Here's a simple but effective suggestion for improving the readability of your memos, letters, reports and advertisements: use bulleted lists. Bullets have the following benefits:

- They emphasize items in a list. The bullets mark the items so that readers can easily see all the items in the list.

- They guide readers' thinking. The bullets say, in effect, "Here's something important. Take a good look at it!"

- They make your document more attractive. Like graphics, bullets keep your document from appearing drab and unappealing.

- They allow readers to review the document contents more readily. The bulleted lists often contain the key information in a document.

Bullet Characters

Once you decide to include a bulleted list in your document, you must next select an appropriate bullet character from among WordPerfect's special characters. WordPerfect gives you a choice of many different types of bullets and characters.

To insert one of these bullets into your document, you must first look up the character set and number of the bullet in Appendix P of your WordPerfect reference manual. Once you've found the proper character set and number, press Compose (Ctrl-2 or Ctrl-V), then type the set number, a comma, the character number for the desired character and press (Enter). For example, to insert a square bullet (n), press Compose (Ctrl-2 or Ctrl-V), type 4,2 and press (Enter).

Note: If you press (Ctrl-2) rather than (Ctrl-V) nothing appears on the screen until you press (Enter). In the Equation Editor and the Macro Editor, only (Ctrl-2) works to insert Compose characters.

The BULLETS.WPM Macro

There's a simpler way, though: use the included BULLETS.WPM macro. When you run BULLETS.WPM, it displays a menu (see figure below) of seven WordPerfect bullet characters.

Selecting an item in this menu works the same way as selecting an item from any WordPerfect menu. You press a key corresponding to the highlighted number or letter given for the desired menu item. After you select a menu item, the macro inserts the bullet character into your document.

Using the macro

To use the macro, position the cursor where you want a bullet character, press Macro (Alt-F10), type bullets and press (Enter). With the menu shown in Figure 2 on-screen, select the desired bullet. The macro automatically closes the menu and inserts the bullet into the document. The bullet may appear on your screen as a rectangle, but will print properly.

Understanding the Macro

The BULLETS.WPM macro uses control characters to display a menu in WordPerfect format. Lines 1 through 10 of Figure 1 contain the {CHAR} command. The function of this command is to get a character from the user. These 10 lines of macro programming create the menu that you see when you run the macro

In line 1 the {Del to EOP} command, as used in a prompt message, blanks the screen and positions the cursor in the upper left corner of the screen. Keep in mind that this command clears the screen for the {CHAR} message only. It doesn't actually erase any document text.

In line 2, the {^]} code turns on the bold attribute, so that the subsequent text, Bullet Characters, appears on the screen in the screen color for bold. At the end of line 2, the {^\} code turns bold off.

In line 3, the {^P} command positions the cursor at a designated location on the screen. To indicate a location, youave to specify two numbers, the first of which is the screen column and the second of which is the screen row. The normal WordPerfect screenas 80 columns, numbered from 0 to 79, and 25 rows, numbered from 0 to 24. Therefore, the upper left corner of the screen is position 0,0.

Line 3 tells the macro to begin placing the text at position 5,3, that is, column 5 and row 3. Using column 5 makes the menu look like it's indented five spaces. Using row 3 makes this line appear on the fourth line because the first line is row 0, the second line is row 1 and so on.

To insert the position 5,3 you can't just type a 5 and a 3. You have to type the ASCII equivalents of those numbers. One way to do this is using the {NTOK} command, which converts a number to a key equivalent ASCII code. Therefore, the command {NTOK}5~ converts the text value 5 to the ASCII code for 5, which is the number we want following the {^P} command.

In lines 3 through 10, the {^P} command is followed by a pair of {NTOK} commands corresponding to the screen position for a line in the macro menu. In line 10, that position is 0,24, the lower left corner of the screen.

All of the menu lines (3 through 9 in Figure 1) contain two highlighted characters, one with the bold attribute and one with the mnemonic attribute. The default display for the mnemonic attribute is the same as bold, but you can change it by pressing Setup (Shift-F1), (2) Display, (4) Menu Options, (1) Menu Letter Display and choosing one of the three options. If you choose (3) Normal, then your mnemonics will be the same as regular text. If you choose either (1) Size or (2) Appearance, then you can choose one of the listed display options. Press Exit (F7) to return to the document screen.

The code to turn on the mnemonic attribute is {^V}. The code to turn it off is {^Q}, which turns off any attribute.

Line 11 starts the Compose feature with the {^V} you would normally press at the document screen. The {CASE CALL} statement in lines 12-20 tells the macro where to go to get the character set and number based on your selection from the menu. The macro jumps to one of the labels in lines 22-28, then returns to line 21 to finish the Compose feature and end the macro.

If anything is pressed besides the options given in the menu (shown in the {CASE CALL} statement), then line 20 makes the macro go to line 29, where the Compose feature is cancelled and the macro ends.

With this introduction to menus, you'll be able to create almost any type of menu in your macros. The screen-control commands that appear in the {CHAR} command in BULLETS.WPM will work in any macro. In fact, they'll work in any macro programming commands that display messages, including {CHAR}, {INPUT}, {PROMPT}, {STATUS PROMPT}, and {TEXT}. For a complete description of all the screen-control commands, see "Macros, Message Display" in your WordPerfect reference manual.

Have fun creating your own macro menus!

Bullet Characters

1 - Medium Round

2 - Small Round

3 - Hollow Round

4 - Medium Square

5 - Diamond

6 - Star

7 - Check Mark

Selection: 0