Understanding your computer

If you'd like to get started with computers but you're not sure where to begin, this activity will show you how and get you going.

What will I learn?
- What the main parts of a computer are
- How to turn your computer on and off
- How to use a mouse or a trackpad

welcome to

fastershire

Faster broadband for Herefordshire and Gloucestershire

How do I do it?

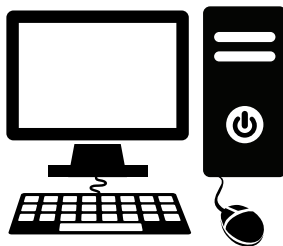Be safe! If you're using this hand–out on a shared or public computer, remember to:

• Log on using a 'strong password': one that includes upper and lower case letters, numbers, and isn't something that someone else could guess.

• Never share or write down your password.

• Log out when you're finished.

What are the main parts of a computer?

1. Take a look at the computer in front of you. Is it a desktop computer, with separate parts? Or is it a laptop, with everything built into one?

Desktop computer

Laptop

2. Find these parts on your computer:
   a. Monitor screen
   b. Keyboard
   c. Mouse
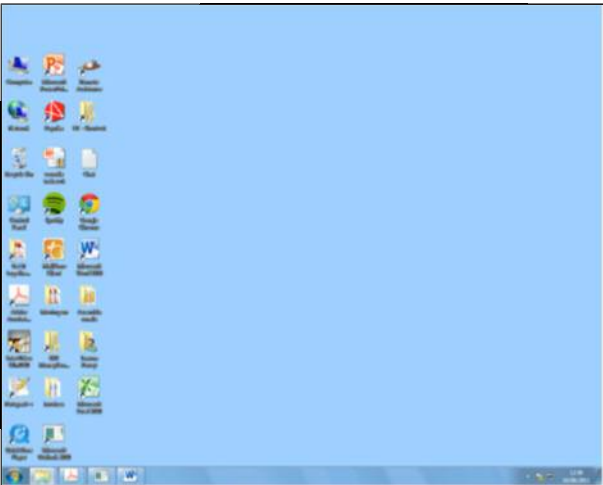   d. The power button: ⏻

a.
b.
c.
d.

How do I turn it on and off?

3. You turn the computer on by pressing the power button. If yours is not already on, press it now and wait while the computer starts up.

4. You can now see your computer's 'desktop'. The desktop is the screen that you see when you have not got any folders or files open.

- On your desktop are shortcuts you can click to go straight to files or programs.

- There is also a 'recycle bin', where you can put files you no longer want.

At the bottom left are buttons you can click to access programs and files. You can probably see:

- The Windows Start button.

- A button to launch Internet Explorer, a program that lets you browse the Internet.

- The Libraries button, which lets you find your documents, photos, music and more.

- Windows Media Player, a program that lets you play music and videos.

Windows desktop

5. Turning the computer off is a little different:

- Hold your mouse and move it so that the cursor arrow moves down to the Windows Start button in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

- Left click your mouse (press the left-hand button) so that the Windows Start menu pops up.

- Left click either on the power symbol or on the little arrow next to the 'lock' symbol and then on 'Shut down'.

How do I use a mouse?

6. Your computer's mouse lets you interact with what's on your computer screen:

   • A pointer on the screen, called the cursor, shows where you are.

   • The cursor changes shape depending on what it is hovering over.
   It can be an arrow: ▶ , a hand: ✋ , or if in a document, a line: I that shows where you are typing.

   • Slide your mouse around to move the cursor around on your screen. If you run out of space you can lift the mouse and reposition it on your desk or table.
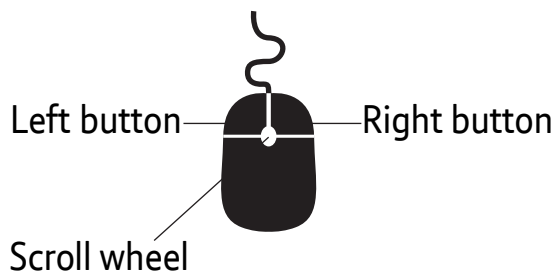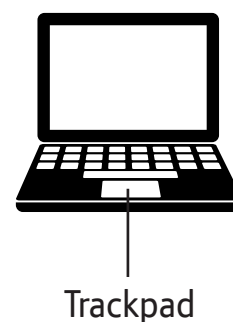
   • If your computer is busy the cursor changes to an hourglass: ⧗ or animated circle: 🌈

7. A computer mouse usually has two buttons or clickable areas on top, one on the left and one on the right. Pressing these is known as 'left clicking' or 'right clicking':

   • Left click once to select an option, like a web link.

   • Left click twice (a 'double click') to open a document.

   • Right click to make a mini-menu pop up. You can then select from the menu using the left button.

Left button — Right button

Scroll wheel

8. You can also drag things on-screen with your mouse: Move the cursor so it is over the recycle bin. 'Click and hold' the left mouse button (that is, press it down and keep it pressed). You can now drag your recycling bin to another part of the desktop. Release the mouse button. Now click and hold the recycling bin again, and drag it back to where it was.

9. Your mouse may also have a little wheel in the middle, called the scroll wheel. Moving this lets you scroll up and down a document or web page.

10. Laptops have a trackpad instead of a mouse (although you can also connect a mouse and use it instead):

    • Drag your finger around on the track pad to move your cursor on the screen.

    • Below the trackpad there is usually a left button and right button, which have the same functions as the buttons on a mouse.

    • Many trackpads also let you tap on them once or twice, for a single or double left click.

Trackpad

Quiz yourself

- Do you left click or right click the mouse to select something on screen, like a button or option?

- Which button on the screen allows you to access different ways to change the computer's settings, including turning it off?

Try your new skills

Practise what you have just learnt:

- Turn your computer off and on again.

- Use your mouse in different ways, using the left-hand and right-hand mouse buttons.

> ☆ **If you are using a public computer, remember to change the settings back to how they were.**

Write down any notes that will help you:

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My learning checklist

- ☐ I can turn a computer on using the power button.
- ☐ I can turn a computer off using the Windows Start menu.
- ☐ I can use a mouse or trackpad to move my cursor around the screen.
- ☐ I can use the left and right buttons on the mouse or trackpad.

Write down any notes that will help you:

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Top tips

- You can find lots more videos and help at the Microsoft Windows website.

Useful Links
You may want to use these links in your session:

Explore the parts of a computer:
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Parts-of-a-computer

Read about turning off your computer:
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/Turning-off-your-computer-properly

Find out more about how to use a mouse:
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Using-your-mouse