The Hotbox, Marking Menus, Context Menus, and Workspaces

The Hotbox
Maya tries to show commands as close to the work as possible. One way it does this is the Hotbox. This is accessed by holding down the spacebar, which brings up the menus for the applications, such as File, Edit, Create, etc. All the custom menus are also here like the Mesh, Skeleton, and so on, but they are placed at the cursor location. This speeds workflow.

There are several other options in View: we can look at selection, frame all, or frame selection. If something in the scene is selected then View – Look at Selection will center the camera on that selection. Another way to bring an object into view is to use frame selection; if we select an object and choose frame selection the view port will frame the house. There is also frame all, which frames everything in the extent of the scene.

We can customize the Hotbox by going to Hotbox Controls. So if you left click and hold over Hotbox Controls you can Show or Hide any elements. If you want to Show All, you can do that, or if you only want to see the FX menu you can do that as well.

The spacebar in Maya has another function in switching views, so if you just tap the spacebar it brings you to your quad view from which, by moving the cursor over a particular view and tapping the spacebar again, you can change the full screen view.

The Marking Menus
Marking menu contents are specific to the type of object currently selected (if there is more than one selected, it refers to the last one) and are accessed by right clicking anywhere in the scene. They allow you to access component (subobject) levels for the selected object as well as change many of its properties.

If nothing is selected, right clicking provides two options: to finish using the current tool or to select everything in the scene.

There is a brief tutorial at https://youtu.be/Hgx56qeGpD8

Context Menus
When you're in a subobject mode such as Vertex, Edge, or Face, you can access a list of commands specific to that mode by holding down the Shift key and right clicking. This is a great time saver when modeling.

Workspaces
A useful way to customize the interface is to use the Workspaces pull-down menu in the top right hand corner of the interface; its default is Maya Classic, and you can do everything in that for simple scenes. But if you're heavily into modeling, you can use the Modeling Standard interface which brings up the modeling tool kit and hides the animation controls. If you're a modeling guru you can go into Modeling Expert and this gets rid of everything; all that's available are the hot keys. There are several other specialized layouts, including UV Editing and Animation.

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