



Computer Basics - Keyboard & Mouse

If you know little or nothing about computers, this is the place to start!

I. Definition of terms

Hardware – The physical parts of the computer. In other words, anything you can touch and see, even before you turn on the computer.

Software – Generally refers to any type of computer program. The software is what makes the hardware run. The CD is the hardware and the music on the CD is the software.

Input Devices – Allows you to enter data into the computer. The most often used input devices are the keyboard and the mouse.



Keyboard - A typewriter-like device used to communicate with a computer. On a laptop, it is usually attached.



Mouse - Hand-operated pointing device. When you move the mouse on your desk, the mouse pointer on the screen mimics its movement. On a laptop, there are touch-pads or an external mouse can be attached.



Scanner - Converts a picture or paper document into digital format.



Monitor – This is where you see the text and graphics you are working with or the thing you stare at while you use the computer (it looks a little like a TV). On a laptop, this is attached and usually flips up.

CPU, Central Processing Unit - the “brain” of your computer. The CPU acts like a traffic cop at a busy intersection to instruct the computer programs to process the data. These can be in a tower or desktop model. On a laptop, this is located under the keyboard. The following are located on the CPU:

On/Off switch - the computer switch is usually located on the front or the side of the CPU. This would be pressed to start your computer. There is another way to shut off the computer, which will be covered soon.



Hard Drive – device that stores large amounts of information for a long time. It is located within the computer case or CPU. If a computer has one hard drive, it is called drive C. It stores the operating system, programs, and documents.



Other Storage devices:



Floppy Disk Drive - floppy disk drive allows you to insert and remove a floppy disk, which is magnetic medium used for storing data. On a laptop, this can be an external drive.



CD-ROM drive - reads information from a compact disk, like a music CD or a software CD. Many people also store photos on CD-ROMs. There are read/write features available on recordable drives.



Flash Drives – also known as JumpDrives, Pocket Drives, Pen Drives, and Thumb Drives They pretty much operate the same way, but have inherited many names. They are pluggable, portable and lightweight. They connect to a USB port on the CPU, and hold up to 2 gigabytes or more of data.

Bytes and Gigabytes: Byte is an abbreviation for *binary term*, a unit of **storage** capable of holding a single **character**. Large amounts of **memory** are indicated in terms of **kilobytes** (1,024 bytes), **megabytes** (1,048,576 bytes), and **gigabytes** (1,073,741,824 bytes).

II. Parts of the Windows Desktop

Operating system – The software that runs your hardware and your programs behind the scenes.

Windows – The most widely used operating system for PCs. It provides a common way of using programs. Most PCs come with it already installed. Currently, the most common version of Windows is called Windows 7. There are also older versions of Windows that are still being used. For instance, at home you may have Windows Vista, Windows XP, or another version of the operating system.

Desktop – This eventually appears when you first turn on the computer. It is the space that contains the icons as well as the “empty space” left over.

Icons – Pictures that represent programs, files, or folders. You double-click these to open them.

Taskbar – Strip of buttons at the bottom of the Windows desktop. Each button relates to a window or task on the screen.



III. Keyboards

A. Computer keyboards share many similarities to and some differences from a typewriter keyboard.

- Alphabet layout is basically the same.
- The location of some punctuation keys is different
- Additional keys include directional keys and the number pad on the right.

B. The basic hand placement on a keyboard takes some practice.

- Rest both thumbs on the space bar.
- Starting with the little finger of your left hand on the letter “A”, the other three fingers will rest on the next three letters “S” “D” and “F”.
- Skip “G” and “H” and put index finger of your right hand on the “J” key. The other three fingers of your right hand will rest on “K” “L” and the semi-colon key.
- Notice how you can reach all the other keys quite easily.
- Hunting and pecking is good, too. Use whatever is most comfortable to you!

C. There are several specialty keys on the keyboard that will help with formatting your typing and make some computer steps quicker. Many can be used in combination with other keys to create shortcuts for special actions.

- ESC-ESCAPE KEY (In [DOS](#) and [Windows environments](#), pressing the Escape key usually cancels or [aborts](#) the [current](#) operation.)
- Space bar
- TAB moves the document over a set number of spaces
- BACKSPACE backs over the document erasing as it goes.
- ENTER is a multipurpose key and will either allow you to enter information on the computer or act as a return carriage key on a typewriter.
- Forward slash vs. back slash
- ARROW KEYS will move you anywhere within a document without making any changes.
- HOME/END
- PAGE UP/DOWN
- INSERT/DELETE
- Number/directional pad with NUMLOCK on and off
- Multiple key commands-Many people find it less efficient to have to take their hands off the keyboard to click buttons with the mouse so there are keyboard shortcuts using two or more keys together (See the Keyboard shortcuts handout)
- You use both the SHIFT key and the CAPS LOCK key to create upper case letters.
- Number/symbol keys are on the top row above the letters. Using the SHIFT key plus the number key prints the symbol above the number.
- Ctrl-Alt-Delete



- Function Keys are like one step buttons and their use may vary depending on what program you are using. For instance if you are using Microsoft Word F7 will start spell check. The Function Keys are located at the top of the keyboard.

Practice keyboarding sites:

- Free Typing Online: <http://alfatyping.com/>
- Free Online Typing Course: <http://www.goodtyping.com/>

IV. Mouse Basics

Do the on-line tutorial at www.pbclibrary.org/mousing.

*Note: You can adjust the mouse for left-handed use. **Windows XP** users go to **Start**, **Control Panel**, "**Printers and Other Hardware**" (if in category view), then **Mouse**. Check the box next to **Switch primary and secondary buttons**. Then click **OK**.*

Practice sites:

- Mouserobics: <http://www.skyways.org/central/mouse/page1.html>
- JigZone Online Jigsaw puzzles: www.jigzone.com