

03 What is a Computer?

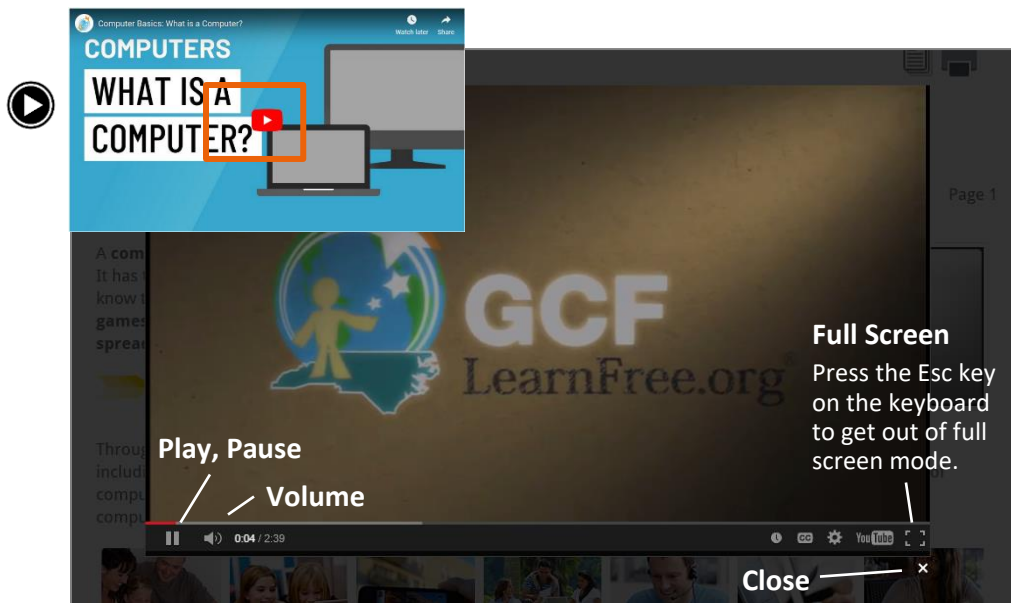
A computer is an **electronic device** that manipulates information, or data. It has the ability to store, retrieve, and process data. You may already know that **you can use a computer** to type documents, send email, play games, and browse the Web. You can also use it to edit or create spreadsheets, presentations, and even videos.

Play the video by clicking the link below:(Ctrl + click)

[What is a Computer?](#)

*Note: each video link in the course contains only one video.
Each video is only a couple of minutes long*

- Scroll down the webpage until you see the video.
Click the **Play icon** on the web page to play the video.
See the next page for a description of the video controls.



- Video Controls:**
- After you watch the video, **read** the rest of the section on the following pages and **answer the quiz questions**.

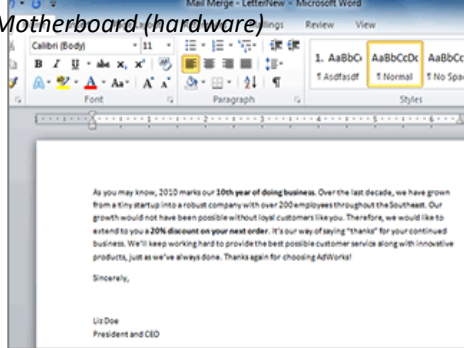
You may refer to the material when answering the questions on all the quizzes.

Hardware vs. software:

Hardware is any part of your computer that has a **physical structure**, such as the keyboard or mouse. It also includes all of the computer's internal parts, which you can see in the image to the right.



Motherboard (hardware)



Microsoft Word (software)

Software is any set of instructions that tells the hardware **what to do and how to do it**. Examples of software include web browsers, games, and word processors. To the right is an image of Microsoft Word, which is used to create letters and other documents.

Everything you do on your computer will rely on both hardware and software.

For example, right now you may be viewing this instruction sheet using Adobe Acrobat Reader (software) and using your **mouse** (hardware) to click from page to page. As you learn about different types of computers, ask yourself about the differences in their hardware.

What are the Different Types of Computers?



When most people hear the word **computer**, they think of a **personal computer** such as a **desktop** or **laptop**. However, computers come in many shapes and sizes, and they perform many different functions in our daily lives. When you withdraw cash from an ATM, scan groceries at the store, or use a calculator, you're using a type of computer.



Desktop Computers

Many people use **desktop computers** at work, home, and school. Desktop computers are designed to be placed on a desk, and they're typically made up of a few different parts, including the computer case, monitor, keyboard, and mouse.

Desktop Computers are **easy to upgrade, repair and expand (add new parts)** and are **priced lower** than laptops.



Laptop Computers

The second type of computer you may be familiar with is a **laptop computer**, commonly called a laptop.

Laptops give you the components of a desktop computer packed into a **portable unit** that you can take anywhere. They can run on battery or AC power.



Tablet Computers

Tablet computers—or **tablets**—are handheld computers that are even more portable than laptops. Instead of a keyboard and mouse, tablets use a **touch-sensitive screen** for typing and navigation. The **iPad** is an example of a tablet.



Servers

A **server** is a computer that serves up information to other computers on a network. For example, when you access the documents for this computer course, they are stored on the classroom server. Whenever you use the Internet, you're looking at web pages that are stored on a server. Many businesses also use **servers** to store and share documents and databases internally.

Other types of Computers

Many of today's electronics are basically **specialized computers**, though we don't always think of them that way. Here are a few common examples:



- **Smartphones:** Many cell phones can do a lot of things computers can do, such as browsing the Internet and playing games. These are often called **smartphones**.

- **Wearables:** Wearable technology is a general term for a group of devices, including **fitness trackers** and **smartwatches**, that are designed to be worn throughout the day. These devices are often called **wearables** for short.



- **Game consoles:** A **game console** is a specialized kind of computer that is used for playing **video games** on your TV.
- **TVs:** Many TVs now include **applications**—or **apps**—that let you access various types of online content. For example, you can stream video from the Internet directly onto your TV.

PCs and Macs

Personal computers come in two main styles: **PC** and **Mac**. Both are fully functional, but they have a different look and feel, and many people prefer one or the other.



This type of computer began with the original **IBM PC** that was introduced in 1981. Other companies began creating similar computers, which were called **IBM PC Compatible** (often shortened to **PC**). Today, this is the most common type of personal computer, and it typically includes the **Microsoft Windows** operating system.



The **Macintosh** computer was introduced in 1984, and it was the first widely sold personal computer with a graphical user interface, or **GUI** (pronounced **gooey**). All Macs are made by one company (**Apple**), and they almost always use the **Mac OS X** operating system.

Follow the same procedure for
MODULE 2 Computer Introduction, Sections 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.
Note: Section 7 is a video only – there is no quiz

- Let your instructor know when you are **ready for the MODULE 3 INTERNET.**