

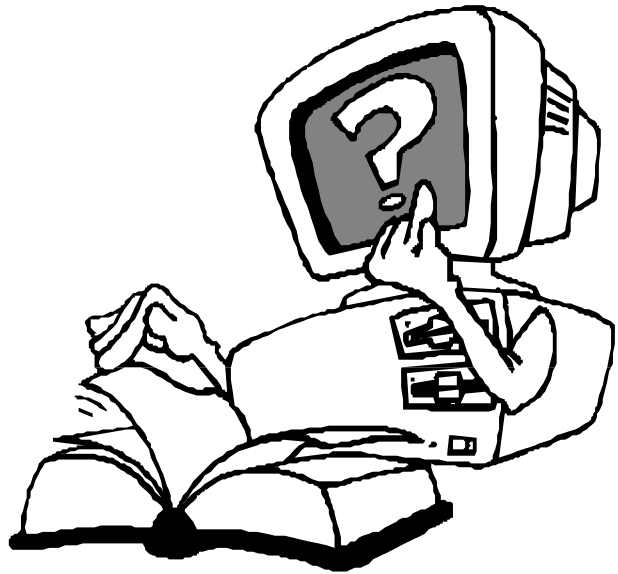
Getting Started

The first thing to remember is that a computer will only do what it is told to do. The adage "You only get out what you put in" is very apt when using computers.

A personal computer or PC is the equipment you see in front of you. Some of you will have a PC at home but others will be using one for the first time.


Basically your computer is a powerful tool for information manipulation, storage and retrieval and to connect to other computers.

Information Technology or IT as it is commonly known is the manipulation and management of information. Your computer will help you do this.



PC Startup and Shutdown

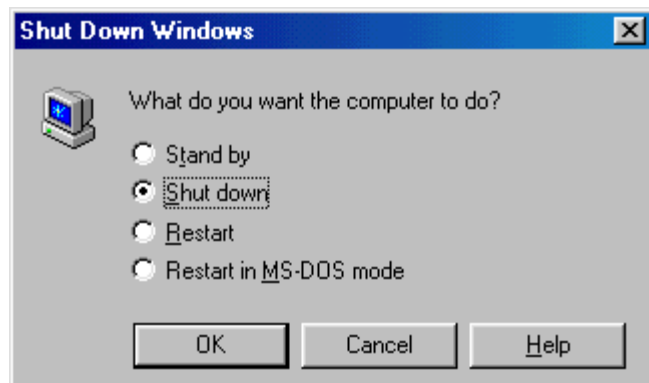
Startup

Ensure that all cables and connections are secure
Ensure that the PC has electrical power i.e. plugged in
Using the PC's power switch, turn the PC on - The power switch or button normally has the symbol  on or close to it.

Assuming no difficulties arise, your PC will start and load Windows.

Shutdown

Ensure that all work has been saved
Close down all applications fully
Click on the Start button
Select the item Shutdown...
Select the option "Shut down the computer?"
Click on the Yes button
Depending on the PC model, the PC will either :
Shutdown completely and power off, or
Display the message "It is now safe to turn off your computer", once displayed the computer can be switched off via the power switch.



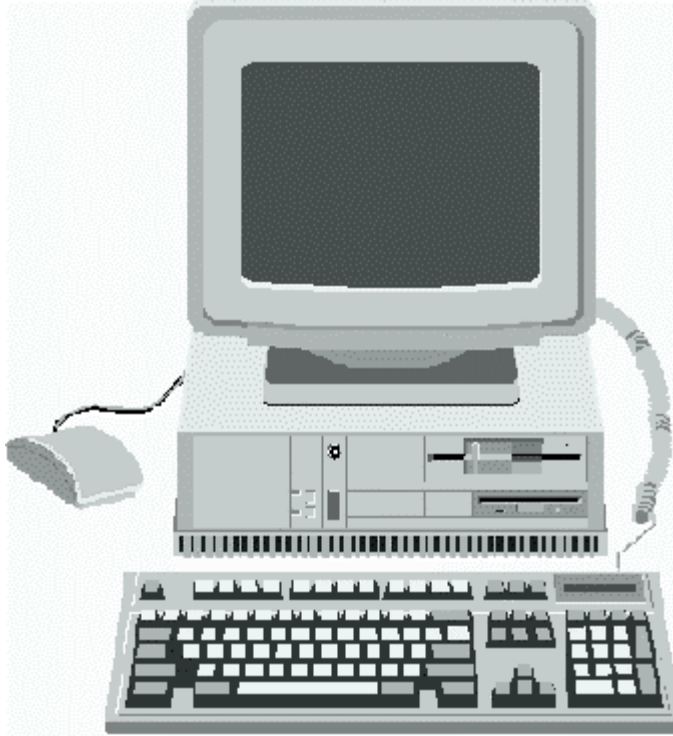
Restart

Following the procedure for Shutdown, at step 5, select the option "Restart the computer?" and click on the Yes button. The computer will be shutdown, and restarted automatically.

Hardware

Hardware is all the physical equipment you see in front of you. Hardware is the term used to describe all the real parts that make up a computer, for example the monitor and keyboard are all hardware.

There are four basic pieces of hardware – base unit, monitor, keyboard and mouse.



The Base Unit

This is where the CPU chip and main storage are, and where all processing is carried out. All peripheral hardware devices are connected to this unit via cables that plug into the ports in the back.

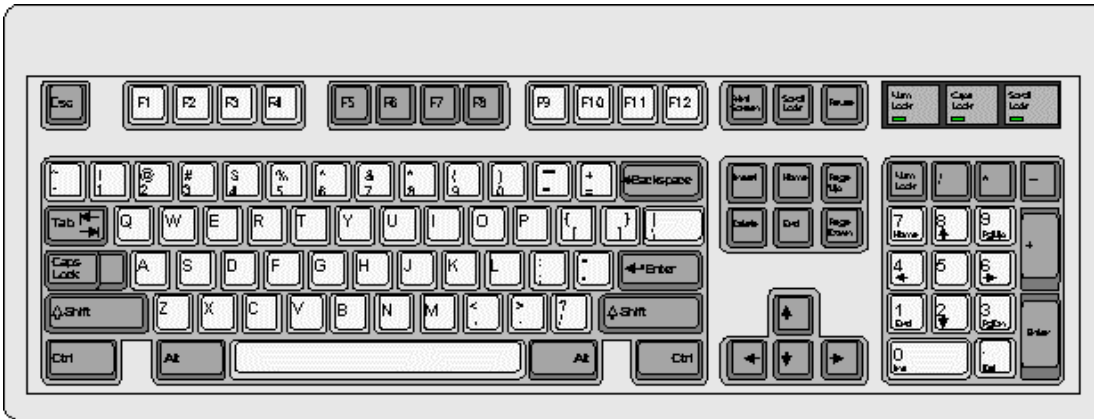
The Monitor

This is also known as the screen. It has its own power supply and is attached to the base unit by the video cable.



The Keyboard

The keyboard also plugs into the back of the base unit. The keys are set out in a similar format to a typewriter (QWERTY), but contains extra PC specific keys.



The Mouse

The mouse is the main visual input device in Microsoft Windows. The user can point and click instead of typing a series of commands. The mouse can have 2 or 3 buttons. The left button is used mostly to click and double-click, whereas the right is used for more advanced work. The mouse can be adapted to suit left-handed as well as right-handed users.



Other Hardware

The most common additional hardware is a printer. There are 3 main types of printer – ribbon, inkjet and laser. The inkjet printer is most common to the home user. Again, it is attached to the PC by a special cable (parallel).

A scanner is used in a similar manner to a photocopier to make a copy of a letter, picture, etc. The difference with this piece of hardware is that the copy is transferred to the PC instead of being printed on a page.

Multimedia PCs will include external speakers adding to the PCs sound capabilities. Most base units have a small speaker built in, but this is not powerful enough for advanced audio output. A sound card is inserted into the base unit and the speakers are plugged in to a port in this card.



A modem allows one PC to “talk” to another, and since the popularity of the Internet has increased, most PCs are now sold with an internal modem installed. This piece of hardware can be internal to the base unit or an external device. When plugged into your telephone socket, the modem uses the line to pass data through the telephone exchange via an Internet Service Provider.