

Your Hardware

Hardware is the physical components of your computer. These are the bits and pieces that make everything happen.

MONITOR---this looks like a television screen and works almost the same way. The difference is its special cord that plugs into the back of your computer and it takes signals from your computer then displays them on the screen.

SPEAKERS---these are much like your stereo speakers, but smaller. They play the music and sound you hear from your computer. Some speakers are built right into your monitor.

KEYBOARD---this looks like a typewriter keyboard and works just like one. Just push the letters or numbers you want and they will show up on the computer screen.

MOUSE---this is a hand-held device you roll around on a mouse pad. It has 2 or sometime 3 buttons, a small ball on the bottom of it, and a wire that plugs into the back of the computer. You'll use the mouse to move things around on the screen and to give commands to the computer. The optical mouse is a newer type that works off a red light instead of a ball. The optical mouse is far more reliable.

MODEM---this may be built into the back of your computer. You plug into a telephone jack on the wall where your phone would plug in. The other end you would plug into the modem, a communication device used to connect computers to the Internet by a telephone line.

NETWORK CARD---this may also be built into your computer. You will see a jack on the back that looks very similar to a regular telephone jack, but it will be a bit bigger. You will use this connection if you have a high-speed internet connection, such as a cable modem, or a telephone DSL modem

MICROPHONE---some microphones are built in your monitor. Others plug in the back of your computer. You use this to send voice email and record sounds. With the right program you can use the microphone to speak into your computer and it will do your typing for you.

FLOPPY DISK---(Which has become obsolete) this looks like a plastic coaster with a metal center. These are used to put information in your computer or to copy information from your computer. Possibly a program you would like to share with a friend. You should also use this to make a spare copy of important files.

FLOPPY DISK DRIVE---(Is no longer installed in the new computers) this is a small slot on the front of your computer with an eject button. This is where you insert a floppy disk.

CD-ROM---this looks no different than the CD's you use to play music. The difference is this is used to store programs.

CD-ROM DRIVE---this is where you put the CD -Rom you want to use. It's a little tray that comes out when you push the eject button. The CD -Rom drive is usually just below the disk drive on the front of your computer.

SOFTWARE---this is a fancy name for "program" which can be on a floppy disk or a CD Rom. You will already have some programs installed in your computer.

PROGRAMS---a sequence of instructions that a computer can interpret and perform. There are programs that enable you to do just about anything, from designing a birthday card to doing your income tax.

HARD DRIVE---this is located inside your computer. It stores all the information needed to run your computer. The Hard Drive is also known as the "(C:)."