

Launch Any App with a Word Keyboard Shortcut

What

Instructions to create a Word keyboard shortcut that will open any app from within any Word document. The Word keyboard shortcut will run a macro created to open the app you choose.

Why

If you often have the need to open another app (such as Excel, Outlook, Photo Editor, Chrome, etc.) while using a Word document you will instantly see why entering a 2 or 3 key shortcut while still in the Word document to launch the app is way better than leaving Word, finding the shortcut, and starting that app. Investing a little time to create the one line macro and assign a Word keyboard shortcut to it will result in you being able to enter that keyboard shortcut while viewing any document in Word to have that app open and ready for use. For example: In any document I am viewing in Word if I desire to check something out on the Internet, pressing 2 keys at the same time opens my browser (Chrome) ready for my search.

Note: These instructions and screenshots are for Word 2019 installed on Windows 10 Home, but should apply to many other versions of Word and Windows.

How

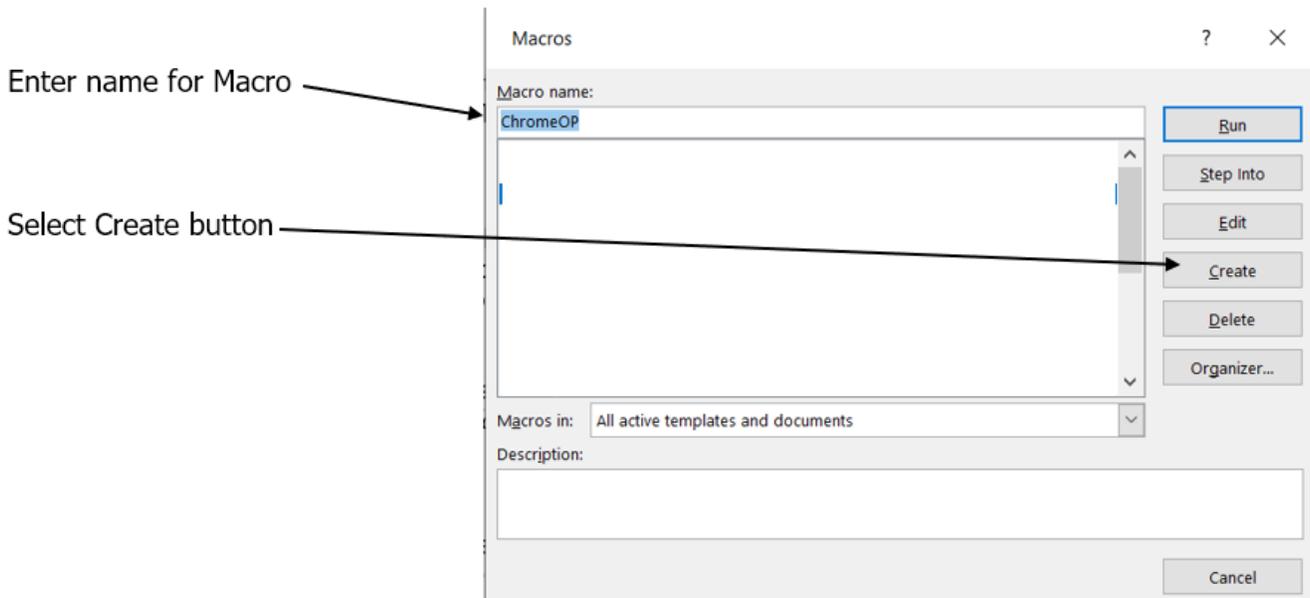
Notice: The Developer tab must be available in the Ribbon to be able to access Macros. To display the Developer tab in Word's Ribbon: Right click a blank spot in the Ribbon...*Select Customize the Ribbon...*On the Customize Ribbon Option page, in the Main Tabs list in the right pane; place a checkmark next to *Developer* in the list...Press OK to save your changes.

Step 1: Get Path of App

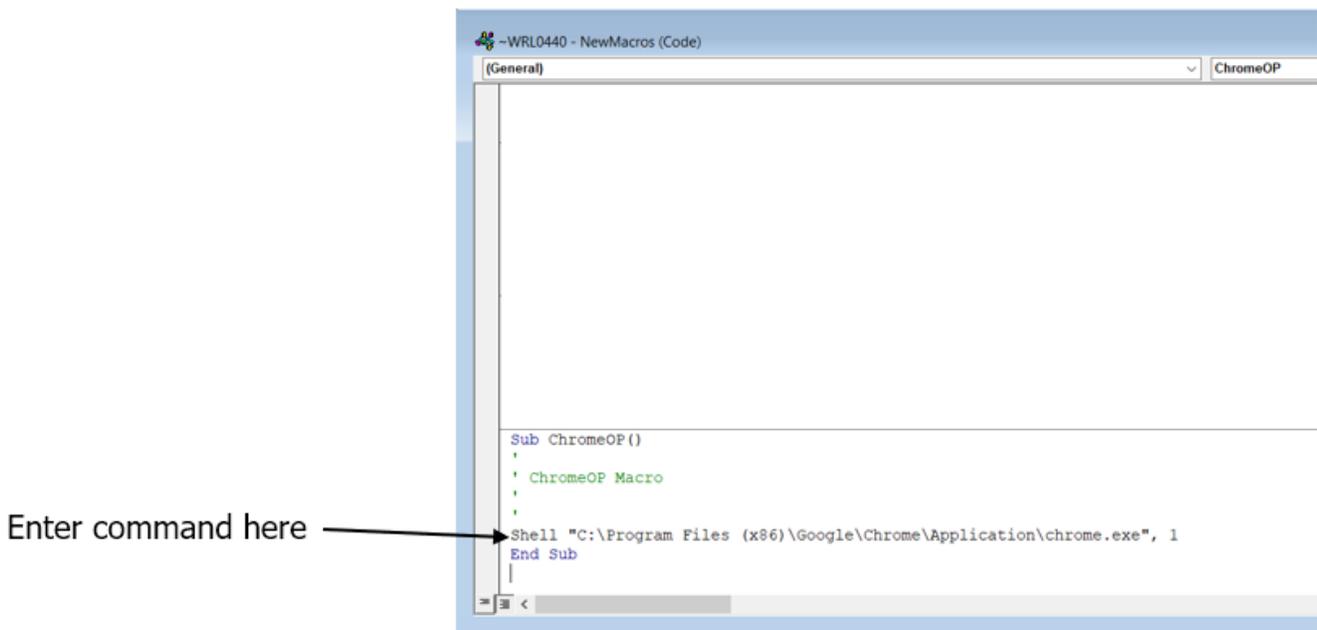
- You will need the exact location (Path address) in your system for the app you wish to open.
- An easy way to get that Path address is from the shortcut you use to open that app.
- Right click that shortcut and select Properties which will open the Properties window to the Shortcut tab with the Path address to that app highlighted. Press Ctrl + C to copy that Path address.
- If the shortcut that you use to open the app is in the Start Menu, right click the shortcut and select More > Open file location which will open File Explorer to the Start menu folder where the shortcuts are stored. Right the shortcut for your app and select Properties to see the Path address to the app and copy it.
- When finished you will have the Path address to the app copied and ready to be pasted into the macro.
- For my example I will use the Path address to the browser I use (Chrome) most which is located on my system at: "C:\Program Files (x86)\Google\Chrome\Application\chrome.exe"

Step 2: Make the Macro

- In a Word document select the Developer tab of the Ribbon and select the Macros button to open the Macros window.
- Enter a name for the Macro in the Macro name box as shown below. The name must not have any spaces in it. In my example I named it ChromeOP.



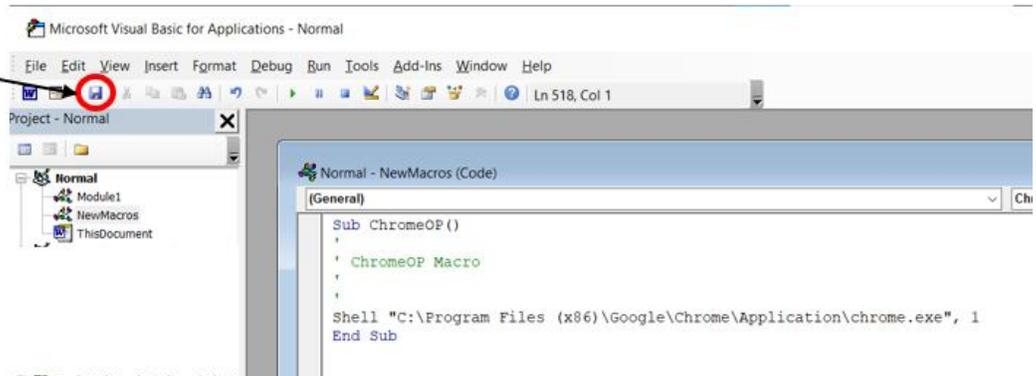
- Press the Create button to open the Visual Basic Editor as shown below.



- The image above shows the blue border coding box in the right pane of the VB Editor with the command already entered.
- To enter your command:
 - Make sure the flashing | is on the line just above End Sub where the arrow points to in the image above.
 - Type in **Shell** and enter **one** space.
 - Press Ctrl + V to paste the Path address you copied earlier.
 - Enter , (comma) after the last quotation mark of the address and enter **one** space.
 - Enter **1** (the number)

- The command is entered and do not press any other keys
- With the mouse pointer click the Save icon in the upper left portion of the VB Editor as shown in the image below. This will save the macro you created.

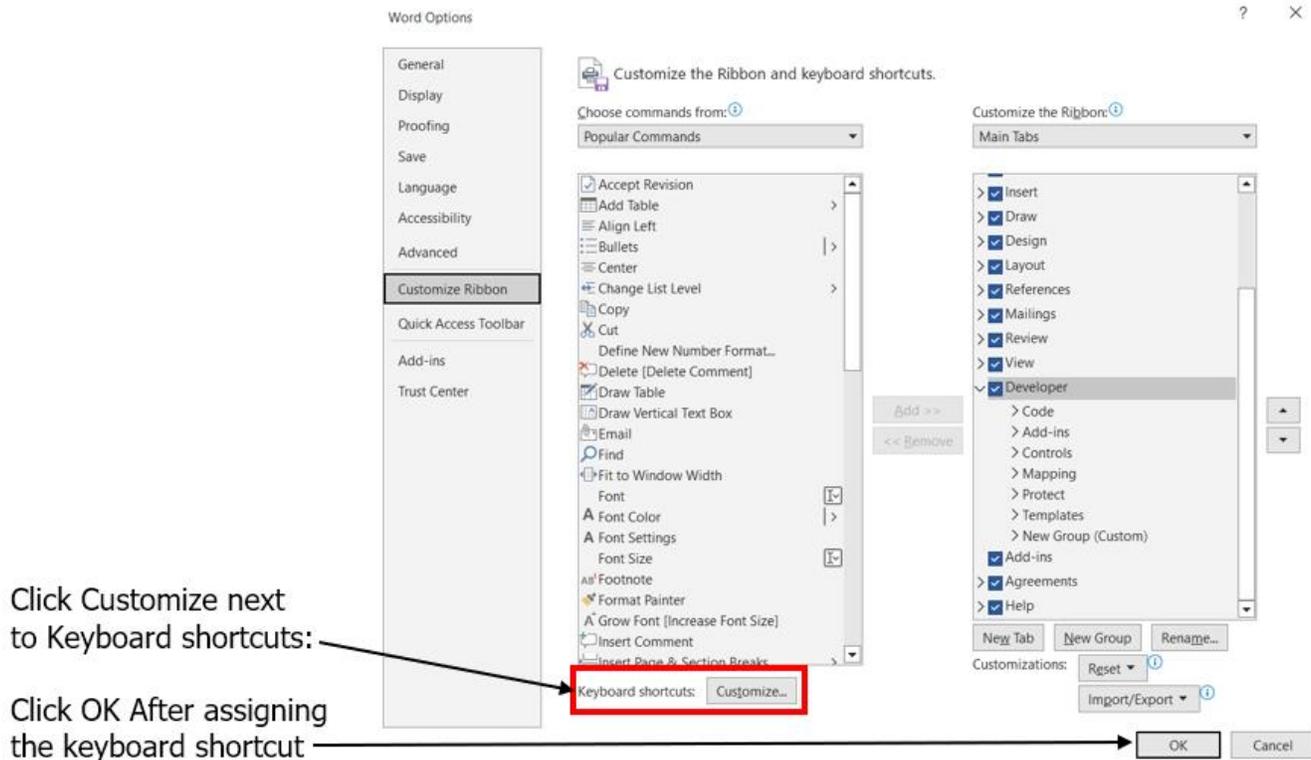
Click Save icon to save the macro



- Close the VB Editor and return to the document by pressing the Alt and Q keys (Alt + Q) at the same time.
- Press the Macros button to open the Macros window again and you should see your macro you just created. With your macro highlighted click the Run button to see that it does open the app.
- Proceed to the next step.

Step 3: Assign Keyboard Shortcut to Macro

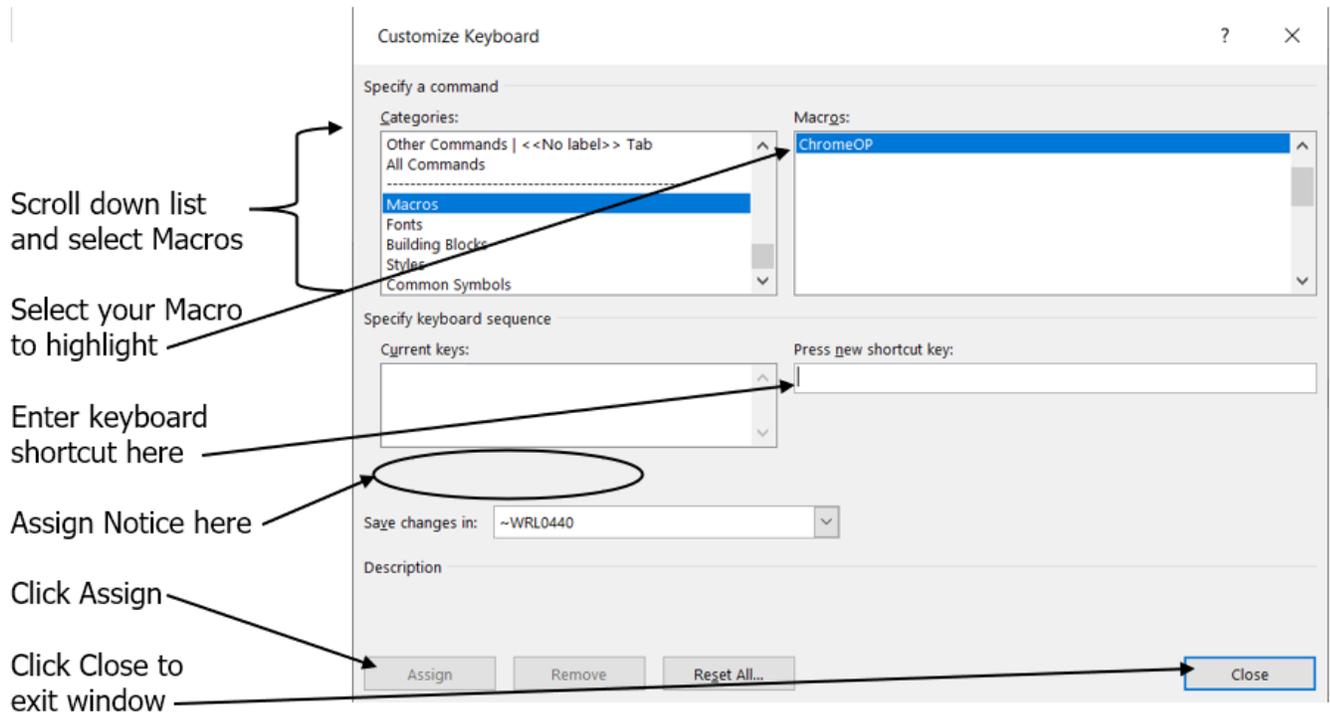
- In a Word document right click a blank spot on the Ribbon above and select Customize the Ribbon... to open the Customize Ribbon page of Word Options as shown below.



Click Customize next to Keyboard shortcuts:

Click OK After assigning the keyboard shortcut

- Click the Customize button next to *Keyboard shortcuts*: to open the Customize Keyboard window as shown below.



- In the Categories box scroll down the list and select Macros which will display your macro(s) in the box to the right now labeled Macros.
- In the Macros box select your macro to highlight it.
- Click the box below *Press new shortcut key* to activate the box. Press the keyboard shortcut you want. The keyboard shortcuts can be two or three key combinations of the Ctrl and Alt keys. Keyboard shortcuts should begin with the Ctrl or Alt key (or both) followed by a letter key such as Ctrl + Q or Alt + Q or Ctrl + Alt + Q. After pressing the keyboard shortcut keys a message will appear below the Current keys box (as indicated in the image above) indicating if that keyboard shortcut is already assigned in Word or is unassigned and free to use. Using an assigned keyboard shortcut will unassign that shortcut to the other function it did.
- Once you have the keyboard shortcut entered press the Assign button and then the Close button.
- Click the OK button of the Options window to save your changes.
- The effects are immediate, press the keyboard shortcut and the app you wrote the macro for will open as current active window ready to use.

Notes on Using the Keyboard Shortcut

- The keyboard shortcut will work and open that app from within any Word document you have currently opened in your Word program on your PC.
- A Word document must be the current active window for the keyboard shortcut to work.
- When the app opens it will be the active window and ready for your use and input.
- If the app is already open but is not the current active window, entering the Word keyboard shortcut will open a separate process and window for that app.
- If you ever uninstall or move the location of the app's exe file the macro will no longer work.
- This VBA Shell command will also open a file and not just an app if desired.
- You can use this same technique to enter the same macro into Excel and assign its own keyboard shortcut for opening an app while in an Excel document.
- Oh, yes you can have many macros with each launching a different app and each having a different keyboard shortcut.