any computing device, be it a laptop, a smart phone, or a tablet, is the ability of the device’s operating system to allow the user to COPY or CUT digital material, and PASTE it to another location. Digital material can be text, photos, music, video, or any other information, including programs, needing to be placed in another location. Locations can be different documents within the same program (such as MS Word documents) or locations can be different devices, such as a flash drive or external hard drive. Locations can also be different documents in different programs, or from an Internet source to an MS Word document, for example, or vice versa. Think broadly when thinking about locations. Often, we think of copy and paste within the same document, and this is something many of us actually do, but you can also copy from one document to another, or from one device to another device, or from an Internet source to an MS Word document, for example.

You must have a way of showing the computer what digital material you wish to copy, and you do this by highlighting material or making a selection of material. Highlighting or selecting material on a computer or other such device usually involves dragging the mouse across the material with the left mouse button pressed the entire time. Selecting can also be done by double clicking or even triple clicking material. Sometimes a single click will also do the job, such as if you are selecting a photo in a Word document. Once material is selected, this is the first step towards completing a copy or cut and paste operation. This is your way of telling the computer WHAT you want to copy or cut.

Here are four steps to completing a COPY or CUT and PASTE operation on a computer or similar device.

- **FIRST** – Make a selection of what you intend to copy or paste from your source location.
- **SECOND** – Execute the COPY or CUT command.
- **THIRD** – Decide where you want your material to go (the destination location), and click there with your mouse. Be as specific as you can.
- **FOURTH** – Execute the PASTE command.

**The Clipboard**

Material you first select, then COPY or CUT, automatically goes to a temporary area of computer memory which, on a PC is called the clipboard. The copy or cut commands actually send the material to the clipboard. The clipboard can be thought of as a holding area, a temporary area of memory for storage of digital material, or think of a “real life” clipboard where items can be held for the time being. The computer clipboard can be turned on, and can be visible in such programs as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher (all MS Office products), among others. An advantage to this is that the clipboard can, when turned on, or rather, when made visible, hold up to 24 items (versions 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013 of MS Office products). However, if the clipboard is not activated or made visible through the opening of one of these types of programs, then the clipboard retains only one item at a time, and this item is then replaced by any other item that is copied or cut later on. Another clipboard rule is that if the PC is rebooted or shut down, the clipboard, since it is a temporary holding area, will delete all material therein.

**Differences Between COPY and CUT**

Think of COPY as you would a traditional Xeroxtm machine, or COPY machine. You want to duplicate the material from one location to another. The material remains in this location as well as is ready to be duplicated
to another location. When you copy something, it is duplicated to the clipboard where it is ready for you to use whenever you need to paste it somewhere.

Think of cut as a function that removes material from one location with the intent of placing it or pasting it to another. When you cut something, it is removed from its location and is placed in the clipboard, awaiting your command of paste to place it in still another location.

**COPY and CUT Work With PASTE**

COPY and PASTE, and so does cut. Both COPY and CUT have this secondary step called PASTE that is implicit in the execution of the COPY or CUT. If you are going to perform a COPY or a CUT function, remember that the secondary function of PASTE is awaiting execution.

**Differences Between CUT and DELETE**

Distinguish between cut, for example, and DELETE. If you cut something, you remove it from one location, such as a document. However, the material that you cut from the source location resides on the computer’s clipboard, where it will stay until you either cut or copy something else, at which point the latest cut material will be replaced (or, if the clipboard is open, moved down in the hierarchy or list of cut and/or copied items – up to 24), or until you complete its complementary command of PASTE, as was just mentioned in the above paragraph.

If you delete something, it will not be on the computer clipboard for later retrieval through PASTE.

Also, if you cut something, intending to delete it, you may find it re-appearing if you execute a PASTE command.

Just make sure when you cut something, you are not thinking DELETE, as they are two separate actions.

To retrieve something you delete, it is possible to try the undo command. This works in most instances except if you are deleting something from a flash drive, for example, then undo would not work, and we have already established that PASTE would not work with delete. Delete can be considered a “final” command.

**Keyboard Shortcut Keys Worth Remembering for COPY, CUT, PASTE**

Because you may want to have access to copy, cut, and paste in multiple areas of your computer for a broader use of these commands, it is worthwhile to use keyboard shortcuts rather than solely rely on commands you can click on within a program.

**Note:** Right-click your mouse for a menu of choices which include copy, cut, and paste, too!
Within programs you may be able to execute a **COPY**, **CUT**, or **PASTE** command through command buttons at the top of the screen, or by clicking the menu word, **EDIT**, or **ORGANIZE**, and looking for the word commands, **COPY**, **CUT**, or **PASTE** in a menu.

Let’s look for some of these in some common programs such as **MS Word**, **Excel**, and **PowerPoint**. We’ll also open the clipboard and see how it behaves.

Next, let’s see if they are present on the Internet through the browser, **Internet Explorer**, for example.

What about in E-Mail? Let’s explore a couple of different types of E-Mail, such as **G-Mail**, **AOL**, and a version of **Outlook**.

**Exercises:**

1. Open **MS Word 2013**.
2. Type this sentence: **This is my first class using copy, cut, and paste.**
3. Slide the mouse to the left-hand margin of the page, in line with your sentence, until you see a white arrow pointing diagonally to the right.
4. Click once.
5. Notice your sentence now has a blue background – this is called a **SELECTION** or **HIGHLIGHT**. This is how we “tell” the word processor WHAT we want it to work on.
6. Click in a blank spot on the screen. This removes the ‘highlight’ or ‘selection.’ This is also called “deselecting.”
7. Highlight the sentence again.
8. Click the **COPY** button in HOME tab of the ribbon, looking for the clipboard group.
9. Open the Clipboard by clicking the small dialog box launcher in the lower right corner of the Clipboard group.
10. Notice your sentence sitting in the clipboard.
11. Click to the right of your sentence on your document (not in the clipboard).
12. Hit **ENTER** on the keyboard to move the cursor down a line.
13. Click the giant clipboard **PASTE** button in the clipboard group of the ribbon, or click on the item in the clipboard panel itself.
14. Did you notice a duplicate sentence appearing? _________________

1. Minimize **MS Word**.
2. Click the **File Explorer** button in the Windows 8.1 desktop taskbar.
3. Double-click **LAB FILES**.
4. Double-click the file named **BIRDS.doc**
5. Highlight or select the entire article, **BIRDS**. You can use the mouse and drag across the entire text, and drag down as well, OR you could use a new keyboard shortcut – **CTRL – A** for select all.
6. Make sure the **HOME** tab of the ribbon is clicked. Click the **COPY** button, just under the scissors, and just under the word, **HOME**, where you JUST clicked. The **COPY** button is in the **CLIPBOARD** group on the ribbon.
7. Click just **after** the last sentence in **BIRDS**, to the right of the last word in the last sentence, and hit the **ENTER** key a couple of times.
8. Click on the BIG clipboard picture of the **PASTE** button back in the **HOME** tab of the ribbon. Did the entire article get copied right underneath the first one? ____________________________
9. Does the clipboard now have two items in it? ____________________________
To re-emphasize, one of the best, most efficient, and most useful features on your word processor/PC is its ability to **CUT AND PASTE** as well as **COPY AND PASTE**. These features are extremely helpful if you want to save yourself extra time and work.

In review, **CUT AND PASTE** and **COPY AND PASTE** allow you to mark off, highlight, or select a portion or all of your document to be either “cut” or “copied” from its current place. If you highlight and CUT the portion, the computer stores the selected material temporarily into an area of memory known as “the clipboard.” In MS Word 2010, you can store up to 24 items in the clipboard. Items are sent there through the use of the CUT or COPY commands.

- To open the clipboard, click the **Home** tab on the ribbon,
- Look for the **Clipboard** group. Click the **button** to the right of the word, **Clipboard**.
- You should see the Clipboard appear on the left side of the screen. Click the same button to close it, or click **X**.

You can also cut (or copy) and paste selections from one document to the next, or even from Internet pages (you have to use COPY to take selections from the Internet) to your word processor (always give proper attribution if taking exact words and putting them into your own document for copyright purposes).

The difference between CUT (and paste) and COPY (and paste) is that CUT will **remove** the highlighted portion of text from your document. COPY will simply **reproduce** (Xerox™ so to speak) the portion into the clipboard, leaving the selection or highlighted portion of text intact within the document.

**Try this.** **Objective:** Use **copy and paste and cut and paste in the same document**.
1. Click **File**, then click **OPEN**, then **COMPUTER** and **BROWSE** in MS Word 2013.
2. Click **Lab Files** on the left-hand side of the dialog box (you may have to scroll to get there).
3. Open **BIRDS** from the file list. (Either double-click it or click it once and then click the **OPEN** button) (Ignore the spelling errors for now, and the mis-aligned title.)
4. Click once to the left of the word, Wrens. You should see a flashing cursor or insertion point.
5. Hold the shift key and at the same time, press the right arrow key on your keyboard **until the sentence is completely highlighted in blue**. You should see your cursor highlighting or selecting the text as you press the arrow key. Notice, by the way, that you can press any arrow key to select items below or above the area you are in, or if you press the left arrow, you will remove highlighting.
6. In the **Home** tab of the ribbon, look in the Clipboard Region and click the **Copy** button. (or, press **CTRL + C** on the keyboard for the same effect)
7. Click to the left of the title, **BIRDS**. You should see the flashing cursor or insertion point.
8. In the **Home** tab of the ribbon, look in the Clipboard Region and click the **big PASTE** button.
9. In the menu that appears, click **Paste** and not **Paste Special**. (or, press **CTRL + V** on the keyboard for the same effect). *We will learn to use Paste Special later on.*
10. Did you notice that the sentence appeared exactly **WHERE** the cursor was flashing? Now there are two of the same sentence in this story. Granted, it doesn’t make much sense to paste it here, but we were just practicing the procedure so it really doesn’t matter right now.
11. For practice, find the **UNDO** button in the **Quick Access Toolbar**. Click it. Notice how the story returns to its normal state without the duplicate sentence.

- Repeat steps 1-11 but instead of choosing the **Copy** button in step 6, choose the scissors button or **Cut**. When you get to step 10, notice that there are NOT two copies of the same sentence, but one. We cut, or removed, the sentence and then pasted it. When we copy, as before, we **reproduce** the selected material.
- **Now** display the Clipboard. Do you see the sentence in the Clipboard area? ___________

**While in Word, you can copy pictures, tables, charts, text, and other objects, which can also be stored in the clipboard.**
Continuing on, now let’s try copying and pasting from one document to another.

1. With BIRDS still on your screen, click FILE, then OPEN, COMPUTER, then BROWSE, and from Lab Files, the file called GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK. Click OPEN.
2. Notice at the bottom of the screen, in the Windows Taskbar, that both files are listed there as buttons.
3. With “Grand Teton National Park” as the “active” window or document, highlight the entire paragraph excluding the title (ignore the spelling mistakes for now).
4. Click COPY.
5. Click the BIRDS document from the bottom of the screen in the Windows task bar.
6. Click at the end of the paragraphs. Hit the ENTER key on the keyboard to give yourself some space below the paragraph.
7. Click PASTE.
8. Did the highlighted or selected text reproduce from one document to the other? __________

You’ve now successfully copied and pasted from document to document, and, of course, from within the same document in the first exercise.

Next, let’s try copying from the Internet to a document.

1. With BIRDS and GRAND TETON still on the screen, click the MINIMIZE button at the top right-hand portion of the screen. (You may have to click it several times, once for each open document.)
2. When you return to the desktop, click Internet Explorer. You should see the Library’s Home Page.
3. Click the About Us link.
4. Highlight the first paragraph on this page. (You will have to use your mouse to do that.)
5. Release the left-mouse button and point or hover the mouse at the highlighted text (probably blue).
6. Right-click the mouse and notice the menu that appears.
7. From the menu, left-click on COPY.
8. At the bottom of your screen, look for the BIRDS document in the Windows Taskbar. Click it once.
9. Click your mouse at the end of the document and press the ENTER key on the keyboard a couple of times to give yourself some space below the last paragraph.
10. Now paste. (either by clicking the button at the top of the screen in the Clipboard Region, or by pressing CTRL + V on the keyboard, or by RIGHT-CLICKING with the mouse at the spot where your cursor is, and selecting PASTE from the menu that appears)

You should have noticed that you successfully copied from the Internet to MS Word. When copying a large article from the Internet, usually with the intent of pasting it and printing it in Word without extra formatting or advertisements, it’s a good idea to use PASTE SPECIAL, and then to use the choice, UNFORMATTED TEXT from the Paste button in the Clipboard Region. Experiment.

**Ways to Highlight or Select Text -- In Summary**

- **Drag the mouse** (press left mouse button while sliding the mouse) across and/or down your text.
- **Keyboard Shortcut:** Click once to the immediate left of the text you wish to select. Switch to the keyboard and press SHIFT and keep it pressed. Then tap an arrow key in the direction you wish to highlight – usually left, then down. You have more control over selecting this way as you can use any arrow: up, down, left, or right, to select more or less of the text you need.
- **Double click** a single word to highlight or select it. **Triple click** to select one paragraph.
- **Use still another keyboard shortcut** – click once in the text you wish to highlight, and if you wish to highlight or select everything, press CTRL and keep it down, then locate A and tap it. **CTRL A** allows you to select ALL.
- **White Arrow Method for one line:** Slide your mouse to the left of the text you wish to highlight or select. Notice that once you are in the “margin” territory of the page, the mouse becomes a white arrow pointing to the upper right. When the arrow lines up with your first line of text, press the left mouse button once. This technique is useful if you have one line of text that does not trail onto another line.