


MS Word, AutoCorrect and Scientific Word-processing

Users of MS Word will probably have encountered the AutoCorrect function. . This was designed to fix common errors in one's typing – so it automatically changes common errors like 'teh' into 'the'. But it's not just handy for correcting your typing, you can use it to develop your own short cuts.

I shall demonstrate by showing how I've set Word up so I can easily enter M_{\odot} (indicating the mass of the Sun – used a lot in S281).

The desired symbol combination has to be typed once – M_{\odot} . Then you need to select it. Now, in the Tools menu, choose AutoCorrect. You should find your selected symbol combination in the box labelled 'With:'. Ensure that the button "Formatted Text" is selected. Now all you need to do is enter the combination of letters that you wish to be replaced by those symbols. For the mass of the sun I chose msol. Make sure you use a combination of letters that you're not gonna be using elsewhere.

Now, to type M_{\odot} , all I need to is type the letters 'msol' and Word thinks I've made a mistake and 'corrects' it.

You can be more adventurous if you like. I've set up $4/3\pi$ to be autocorrected to $\frac{4}{3}\pi$ using the equation editor. And you can paste any object as the replacement text. Using ISIS/Draw I pasted a benzene ring in. Now AutoCorrect will change the letters IDbenzene to .

I'd be interested in other ways that people find to exploit the potential of AutoCorrect.

Many thanks to Eileen Kercher who first pointed me in this direction by pointing out how AutoCorrect could be used to simplify chemical formulae like H_2O , CO_2 , etc. and scientific units such as replacing Gunits with $N\ m^2\ kg^{-2}$.