

What is a computer?



Hi, I'm Tim.

Mike is looking for a job and wants to learn how to use a computer so he can apply for jobs online.

Since he is new to using a computer, he will need an introduction to the parts of a computer and how to use them.

Let's follow along with Mike as he learns about computers.



First we will go over the basics of a computer and its parts.

A computer is an electronic device that processes information.

With a computer you can create documents like resumes, look up information on the Internet, watch movies, play games, and much more.

The computer in this picture is called a desktop.

A desktop computer is meant to be used in one set location and not be moved around very much.



This computer is a laptop.

Whereas the desktop is meant to stay in one place, this kind of computer is easy to set up and use in different locations.



Tablets are another type of computer.

They sometimes can't do everything that a desktop or laptop could do but they are very easy to use and are the easiest to transport.



Many computers out there are known as a PC, which stands for Personal Computer. The computer on the right is a PC, and is made by companies like Dell, HP, etc.

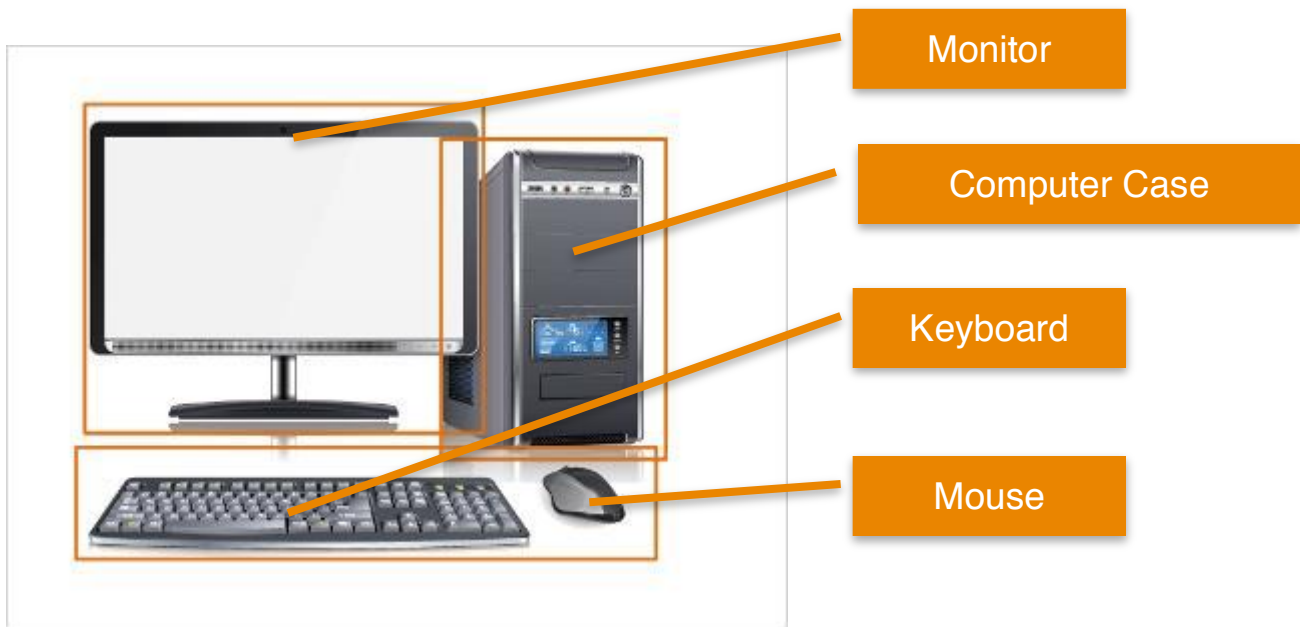
Another type of computer is a Mac, which stands for Macintosh and are made by apple.

The Mac is the computer on the left.

These two types of computers work a bit differently.

For some of the other classes on this site, you will choose between the Mac and PC for the lessons, but for this topic, they are very similar.

A desktop computer has different parts.

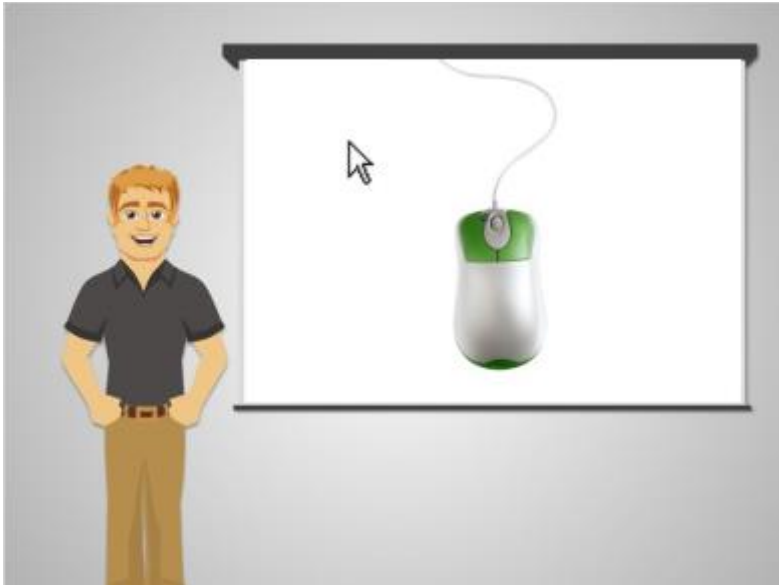


The computer case is what holds the main parts of the computer that make it work and process information.

The monitor is the part of the computer that shows the visual information such as the text and images.

The keyboard and mouse are the ways that you can communicate with the computer and tell it what to do, similar to how a remote is how you tell your tv what to do. You can learn more about these parts of the computer in the following lessons in this class.

The Computer Mouse



The mouse is one way to communicate with your computer.

The mouse is a tool to help you move around different parts of the computer screen.

As you move the mouse around, you will also move a corresponding pointer that appears on the computer screen.

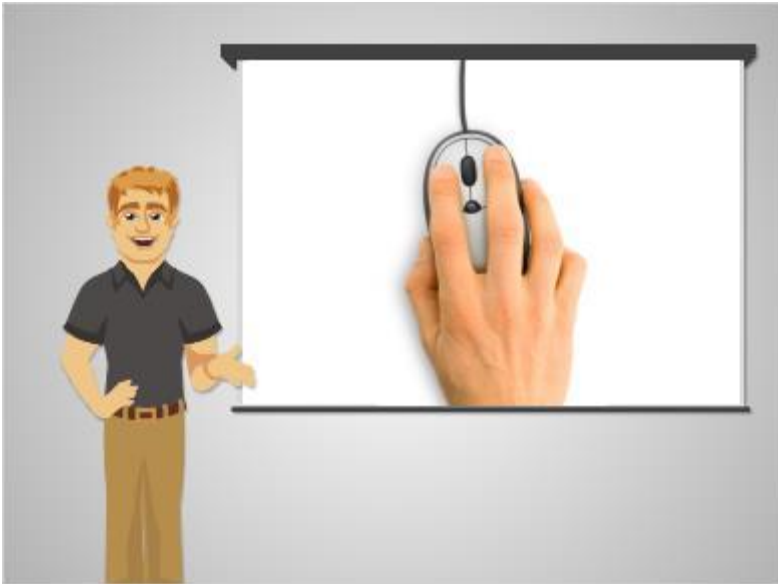
Once you have that pointer on something you want to do or select, you click a button on the mouse to tell the computer to do something.



A Trackpad or Touchpad is another type of mouse.

It is common on laptop computers and tracks the touch of your fingers to move the pointer.

To click on a touchpad, you just press down on it, rather than hitting a button like you do on a mouse.



In order to use a mouse effectively, it is best to hold the mouse as seen in the picture.

Mike places his whole hand on the mouse and places his index finger on the left button and his middle finger on the right button.

The rest of his fingers rest on the side of the mouse to help him move the mouse.

When you are moving the mouse, remember that you are just sliding the mouse around, not turning it.



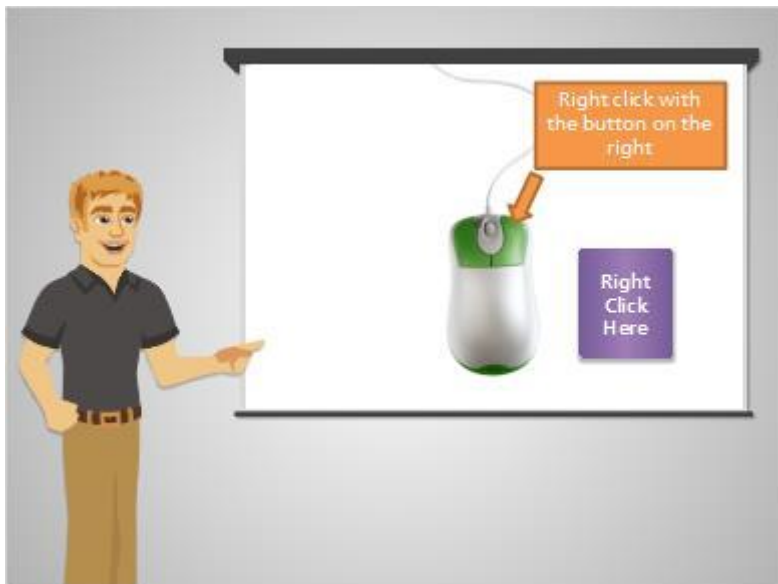
In the class, you will now practice moving the mouse.

Don't worry, I know this takes some getting used to but with practice you will get it!



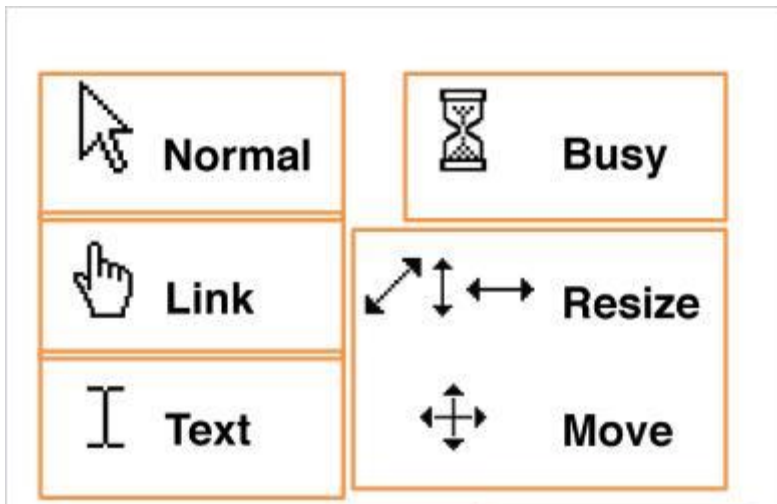
Most of the time, when you want to select something on a computer, you will move the mouse to get the pointer where you want and then press down on the button on the left of the mouse.

This is called left clicking.



The Button on the right is often used to show a menu of options.

Pressing down the right button is called right clicking.



The pointer of the mouse that appears on the computer screen appears differently based on what the mouse does over certain parts of the screen.

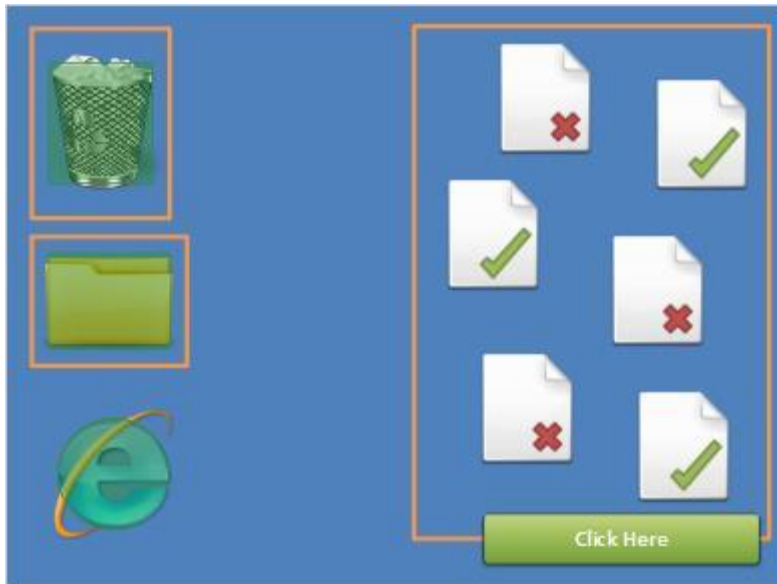
The pointer will look like the arrow labeled normal when it is just moving around the screen. The normal pointer is also what you will see when you are on a desktop icon or other similar items you can click on to open.

When the pointer is on a link to a website, a button, or other items you can also click on, it will appear as a hand.

The pointer will look like a capital I when it is over text you can click on.

When the computer is thinking, the hourglass will appear to tell you to wait.

Also, the pointer will appear as arrows when you are resizing or moving windows, something you can learn more about in the intro to PC or MAC class on this site.



Drag and Drop is another thing you can do with a mouse.

To move something from one area of a computer to another, you place your pointer above the item you want to move.

Then press down on the left button and don't let go.

Keep holding that button down while you move the pointer where you want the item to go.

Once you have the pointer and the item where you want it, lift your finger to stop holding down the left button.

In the practice session in the class, you see some documents on the desktop, along with a recycle bin and a folder.

For each document that has a green check mark, you would drag it to put it into the folder by moving the mouse pointer over the document, press down with the left mouse button and hold, then drag over to the Folder icon, and let go of the left button.



One way to get more practice with the mouse is to play the game solitaire on your computer.

PCs come with this game, because it's so helpful for learning to move the mouse, click, and drag and drop.

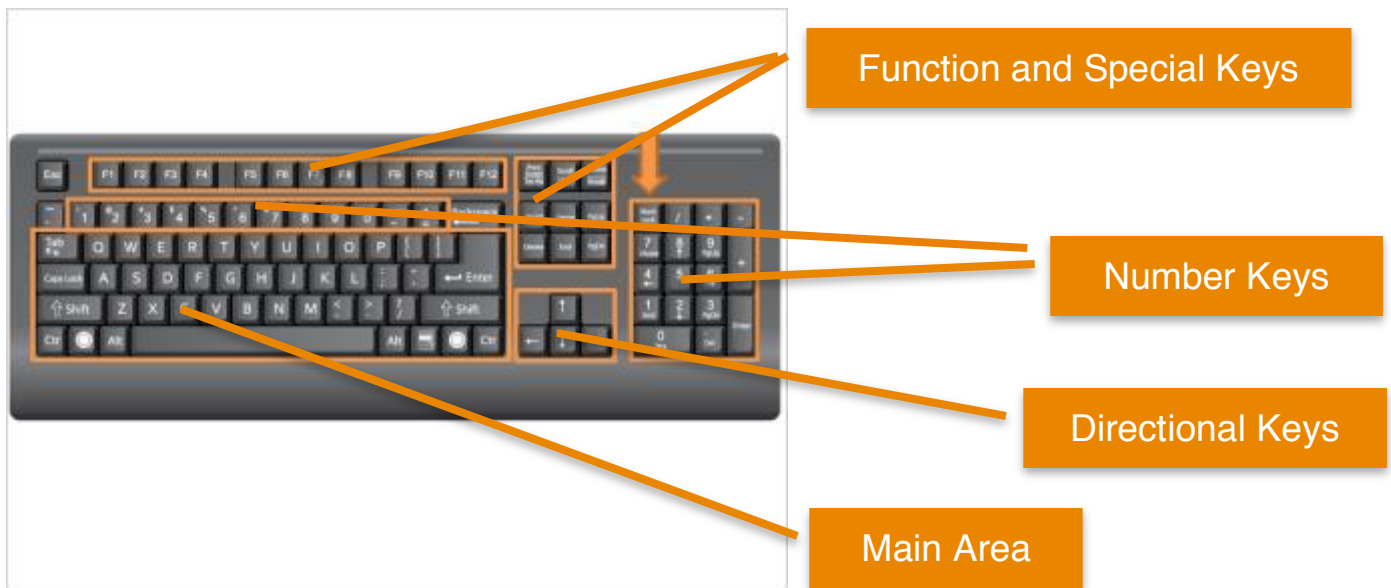
On Windows computers, you can find solitaire by going to Programs, then Games and you'll see it listed there.

The Keyboard



The keyboard is one of the main ways to communicate with the computer.

Mike will be using the keyboard to type in a lot of the information, to create his resume, for example.



There are sections of keys on the keyboard.

The main portion of the keyboard includes the keys you will use most often, such as the letter keys, the space bar, and more.

We will go over some of the specific keys later in this class.

This section has the directional keys, which help you move through a document and website with the arrows.

The number keys are located in two places on the keyboard.

They are in the main section above the letters and in the number pad on the right side of the keyboard. The area of number keys on the right can either be arrow keys or number keys depending on whether the number lock key is on or off.

At the top of the keyboard are the function keys and special keys, which have more specific uses.



Lets go over some the specific keys themselves.

Space Bar - This bar adds a blank space.

Shift - This key is used for either capitalizing a letter or to access the symbols above the number keys and punctuation keys. When you hold down the shift key, either the capital letter is typed or you are typing the icon that appears on the top left of the key.

Backspace (on some keyboards this is delete) - Use this button if you are typing something and you want to delete things.

Enter - Enter is the key that you press to submit something or go to the next step. For example, you would press enter to go to the next line in a word processing document or to go to a website after typing in the address.

Caps Lock - When you press this button, everything that you type will be CAPITALIZED. To turn it off and go back to typing lower case letter, just press it again.

Tab - This button is used if you want to indent in a word processing document or an email or you can use in to jump to the next field if you are filling out a form.



Notes:

Arrow Keys - These are navigation keys that can help you go up, down, left and right when you are working on a word processing document or when you want to scroll up and down a webpage.

Number Lock - Some keyboards have a number pad on the side, and if you turn on the Num Lock, the number pad will display numbers. If the Number Lock is not on, the number pad becomes a navigation pad like the arrow keys.



The class includes a practice session using the keyboard.

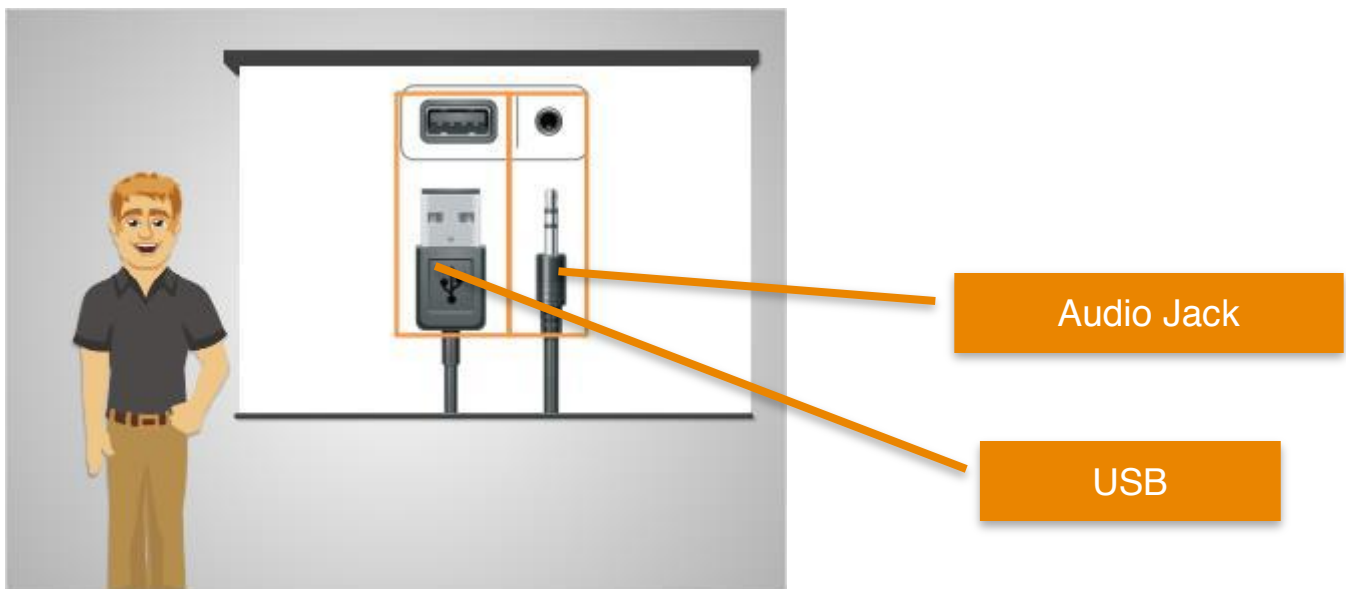
Computer Ports



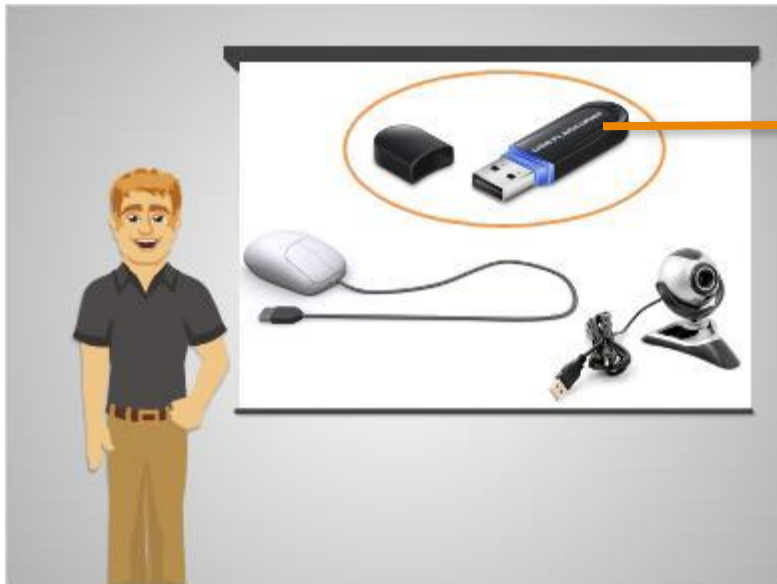
Things you use with a computer, such as a mouse or headphones, connect to the computer through plugs we call ports.



These ports are often found on the back of the computer box for desktop computers and on the sides of the keyboards for laptops.



Two of the most common types of ports you will find yourself using are the USB, seen on the left here, and the headphones jack, seen on the right of this image.



USB Drive

The USB is a common plug for things like a mouse and a web camera.

It is also used for a storage device called a USB drive.

These drives, as seen in the picture above are a great way to save your work if you are using a public or shared computer.

They can be plugged into the USB drive of the computer and then you can save documents, images, and other things to them.

Once you are done working, you can just take the drive with you and you will have all your work.

USB drives are also called flash drives and thumb drives.



Headphones can either use a USB port or sometimes they use the audio jack.