

08 Buttons + Ports on a Computer

Take a look at the front and back of your computer case and count the number of **buttons**, **ports**, and **slots** you see. Now look at your monitor and count any you find there. You probably counted at least 10, and maybe a lot more.

Each computer is different, so the buttons, ports, and sockets will **vary from computer to computer**. However, there are certain ones you can expect to find on most desktop computers. Learning how these ports are used will help whenever you need to connect something to your computer, such as a new printer, keyboard, or mouse.

Play the video by going to page 1 and clicking the link below: (Ctrl + click)

[Buttons + Ports on a Computer](#)

- Scroll down the webpage until you see the video
- After you watch the video, **read** the rest of the section on the following pages and **answer the quiz questions**.

Buttons + Ports on the Front of a Computer

EST Computer Lab Model

Power Button

The power button is used to power the computer on and off.

USB Ports

(Universal Serial Bus)

Most desktop computers have several USB ports. These can be used to connect almost any type of device, including mice, keyboards, printers, and digital cameras. They will often appear on the front and back of the computer. headsets without fumbling with the back of the computer



Optical Disc Drive

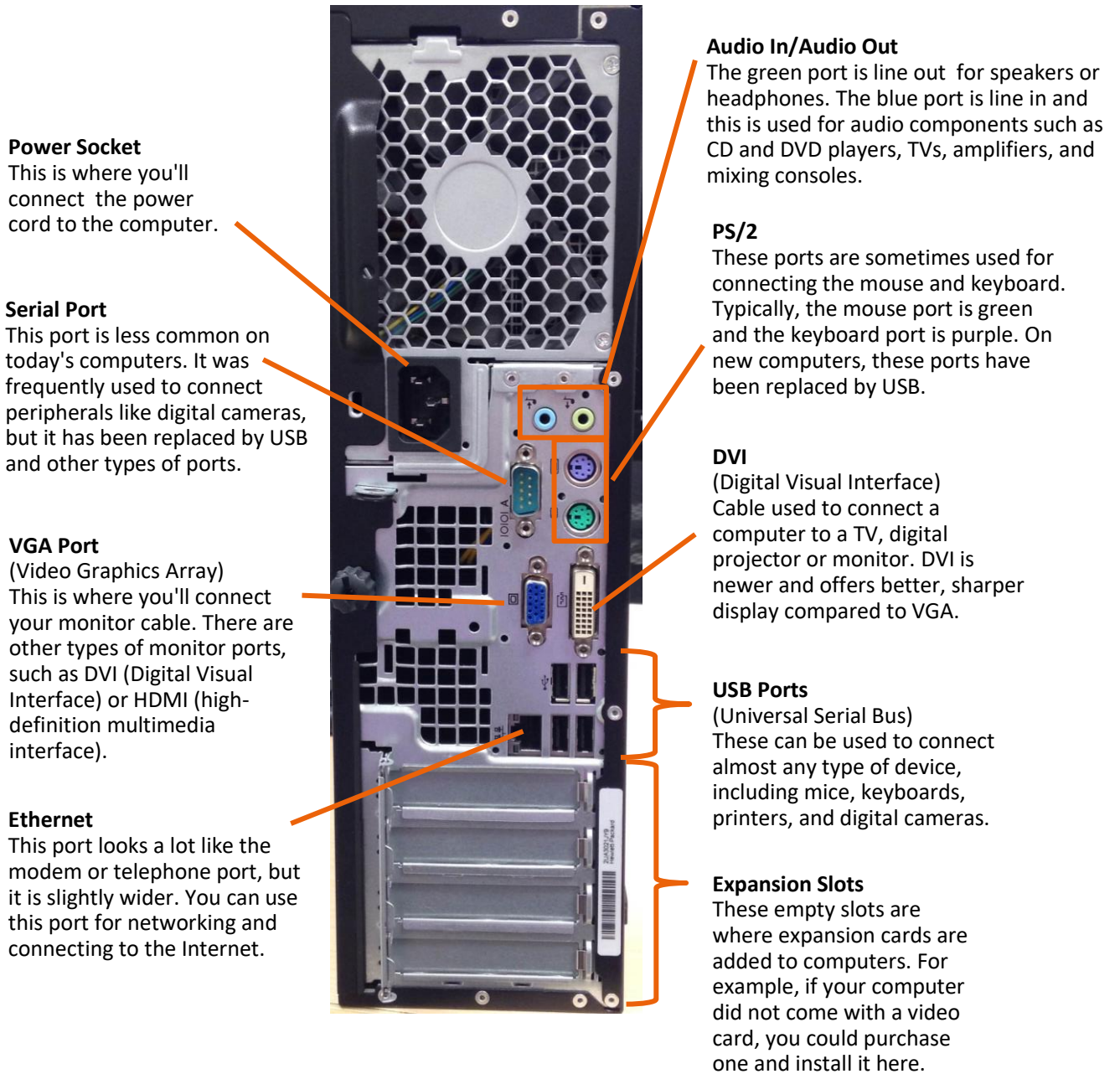
Often called a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive, this lets your computer read CDs and DVDs.

Audio In/Audio Out

Many computers include audio ports on the front of the computer case that allow you to easily connect audio out devices (speakers, headsets) and audio in devices (microphones) without fumbling with the back of the computer.

Ports on the Back of a Computer

EST Computer Lab Model



Power Socket
This is where you'll connect the power cord to the computer.

Serial Port
This port is less common on today's computers. It was frequently used to connect peripherals like digital cameras, but it has been replaced by USB and other types of ports.

VGA Port
(Video Graphics Array)
This is where you'll connect your monitor cable. There are other types of monitor ports, such as DVI (Digital Visual Interface) or HDMI (high-definition multimedia interface).

Ethernet
This port looks a lot like the modem or telephone port, but it is slightly wider. You can use this port for networking and connecting to the Internet.

Other types of ports
There are many other types of ports, such as FireWire, Thunderbolt, and HDMI. If your computer has ports you don't recognize, you should consult your manual for more information.

Audio In/Audio Out
The green port is line out for speakers or headphones. The blue port is line in and this is used for audio components such as CD and DVD players, TVs, amplifiers, and mixing consoles.

PS/2
These ports are sometimes used for connecting the mouse and keyboard. Typically, the mouse port is green and the keyboard port is purple. On new computers, these ports have been replaced by USB.

DVI
(Digital Visual Interface)
Cable used to connect a computer to a TV, digital projector or monitor. DVI is newer and offers better, sharper display compared to VGA.

USB Ports
(Universal Serial Bus)
These can be used to connect almost any type of device, including mice, keyboards, printers, and digital cameras.

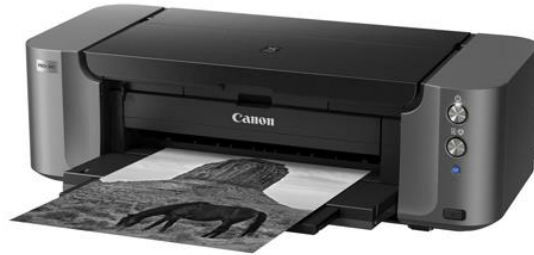
Expansion Slots
These empty slots are where expansion cards are added to computers. For example, if your computer did not come with a video card, you could purchase one and install it here.

Peripherals you can use with your computer

The most basic computer setup usually includes the **computer case**, **monitor**, **keyboard**, and **mouse**, but you can plug many different types of devices into the extra ports on your computer. These devices are called **peripherals**. Let's take a look at some of the most common ones.

Printers

A **printer** is used to **print** documents, photos, and anything else that appears on your screen. There are many types of printers, including **inkjet**, **laser**, and **photo** printers. There are even **all-in-one printers**, which can also scan and copy documents.



Scanners

A **scanner** allows you to **copy a physical image or document** and save it to your computer as a **digital (computer-readable)** image. Many scanners are included as part of an all-in-one printer, although you can also buy a separate **flatbed** or **handheld** scanner.

Speakers/Headphones

Speakers and **headphones** are output devices, which means they send information from the computer to the user—in this case, they allow you to **hear sound and music**. Depending on the model, they may connect to the **audio** port or the **USB** port. Some monitors also have built-in speakers.



Microphones

A **microphone** is a type of input device, or a device that receives information from a user. You can connect a microphone to **record sound** or **talk with someone else** over the Internet. Many laptop computers come with built-in microphones.

Web Cameras

A **web camera**—or **webcam**—is a type of input device that can record **videos** and take **pictures**. It can also transmit video over the Internet in **real time**, which allows for **video chat** or **video conferencing** with someone else. Many webcams also include a microphone for this reason.



Game controllers and Joysticks

A game controller is used to control computer games. There are many other types of controllers you can use, including **joysticks**, although you can also use your **mouse** and **keyboard** to control most games.

Digital Cameras

A **digital camera** lets you capture pictures and videos in a digital format. By connecting the camera to your computer's USB port, you can transfer the images from the camera to the computer.



Mobile phones, MP3 players, tablet computers, and other devices

Whenever you buy an electronic device, such as a mobile phone or MP3 player, check to see if it comes with a **USB cable**. If it does, this means you can most likely connect it to your computer.