

# Introduction to Computers

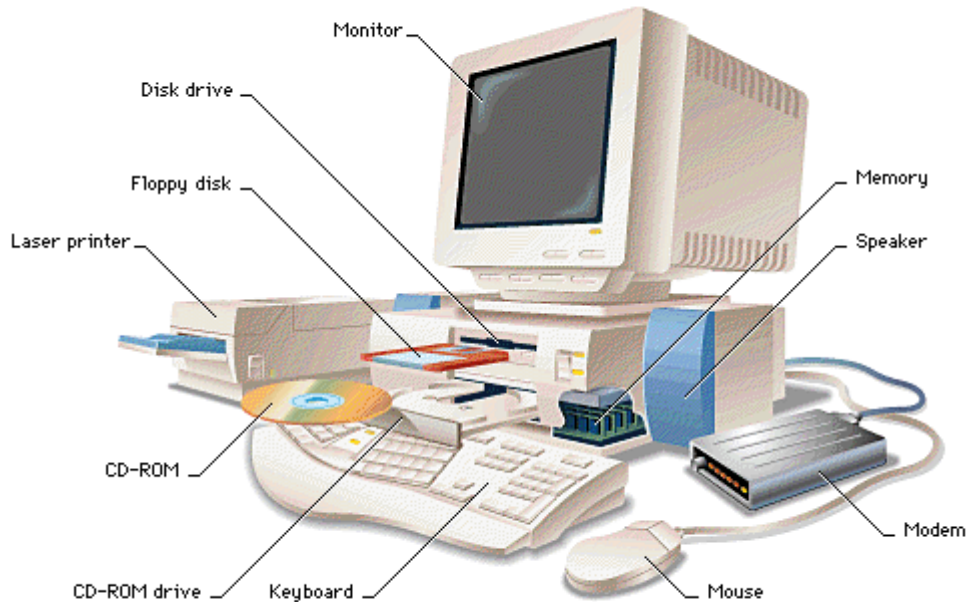


- Identifying Computer Components
  - Hardware Components & Peripherals
  - Software
- Basic Computer Functions
  - Turning the Computer On & Off
  - Mouse Basics
  - Windows Navigation
- Computer Lingo
  - Computer-related terminology
- Care & Feeding of a Computer
  - Tips to Keep a Computer Running Smoothly



*Brookfield Public Library  
3609 Grand Boulevard  
Brookfield, IL 60513  
(708) 485-6917*

## Identifying Computer Components



### Hardware Components & Peripherals

"Hardware" refers to the physical parts of a computer itself including the Central Processing Unit (CPU), keyboards, monitors, and drives. Other extra parts called **peripheral components** or devices include mouse, printers, modems, scanners, digital cameras and cards (sound, color, video), etc. Together, these pieces of hardware are referred to as a personal computer or a PC.

### Macs & PCs

Macintoshes, or Macs, are made by Apple Computer, and are different from the computers commonly called PCs that are made by IBM, Dell, Compaq, and everyone else. Macs and PCs are the two different breeds of computer on the market today, and some folks fiercely prefer one to the other. The library uses Dell PCs that run the Windows XP operating system. Despite technical differences, Macs and PCs can "look" and "feel" the same when you use them, since they use graphical components like "icons" and "windows" to help you interact with the software. The terms and information in this course apply to both Macs and PCs.

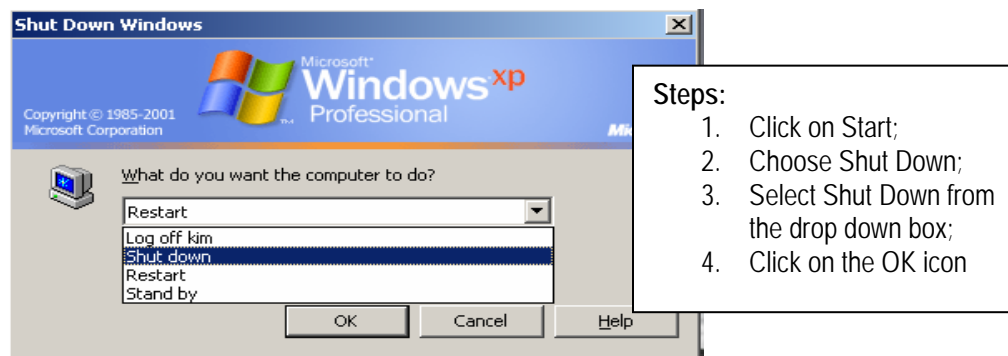
## Software

Software or programs are instructions that tell a computer what to do. Examples of software include:

- Windows XP—an operating system that
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- PageMaker

## Basic Computer Functions

### Turning the Computer On & Off



## Mouse Basics

The mouse is used to select, activate, and manipulate features on the screen. A mouse cursor or pointer acts as our virtual finger on the computer screen. Some basic mouse functions:

**Click** - Press and release the left mouse button.

**Double-click** - Click the left mouse button twice in rapid succession.

**Right Click** - Press and release the right mouse button.

**Highlight or Select** - Drag the on-screen mouse pointer across data, causing it to appear in reverse video.

## Windows Navigation

Navigating inside the Windows environment simply takes practice. Important functions to know:

### Scrolling

To SCROLL down a page, place your cursor over the top of the dark gray bar. Press the button on the left side of the mouse and hold it down. While holding the button down, you can move that bar up and down by holding the mouse the same way.

### Closing a Window & Minimizing or Maximizing

Maximize and minimize windows to view and work in other windows or applications. You don't have to close out (shut down) a program to run another application—multiple programs can be run simultaneously.

## Computer Lingo

**Boot:** To start up a computer. Cold boot: restarting computer after having turned off the power. Warm boot: restarting computer without having turned off the power.

**CPU:** The brains of the computer. The CPU is designed to run a group of instructions, or instruction set.

**Cursor:** The cursor on your screen can indicate two things: 1) where your mouse pointer is, or 2) where the next character typed will be entered in a line of text.

**Desktop:** The desktop is where icons live. It's the "background" area you see when your computer first boots up before you run any programs.

**Download:** The process in which data is sent to a computer. The opposite of this process, sending information to another computer, is called uploading.

**Discs:** The physical, external CD or 3.5-inch "floppy" that stores data and makes it possible to carry documents and files with you from computer to computer. It is important to remember that if you created a document with a particular application, the next computer you go to will need to have that same application installed in order for you to open a document and save changes you make.

**(Disc) Drive:** The place where an external media – such as a "floppy" disc, CD, or USB (a.k.a. "flash" or "jump" drive) is inserted into the CPU.

**Hard Drive:** The place where all the data in a computer is stored or where files and folders are physically located.

**Icon:** Visual representations of computer programs. Double-click on an application icon to open a program.

**Maximize:** Enlarge a window to its maximum size.

**Minimize:** To convert a window into an icon that sits on the taskbar. Just click its taskbar button to restore it.

**Modem:** An electronic device that lets computers communicate electronically. Today, modems are typically found inside a computer. Types of modems include "dial-up", cable, and DSL.

**Operating System:** Also known as an "OS," this is the software that communicates with computer hardware on the most basic level. Without an operating system, no software programs can run. The OS is what allocates memory, processes tasks, accesses disks and peripherals, and serves as the user interface.

**Scroll:** The movement of text as it rolls up or down the screen.

**Shortcut:** A combination of keys which when pressed together performs a function without having to use menus to reach it.

**Software:** Computer programs, stored as magnetic or electric fields, they have no physical existence.

**Taskbar:** The long, gray bar that sits at the bottom of a computer screen. It has the Start button, system tray, and possibly more on it.

**USB Port:** Like a floppy disc or CD, the USB ("flash" or "jump") stick is an external memory device on which you can carry documents and data.

## Care & Feeding of a Computer

### Tips to Keep a Computer Running Smoothly

- ✓ Keep the computer away from heat sources (radiators/heat registers). Heat is a computer's enemy.
- ✓ There is a fan built into the back of the CPU case. Keep this unobstructed and clean. A vacuum cleaner nozzle with a brush attachment is a useful fan cleaning tool.

- ✓ Don't spill liquids on any part of the computer. Liquids spilled on the keyboard or mouse will cause electrical problems.
- ✓ Clean the keyboard with a vacuum cleaner nozzle equipped with a brush tool.
- ✓ Periodically clean the air vents on the side and back of the monitor with a vacuum brush.
- ✓ Keep the monitor screen clean with a soft cloth. Use no detergents, chemicals, or soaps. Clean the monitor when it is off, otherwise static electricity can compete with your cloth for the dust and grime.
- ✓ Wipe off the keyboard keys with a soft cloth dampened with rubbing alcohol or other mild cleanser.

## Practice Tasks

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Turn the computer on and off (warm and cold boot)
- Use the mouse and keyboard to navigate through programs.
- Navigate through the Windows screens:
  - Open, close, minimize, and maximize windows
  - Run multiple programs simultaneously
  - Scroll
- Use shortcuts and the taskbar to run programs
- Use common icons to run programs (Internet Explorer, Microsoft Word, and Excel)
- Create a Word document, save it to a floppy disc, and re-open it.