COMPUTER BASICS - BUTTONS AND PORTS ON A COMPUTER

OPERATION OF DEVICES > 0.4 OPERATING PERIPHERAL DEVICES

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
Facilitators	N/A	Level 1	Background information, Video clip	Protected by United States and international copyright and trademark laws	English, French

An overview of the buttons and ports on a computer, including information regarding various peripheral devices.

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General Objective	Knowledge acquisition
Preparation time for facilitator	less than 1 hour
Competence area	0 - Operation of devices
Name of author	GCFGlobal.org
Resource originally created in	English

WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

1 Introduction

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, like a new printer, keyboard, or mouse.

Watch the video below to learn about the buttons, ports, and slots on a desktop computer.

2 Front of a computer case

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Optical Disc Drive

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

Power Button

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

Audio In/Audio Out

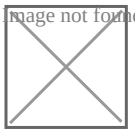
Many computers include **audio ports** on the front of the computer case that allow you to easily connect **speakers**, **microphones**, and **headsets** without fumbling with the back of the computer.

USB (Universal Serial Bus) Port

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.

3 Back of a computer case

The back of a computer case has **connection ports** that are made to fit **specific devices**. The placement will vary from computer to computer, and many companies have their own special connectors for specific devices. Some of the ports may be **color coded** to help you determine which port is used with a particular device.



Power Socket

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

Audio In/Audio Out

Almost every computer has two or more **audio ports** where you can connect various devices, including speakers, microphones, and headsets.

Ethernet Port

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.

USB Ports

On most desktop computers, most of the **USB ports** are on the back of the computer case. Generally, you'll want to connect your mouse and keyboard to these ports and keep the front USB ports free so they can be used for digital cameras and other devices.

Monitor Port

This is where you'll connect your **monitor cable**. In this example, the computer has both a DisplayPort and a VGA port. Other computers may have other types of monitor ports, such as DVI (digital visual interface) or HDMI (high-definition multimedia interface).

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.

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.

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.

Parallel Port

This is an older port that is less common on new computers. Like the serial port, it has now been replaced by USB.

4 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.

5 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.

a canon printer

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- **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.
  computer speakers

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- **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.
  a webcam

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- **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.