

Chapter 2 Word processors in the classroom

Dudeney, Gavin & Hockly, Nicky (2007). *How to teach English with technology*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

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Chapter 2 Word processors in the classroom

- **Why use word processors?**
- **Word processors for teachers: creating materials**
- **Word processing activities for learners**
- **Using word processors: considerations**



Why use word processors?

- **Word processors** can be used in many inventive ways, by both teachers and students. Teachers can
- **prepare, create, store and share materials** for their classes by using a word processing program, and
- learners can use a word processing program both in and outside the classroom, **to practise writing skills, grammar and other language points**, as well as **to present their work**.



Why use word processors?

- Most teachers and learners are familiar with the basic functions of a word processing program, and know how to create, save and store documents.
- We assume basic knowledge of creating and saving documents, and focus on how to use word processing software efficiently and creatively, with word processing features which are particularly useful for both language teachers and learners.



Why use word processors?

- **We will be focusing on Microsoft Word software package similar in other word processing software packages, like Open Office.**
- **A lot of the activities can be used by learners who have access to computers at home.**



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- As a future teacher, you will be using a word processing program to **prepare worksheets**, and **teaching materials** for your learners. You may also use one for **correcting**, **editing**, and **providing feedback** on your learners' digitally submitted written work. In this section, we will both of these two 'teacher' uses of word processors.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Inserting images and links*
- When creating materials, you can **incorporate images** into worksheets to brighten them up, and to **include links to web sites** which your students can go to further **research** or **practice**.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

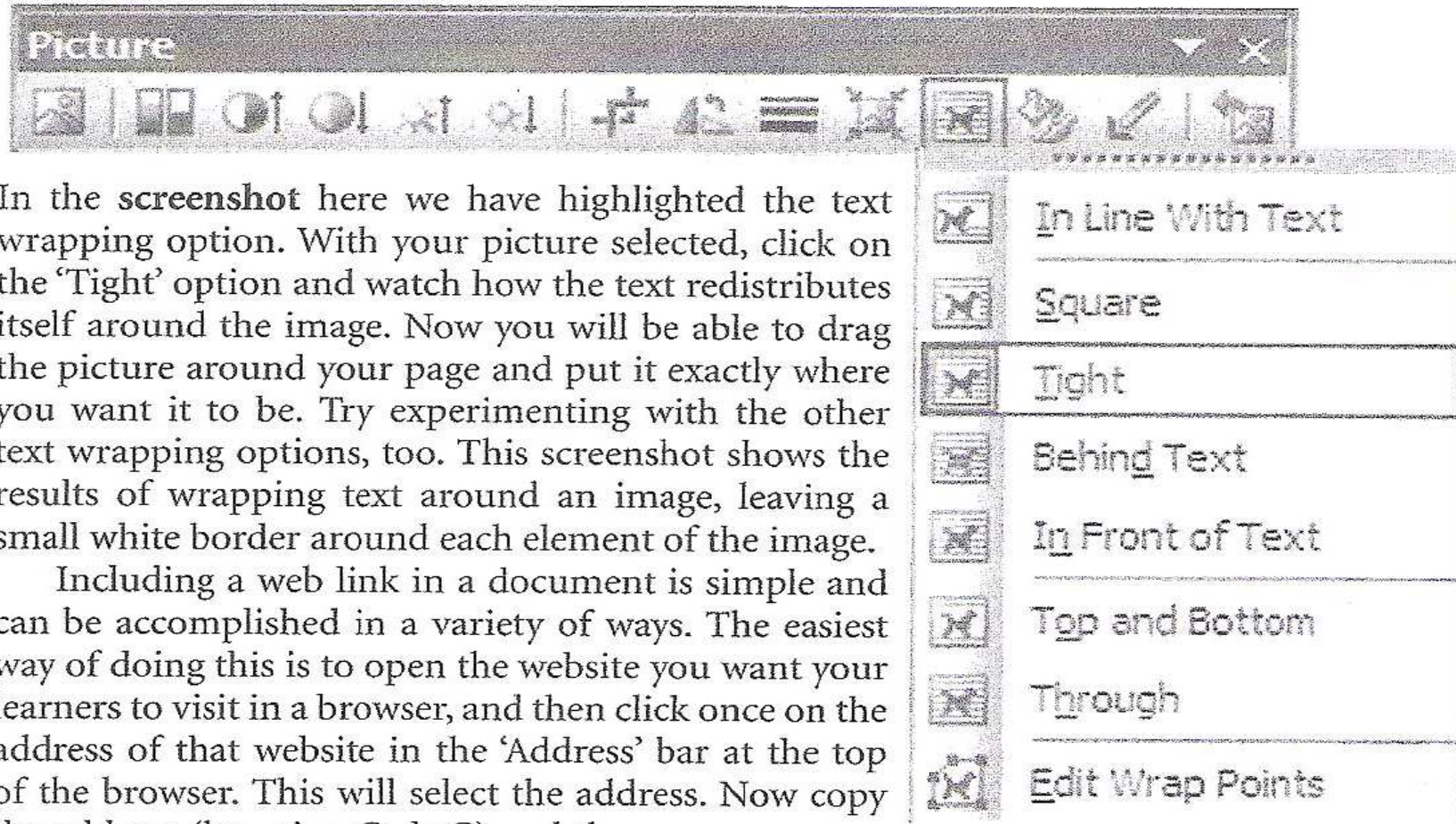
- *Inserting images and links*
- Images can be incorporated from your own computer or from Internet sources (copyright permitting).
- To insert an image stored on your own computer into a document, click the 'Insert' menu, then select 'Picture' and finally from 'From file ...'.
- To grab an image from the Internet, simply find a page with the image, and the right-click on it. A menu will pop up and you should choose 'Copy' from the menu, then return to your word processor and paste it into your document where you want it to be.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Inserting images and links*
- To **place images on your page** and have the text flowing around your images, rather than having it above and below, with your picture isolated in the middle. This is called **text wrapping**. To work with text you will first need to enable the picture toolbar: click on '**View**' then '**Toolbars**' and finally '**Picture**'. Now select your picture by clicking on it once and look at the picture toolbar.

Word processors for teachers: creating materials



In the **screenshot** here we have highlighted the text wrapping option. With your picture selected, click on the 'Tight' option and watch how the text redistributes itself around the image. Now you will be able to drag the picture around your page and put it exactly where you want it to be. Try experimenting with the other text wrapping options, too. This screenshot shows the results of wrapping text around an image, leaving a small white border around each element of the image.

Including a web link in a document is simple and can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The easiest way of doing this is to open the website you want your learners to visit in a browser, and then click once on the address of that website in the 'Address' bar at the top of the browser. This will select the address. Now copy the address (by using Ctrl+C) and then open up your document and paste it onto the page (by using Ctrl+V). As soon as you hit the space or return key, the text you have pasted in will automatically become an active link. Note that to activate links in Word it is customary to have to hold down the Ctrl key while clicking on them.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Creating forms*

- A **form** is a Word document which has interactive elements in it. These elements can include (among others) **drop-down menus** for making choices, **text entry fields** where your learners can type in text, and **buttons** to select one of a set of choices.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Creating forms*
- Let's look at the reading exercise below, composed of a short text and a form featuring comprehension questions for learners to answer. When this is done by learners in Word, the form is locked beforehand and becomes interactive, allowing them to click on answer choices (questions 1 and 6), type answers in (questions 3 and 5) or select from a drop-down list of suggested answers (questions 2, 4 and 7). Once the form in the exercise above is 'locked', each learner can read the text and do the exercise. (See [Barcelona - An Introduction under Technology_Chapter2](#))



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Creating forms***
- In this second version above the form is activated. Note that the form does not automatically check the answers. For more information on how this software tool works, see the Microsoft Office website, and the section dealing with forms:
- <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/>



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Creating forms*
- To get started with adding forms to your documents, you will need to display the 'Forms' toolbar in Word. Click on 'View', then (Toolbars' and finally 'Forms'. You will now see a new toolbar which will allow you to add various interactive choices to your page.

- ***Creating forms***

- Let's look at the more useful of these elements.

1 Adding a text box to your form:

- Type your question, then hit Enter and click on the 'Text Form Field' icon. You will see that it creates a small text box. Click on it, then click the 'Format' icon (fourth icon in the Forms toolbar). From here you can format what the text box does and the sort of input it expects.

Word processors for teachers: creating materials

■ *Creating forms*



2 Adding a check box to your form:

- Type your question, then hit Enter and click on the 'Check Box Form Field' icon. You will see a check box appear. Type your first answer next to this. Now press the Tab key and repeat for as many answers as you need.

- ***Creating forms***

3 Adding a drop-down menu to your form:

- Type your question, then hit Enter and click on the 'Drop-down Form Field' icon. Double-click the newly-created drop-down, and use the 'Drop-down item' box to add each individual choice you want to offer your learners. After you type each choice, click the 'Add' button. When you finish, click 'OK' to activate your drop-down.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Creating forms*
- These are the basic elements. When you have finished with your form, be sure to click on the 'Lock' icon to lock the form and activate it. This is the last icon on the Forms toolbar.
- Forms can be very useful for making collections of basic exercises, and are a solid introduction to the more complex area of making web-based interactive materials. The advantage of creating activities using Forms is that it is simple. The disadvantage is that you cannot build in feedback to your students.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using TrackChanges*
- Word comes with certain '**document tracking**' tools to allow documents to be shared among a group of users, with each user's changes and edits highlighted in a different colour and identified by their initials. When a document has been edited using these tools, any changes made by the second writer (format changes, word order, deletions, inserted comments, and so on) will be highlighted for the original author to see. The original author can then choose to accept or reject each suggested change. ([See TrackChanges Document under Technology_Chapter2](#))



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using TrackChanges*
- In the screenshot (p. 19), you'll see part of a document sent to a colleague, who turned on TrackChanges and made some suggestions. Notice how we can **add comments** to various parts of the text, **delete** and **change sections**, and **format the text** as well. When the document is returned, the writer can see the suggestions and decide whether they want to incorporate them or not.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- **Using TrackChanges**
- You can turn these tools on in Word on a document-by-document basis by opening a document, then clicking 'Tools - TrackChanges'.
- Teachers can use TrackChanges to **provide feedback** on a learner's written work. The learner's text can be **corrected by the teacher** using TrackChanges, or **comments added suggesting** how the learner might improve their own work. TrackChanges also offers possibilities in terms of peer review and correction of written work.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using TrackChanges*

A basic use of **TrackChanges** in Word might look like this:

- Learner A finishes her document and sends it to Learner B.
- Learner B turns on TrackChanges, edits the document and returns it .
- Learner A edits the document, accepting or rejecting Learner B's suggestions.
- Learner A sends the document to her teacher.
- The teacher turns on TrackChanges, edits the document and sends it back.
- Learner A examines her teacher's suggestions and makes a final edit.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Using Markin***
- This is another Windows program that aids the correction of word processed work from learners. It comes with a series of tools for marking up grammar mistakes, spelling errors, word order and other common errors, using a series of abbreviations which will be familiar to most teachers ('sp' for spelling, for example) and different colours for different types of errors. Once the teacher has finished correcting a text, it can be returned as a word processed document, or uploaded to a web server as a webpage. It can even be mailed from within the program itself.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using Markin*
- In many ways, then, Markin can replace the TrackChanges tool we looked at above. Experimentation with both options will help you to decide which is best for you. It's worth bearing in mind that Markin was developed by teachers, and is therefore both more teacher-friendly, and more suitable for teaching purposes, than TrackChanges, which is an all-purpose tool. The advantage of TrackChanges is obviously that it is built in, and does not cost anything. Markin costs £20 at the time of writing:
- <http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/index.htm>



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Word processing activities for learners*
- We can use a word processing program for simple tasks like writing, saving and storing documents. However, before experimenting with word processors, you will need to check that your learners have some basic word processing and file management skills. Many people who work with computers sometimes forget where they are saving documents, what they call them, and so on.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Word processing activities for learners***
- It is particularly important when using word processors for teaching that certain systems are implemented - and skills taught - that make life easier for everybody. Below are a few **simple word processing tips** worth bearing in mind and sharing with your learners:



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Word processing activities for learners*
- Encourage your students to **save their documents in a consistent way, naming them with their own name and a description of what the document contains**, for example, **Joan Andres - Letter of Complaint.doc**. In this way, both your learners and you will be able to find their work more efficiently.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Word processing activities for learners***
- Use USB pen drives to keep a copy of your work safely off-site.
- Make sure that you check with whoever looks after your centre's computers - if you are lucky enough to have such a facility - that files are not deleted on a daily basis. Plenty of good work has been lost this way.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Word processing activities for learners*
- Be prepared to deal with some computing terminology: *hard drive, c drive, printer, word processor, save, print.* Make sure that your students understand it.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- Word processors lend themselves well to creative writing both in and outside the classroom.
- Learners can work together with documents that can be exchanged easily between pairs or groups of learners, and between learners and teachers, encouraging both teacher corrections, and peer correction and revision.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- Word processors also **include dictionary, grammar and thesaurus tools**. Putting your cursor over the word ***happy*** for example, and then clicking on the '**Thesaurus**' option (in Word, this is found in Tools - Language) will open up a side panel with a range of synonyms for ***happy: content, pleased, glad, cheerful*** and so on.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- If your learners are engaged in any kind of creative writing, then spell-checkers would seem to be helpful.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- If your learners are engaged in any kind of creative writing, then **spell-checkers** would seem to be helpful.
- Using the spell-checker on a piece of written work can make a learner more aware of errors, and provide a chance for self-correction. When using a spell-checker, learners need to ensure that they have set the language properly, for example to American or British English.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- If your learners are working with word processors to practise language and structures, the **spell-checker might best be turned off** - at least for the first attempt at any exercise. **Peer correction can be a more valuable tool in these types of activities.**



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- It is worth pointing out these editing tools to your learners, highlighting ways of using them properly.
- One thing that we would recommend disabling is the grammar checker, which is perhaps the least reliable of these types of tool. You can do this by clicking 'Tools' then 'Options' and highlighting the 'Spelling & Grammar' tab and disabling 'Check grammar as you type'.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for creative writing*
- The basic advantage of using word processors in writing activities is
 - the ability to model texts,
 - share texts,
 - produce them collaboratively and engage in peer and teacher editing on a more interactive level.
 - Word processing activities will put the emphasis on the process of writing rather than on the final written product, for example, **brainstorming, note-taking and revising**, all of which makes for a **more creative use of language**.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for language practice*
- Word processors are not only capable of enhancing writing skills, but can also be excellent tools for introducing or practising language.
- The ability to move words and chunks of text around the page easily can guide learners towards a deeper understanding of how the language works.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for language practice*
- The ability to **undo** and **redo** moves and edits means that experimentation is easier and less time-consuming.
- When used in conjunction with grammar exercises, word processors can activate 'noticing' skills, increasing **awareness of language structures** and **encouraging learners to play with the language.**



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for language practice*
- Many of the activities we do with pen and paper can work equally well on a word processor - filling in blanks, sentence reordering, adding titles to paragraphs, and so on.
- They also work well on another level, covering basic **text manipulation skills**. In this way, the use of word processors in our teaching not only serves as an aid to **language practice** or for the improvement of writing skills, but also teaches our learners **valuable ICT skills**.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for language practice*
- Below are two examples of activities which require text manipulation and editing in a word processing program. The first is a [sample listening activity](#). The teacher takes any listening dialogue from the course book (or another source) and types it into a word processed document.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for language practice*
- In class, learners open the document on a computer, then select and drag the sentences on the right into where they think they might go in the conversation on the left. (The first sentence of the dialogue is provided.) Learners then listen to the conversation to check.
- (See Sample Listening Activity under Technology_Chapter2)



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Using word processors for language practice*
- Building up a collection of worksheets and activities like the ones above will allow you to give further practice, extra homework or examination preparation materials to your learners.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Dictation***
- **A simple word processing activity to start with is a dictation from the teacher - in this case the opening few lines of a creative writing narrative. This should be treated as a standard dictation, and the learners should input (type) the text as they listen. Once you have dictated the first few lines, try introducing a small round of peer correction, with learners exchanging texts and making edits to their partner's text, possibly using TrackChanges, before moving on to a final round of teacher-led correction.**



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Further activities*
- ***Dictation***
- Once the dictation phase has been completed, learners return to their own documents and have a fixed period of time in which to add to your model narrative opening and to develop the story further, before turning it over once again to their partner. Their partner then has to read what has been added, make edits and is then given more time to add to the text. This process continues until completion, at which point the final product is turned in to the teacher for correction.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***

- ***Dictation***

- There is a lot of activity in this kind of process, from dictation and text modelling, through peer correction, reading, use of narrative structures and sequencing to final text production, and the combination of these techniques and skills can have a significant effect on the quality of your learners' writing.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Noticing activity***
- **An activity which encourages noticing of structures at lower levels, and for younger learners, is for pairs of learners to produce a short descriptive text (for example, of a mystery animal), including the third person -s.**

This animal is large and grey. It lives in Africa and India, and it has large ears and a short tail. It eats leaves and grass, and it likes to wash in the river. It remembers everything!



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Noticing activity***
- Pairs exchange texts, read the description and guess which animal is being described. They then underline and/or highlight all the examples of the third person **-s** they can find, either by using WordArt (in Microsoft Word), or highlighting the **-s** in a different colour, font or size. They can also be asked to search the Internet to add a photo to the highlighted text. These finished, highlighted and illustrated texts are then displayed around the classroom.

Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Further activities*
- *Noticing activity*



An Elephant!

This animal is large and grey. It live**S** in Africa and India, and it ha**S** large ears and a short tail. It eat**S** leaves and grass, and it like**S** to wash in the river. It remember**S** everything!



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Noticing activity***
- **Collaborative writing activity - A well-known writing activity is that of the collaborative story, where a story is started (perhaps from a prompt such as an evocative series of sounds, or a painting) by one learner or pair, and then passed to subsequent pairs of learners, who add to the story.**



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- *Further activities*
- *Noticing activity*
- This works particularly well if learners are first asked to listen to an evocative piece of music for two or three minutes, and asked to close their eyes while they imagine what is happening, as if they were watching a film. In the computer room, after listening to the music and imagining what is happening in the film, pairs can start a story on one computer and then move around to the next computer terminal after a certain period of time (say five minutes) to add to the story on the next computer.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Noticing activity***
- The teacher can provide a narrative structure for each stage in front of the computer - for example:
 - Describe the scene and the characters. [change computers]
 - What happens first in the story? [change computers]
 - What happens as a result of this? [change computers]
 - What new character arrives and what do they do? [change computers]
 - How does the story end? [change computers - go back to the story you started]



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Noticing activity***
- The final version of the story is then read by the pair who started it, for revision and correction, using TrackChanges, or in a copied document which is edited directly. The final edited versions of the stories are then printed out and displayed for learners to read. Learners can then compare how many different stories for the imagined film there were.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors for presenting work***
- One final use of word processors to consider is that of encouraging learners to put their word processed documents into a presentation package, possibly as part of an **ePortfolio** of their work. (See Chapter 9 for more on electronic portfolios.)



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors for presenting work***
- Word processors facilitate correction and redrafting, and ease the pressure to produce 'good copy' in the finalised piece.
- They also encourage learners to take more pride in their written work, often with surprising results for those teachers used to encountering motivational difficulties when trying to get students to write.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors for presenting work***
- Enhancing produced documents with images and photographs from the Internet (taking into account copyright issues) can also help to increase the time and effort put into the writing process by learners.
- Specific pieces of work can easily be transferred from word processed format to a presentation format like Microsoft PowerPoint for public presentations, or added as files to students' web pages or blogs (see Chapter 7).



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors for presenting work***
- Once learners have a final piece of finished work as a word processed document, they can be encouraged to keep documents together in files on a USB pen drive or diskette (as well as on their own computer if they have one) as a portfolio of work produced during a course. This can then form part of their electronic portfolio, a format that is becoming increasingly important for learners in a mobile working and learning environment.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors: considerations***
- There are some potential downsides to using word processors - not the least of which is working with mixed technological ability classes where typing skills (or lack of them) may play a large part in performance anxiety and in the pace at which activities are carried out. Some attention must be paid to not putting too much pressure on your learners to perform too quickly.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors: considerations***
- You should also not expect great success with these cycles of revision and peer correction if your learners are not used to doing such activities away from the computers. In short, trying to introduce too much too quickly into your word processing classes may ultimately make them more challenging than they should be, and frustrating for your learners.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors: considerations***
- Starting with simple activities, such as the ones we looked at in the first section of this chapter, and getting your learners used to the mechanics of word processing before moving on to the more creative side, will help with this process, as will a good grounding in the writing process in the more traditional fashion.



Word processors for teachers: creating materials

- ***Further activities***
- ***Using word processors: considerations***
- More ideas for exploiting word processors in the classroom can be found at the following addresses:
 - <http://edvista.com/claire/wp.html>
 - http://www.geocities.com/vance_stevens/wordproc.htm



Conclusions – In this chapter we have:

- **considered why we should use word processors in our teaching.**
- **looked at how teachers can work with word processors for materials creation.**
- **examined specific word processing tools such as inserting images and links, creating forms and using TrackChanges.**
- **looked at how learners can work with word processors, for creative writing, language work and presentation of work.**
- **considered some sample word processing activities.**



- **ON THE CD-ROM, YOU CAN HEAR A
TEACHER TALKING ABOUT USING WORD
PROCESSING WITH HER LEARNERS AND
WATCH A TWO-PART TUTORIAL ON
TRACKCHANGES IN MICROSOFT WORD.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE!

