Computer Components and Peripherals

by Sophia Tutorial

☰ WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will look more closely at key external elements of a computer. You will understand how knowledge of these elements is critical to you being able to utilize these digital tools to solve problems. By learning more about these components, you will be improving your knowledge of technology.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. External Computer Hardware
2. Peripheral Devices

1. External Computer Hardware

Although there are many different types of computers available, on a typical computer you will always find several components. The common exterior components are: buttons, CD/DVD-ROM drive, vents, ports, and status lights.

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Buttons
Every computer, regardless of type, will have some way in which to turn the system on. The power button on a computer is what turns it on. Depending on the computer type, you may also see buttons that adjust sound and screen settings, as well as a button to restart the computer. You may also see a button allowing a user to eject a disk.

CD/DVD-ROM Drive
Many computers will have a minimum of one drive that can be used to insert, remove, or write (burn) CDs or DVDs. Some netbooks, such as Apple's Macbook Air, do not provide users with an installed CD/DVD drive.

Vents

As a computer is being used, it is generating heat. To dissipate the heat generated, most computers will contain a fan and at least one externally located vent that cools down the electronic components of the computer.

Ports

Computers provide ports for users to plug in cables and peripheral devices. The types of ports available depend on the age and type of the computer. Most ports are located on the back or front of a desktop PC, and on the side of a notebook PC. Typical ports include USB (keyboard, mouse, external drive), serial port, HDMI (monitor), modem or phone port, LAN or network port, and LPT port (printer).

Status Lights

Many computers will provide a status light(s) to let the user know that the computer is powered on. Some computers will provide indicator lights to let a user know that information is being written to a disk or incoming audio is clipping.

📄 TERMS TO KNOW

CD/DVD-ROM Drive

Drive bay used to insert CDs and DVDs.

Vent

Provides external area for internally generated heat to be dissipated.

Ports

Areas into which device cables can be connected to the system unit.

Status Lights

Provide user with feedback as to the current operation of the system.

2. Peripheral Devices

A peripheral device is a system-related device that is not a native part of the computer system. Peripheral devices are typically connected to the system via a port. Peripherals can be categorized as input, output, or storage devices. Depending on the type of computer, some common peripheral devices are keyboards, pointing devices, scanners, digital cameras, monitors, and printers.

Add video: Sophia course Unit 1, Challenge 2, Lesson 2-Peripheral Devices

Keyboard

All personal computers need components that allow the user to input data. Keyboards help the user enter text

or numbers as input for documents or files. Keyboards are available in different sizes. Some keyboards are designed for ergonomics while others are designed to be small.

Pointing Device
A pointing device is an input device that moves an on-screen pointer and gives users the ability to click to initialize applications or open files. The most common type of pointing device is a mouse. Users move the mouse across a flat surface and press a button to click. Another type of pointing device is a touchpad. A touchpad is a touch-sensitive pad that is built into a notebook computer and is designed to behave like a mouse. Finally, digital pens are yet another type of pointing device. They are generally used for tablets and act as a pen to select items on the screen and write or draw content when needed.

Scanner
Scanners allow users to input documents into a computer, either as images or as text. Most scanners have flat surfaces on which users place documents to be scanned. However, some scanners feed documents one page at a time. Most scanners utilize the USB interface.

Digital Camera
A digital camera is a device that captures a picture and converts it into digital information. Most digital cameras provide a local storage option until the picture can be transferred to a computer. Typically, a digital camera connects to a computer using the USB interface.

Monitor
A monitor is a device used to display video, images, or text. With a laptop computer, the monitor is built-in. With a desktop computer, the monitor comes as a separate component connected to the system unit via cable (typically VGA). Most monitors are used only for output, but some, such as touchscreen monitors, can be used for both input and output.

Printer
A printer is an output device that generates a hard copy of work created on a computer. All printers do the same basic thing: They print an image on a page. A printer's resolution, cost, speed, and overall ability vary.

Antonio is a real estate agent. In order to best serve his clients, he uses several digital tools. For instance, he keeps a tablet with him so that he can frequently access real estate apps, such as Zillow. He also uses a digital pen so that he can take notes from other realtors and his clients and quickly relay them as needed. Antonio also uses a scanner so that documents such as contracts and purchasing terms can be sent and stored online.

📄 TERMS TO KNOW

Keyboard
Device that provides text and/or numeric input into a computer system.

Pointing Device
Device that moves an on-screen pointer and provides buttons for input.

Mouse
A device that can be moved across a flat surface to move an on-screen pointer.

Touchpad
Touch-sensitive pad that behaves like a mouse and is built into laptop computers.

Scanner
Input device that allows users to input documents as images or text.

Digital Camera
Input device that captures a picture and converts it into digital information.

Monitor
Output device used to display video, images, and text.

Printer
Output device that generates a hard copy of work created on a computer.

📋 SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about **external computer hardware**. By examining these components and peripherals, you have more digital tools to use, strengthening your technology skill. Specifically, this lesson covered computer drives such as CD ROMS, explained what ports are used for and how they allow users to plug in cables and **peripheral devices** such as pointing devices, a computer mouse, and touchpad.

On to the next lesson!

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Drive bay used to insert CDs and DVDs.

Digital Camera

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Keyboard

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Monitor

Output device used to display video, images, and text.

Mouse

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