GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR FIRST COMPUTER

OPERATION OF DEVICES > 0.1 OPERATING COMPUTERS

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
Facilitators	N/A	Level 0	Background information	Protected by United States and international copyright and trademark laws	English, French

This resource contains information for first time users about how to start their computer.

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General Objective	Skillset building
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

A computer is more than just another household appliance. The vast amount of information and possibilities can be overwhelming. But you can accomplish a lot with a computer, and using one can be a good experience. Let's walk through getting started with your first computer.

Turning on a computer for the first time can be different from one computer to the next. Your experience could be different from this lesson. It's OK to ask someone for help.

2 Turning on a computer

The very first step is to turn on the computer. Make sure all the cables are plugged in correctly, and locate the power button. It's in a different place on every computer, but it will have the universal power button symbol (shown below).

Image of a power button icon

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Once turned on, your computer takes time before it's ready to use. You may see a few different displays flash on the screen. This process is called **booting up**, and it can take anywhere from 15 seconds to several minutes.

Once the computer has **booted up**, it may be ready to use, or it may require you to **log in**. This means identifying yourself by typing your user name or selecting your profile, then typing your password. If you've never logged in to your computer before, you may need to create an account.

A login screen on a laptop computer

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3 The keyboard and mouse

You interact with a computer mainly by using the **keyboard** and **mouse,** or a **trackpad** on laptops. Learning to use these devices is essential to learning to use a computer. Most people find it comfortable to place the keyboard on the desk directly in front of them and the mouse to one side of the keyboard.

Hands on keyboard positioned in front of a computer

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The mouse controls the **pointer** on the screen. Whenever you move the mouse across the desk, the pointer will move in a similar manner. A mouse usually has two buttons, which are referred to as the left button and the right button. You will often interact with the computer by moving the mouse pointer over something on the computer screen, then clicking one of the buttons.

Hand on mouse controlling the pointer on the screen

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On laptops, you can use the **trackpad**, located below the keyboard, instead of a mouse. Simply drag your finger across the trackpad to move the **pointer** on the screen. Some trackpads do not have buttons, so you'll either press or tap the trackpad to click.

Hand clicking the trackpad

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The keyboard allows you to type letters, numbers, and words into the computer. Whenever you see a flashing vertical line—called the **cursor**—you can start typing.

A blinking cursor in a browser□s address bar

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Note that the **mouse pointer** is also called a **cursor**, but it is shaped differently. The **keyboard cursor** is also called the **insertion point**.

4 Using a computer

The main screen you'll start from is the **desktop**. This is sort of like a main menu or a table of contents. From here, you can access the programs and features you need to use your computer.

Icons are used to represent the different files, applications, and commands on your computer. An icon is a small image that's intended to give you an idea at a glance of what it represents, like a logo. Double-clicking an icon on the desktop will open that application or file.

Icons on a desktop

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A **button** is a command that performs a specific function within an application. The most commonly used commands in a program will be represented by buttons.

Mouse cursor over a button

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Menus are organized collections of commands and shortcuts. Click a **menu** to open it and display the commands and shortcuts within. Then click an item in the **menu** to execute it.

Mouse cursor over a menu

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When you open an application or folder, it is displayed in its own **window**. A **window** is a contained area—like a picture within a picture—with its own menus and buttons specific to that program.

You can rearrange multiple **windows** on the desktop and switch between them.

Multiple windows over a desktop

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