

Computer Basics: Keyboard & Mouse

I. About this class

Being able to use a keyboard and mouse is an important part of using a desktop computer or a laptop. In this class, we will show you how to hold and operate a mouse, the overall layout of a keyboard, as well as the functions of certain keys. We will also practice using the mouse and typing on the keyboard.

II. Definition of terms

A. Key terms

Keyboard—a panel of keys used for putting information including letters, words, and numbers into your computer.

Mouse—is a hand-operated pointing device. When you move the mouse on your desk, the mouse pointer on the screen mimics its movement. A computer mouse can be wired (with a cord attached and plugged in via a USB port) or wireless (which connects to the computer via Bluetooth or USB port.) Laptops have touch pads, but you can also use a wired or wireless mouse if you prefer.

Mouse pad—a thin flat pad (as of rubber) on which a computer mouse is used.

B. Other terms to know

Monitor—This is where you see the text and graphics you are working with or the thing you stare at while you use the computer (it looks a little like a TV). On a laptop, the monitor is attached and usually flips up.



On/Off Switch is used to turn the computer on and off. The on/off switch, also known as the power button, is located on different areas depending on the computer or if you are using a laptop, but it will look something like the symbol at left.

Hardware—The physical parts of the computer. In other words, anything you can touch and see, even before you turn on the computer.

Software—Generally refers to any type of computer program. Used by computers to operate and fulfill specific tasks. Similar to apps on a mobile phone.

C. Storage

Hard Drive—device that stores large amounts of information for a long time. It is located within the computer. If a computer has one hard drive, it is called drive C. It stores the operating system, programs, and documents.

Bytes and Gigabytes—Byte is an abbreviation for *binary term*, a unit of [storage](#) capable of holding a single [character](#). Large amounts of [memory](#) are indicated in terms of [kilobytes](#) (1,024 [bytes](#)), [megabytes](#) (1,048,576 bytes), and [gigabytes](#) (1,073,741,824 bytes).

D. Storage devices

Flash Drive—A small and portable storage device that connects to computers and other devices. It is also known as a Jump Drive, Pocket Drive, Pen Drive, Thumb Drive, or USB Drive.



Portable Hard Drive is a portable storage device that can be attached to a computer through a USB. They typically have high storage capacities and are often used to back up computers.

Cloud Storage—files are stored digitally over the internet rather than a physical source.

Cell phones—Can be used as a storage device for files, photos, and videos.

III. Parts of the Windows Desktop

Operating system—The software that runs your hardware and your programs behind the scenes.

Windows—The most widely used operating system for PCs. It provides a common way of using programs. Most PCs come with it already installed. Currently, the most common version of Windows is called Windows 10. There are also older versions of Windows that are still being used. For instance, at home you may have Windows 7 or another version of the operating system.

Desktop—This eventually appears when you first turn on the computer. It is the space that contains the icons as well as the “empty space” left over.

Icons—Pictures that represent programs, files, or folders usually found on the desktop. You double-click these to open them.

Taskbar—Strip of buttons at the bottom of the Windows desktop. Each button relates to a window or task on the screen.

IV. Mouse Basics

One of the most difficult things to learn when first beginning to use a computer is how to use the mouse. It takes coordination, precision, and patience. Fortunately, the more you practice, the easier it will become.

A. Parts of a Mouse

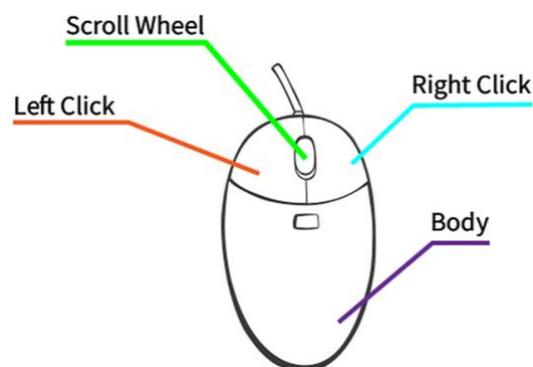
Pointer/Cursor—When you move the mouse around, you will see a symbol that moves around on the computer’s monitor screen that changes depending on what you’re pointing to. You’ll see an arrow or hand when there’s a choice to be made, an “I” beam when you’re in an area where text can be inserted, a cross of arrows when you can move something, and more.



Left click button—Use single click to select items or move the cursor. Use **double click**, meaning press the left click button twice in quick succession, to select a file, program, or function.

Right click button—Use single click to display a context or a shortcut menu.

Scroll wheel—Use to scroll up and down a computer window.



B. How to Hold Your Mouse

- Place your palm onto the body of the mouse and let your fingers fall naturally.
- Your index finger will fall on the left click button and your middle finger will fall on the right click button.

Note: You can adjust the mouse for left-handed use. Windows users can use the **Type here to search** box located on the bottom far right of the screen. In the search box type in **Mouse** and left click on **Mouse settings**. You can change the primary button on your mouse from left to right.



C. Mouse Practice

We are going to practice using the mouse. In this exercise you will practice moving a mouse across the screen, double-clicking, using a scroll bar, and clicking and dragging the mouse.



- Using the left click button, click on the Google Chrome icon located on the task bar at the bottom on your screen.
- Left click in the address bar, located at the top of the page, type in “*mousing around welcome*”, and hit Enter on your keyboard.
- Left click on the *Mousing Around: Welcome* link and start the tutorial.
- Follow the instructions on the screen.
Let’s do a few together.



Note: The direct web address for Mousing Around: Welcome is <https://pbc.gov/mouserercise/intro.htm>.

Have some fun while getting additional mouse practice. Here are some games that help you practice your mouse skills:

Online jigsaw puzzles <http://www.jigzone.com>
 <http://www.jigsawexplorer.com>

Crossword puzzles <http://www.bestcrosswords.com>
 <http://www.boatloadpuzzles.com>

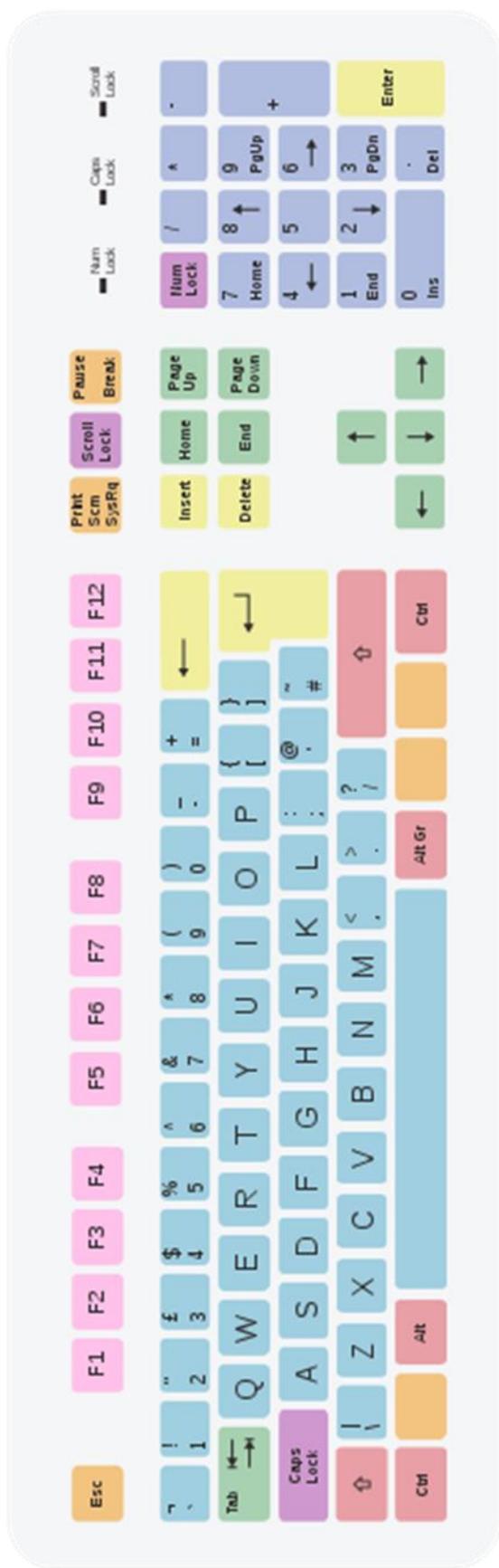
Solitaire <https://worldofsolitaire.com>

V. Keyboard Basics

A keyboard is for putting information including letters, words, and numbers into your computer. Not all keyboards look the same, they can differ in size and layout. The most common kind of keyboard is the “QWERTY” keyboard. QWERTY describes the first few letters on the top row on the keyboard.

A. Keys

Let’s go over the keys on a keyboard. As we go along, locate the keys on the diagram on the next page or on the keyboard in front of you.



- Character keys
- Modifier keys
- Enter and editing keys
- System keys
- Navigation keys
- Function keys
- Numeric keypad
- Lock keys

ESC (ESCAPE) KEY when used will interrupt or cancel the current process or running program.

CHARACTER KEYS make up the core section of a keyboard, which can be used to type letters and other characters. Typically, there are three rows of keys for typing letters and punctuation, an upper row for typing digits and special symbols, and the Space bar on the bottom row.

SPACE BAR is a long bar at the bottom of a keyboard that makes a space between words.

TAB moves the cursor over a set number of spaces.

CAPS LOCK allows users to generate letters in uppercase once activated. To activate the key, the user has to press it once and the button locks on the Caps Lock feature, making all subsequent typed letters the capital form. The user needs only to press it again to turn the Caps Lock feature off.

ENTER might be marked as a “Return” key or with only a large arrow. It’s used to go down to a new line when typing text. It also can be pressed any time a button or choice is highlighted (within a software program or on the Internet) to tell the computer you select that particular item.

BACKSPACE removes characters to the left of the cursor.

DELETE removes text characters to the right of the cursor. This key will also remove any highlighted text, image, or group of images.

FORWARD SLASH is a slash (/), especially as used in website addresses and computer commands.

BACK SLASH a backward-sloping diagonal line (\), used as part of names for files and folders to indicate where they are stored.

ARROW KEYS will move you anywhere within a document without making any changes.

HOME

- If you are in a text file that is *not editable*, like in PDF or webpage, the Home button will take you to the top of the document or page.
- If you are in an *editable* text file or page, the Home button will take the cursor to the **start** of the same line.

END

- If you are in a text file that is *not editable*, like in PDF or webpage, the Home button will take you to the bottom of the document or page.
- If you are in an *editable* text file or page, the Home button will take the cursor to the **end** of the same line.

PAGEUP and DOWN are primarily used to scroll up and down in documents.

INSERT is primarily used to switch between the two text-entering [modes](#) on a [computer](#).

- **Overtyping mode**, in which the [cursor](#), when typing, overwrites any text that is present in the current location.
- **Insert mode**, where the cursor inserts a [character](#) at its current position, forcing all characters past it one position further.

DELETE when struck, discards the text ahead of the cursor's position.

NUMLOCK when switched on, enables the user to use the numeric keys on the keyboard, and when switched off, enables the use of other functionalities associated with the keys.

MODIFIER KEY is a special key on a [computer keyboard](#) that temporarily modifies the normal action of another key when pressed together. Examples of a modifier key includes Ctrl, Shift, and Alt.

CONTROL KEY (Ctrl) AND ALT KEY are keys on a keyboard that when pressed at the same time as another key gives the second key an alternative function. For example, holding CTRL+ALT+DELETE together simultaneously may restart the computer; in some operating systems it brings up a task manager that allows you to close specific programs.

SHIFT KEY allows users to type a single [capital letter](#) and change the top number keys to a [symbol](#). For example, pressing and holding **Shift** while pressing "A" generates a capital "A" and pressing **Shift** and the number "1" creates an [exclamation mark](#).

FUNCTION KEYS are usually located at the top of the keyboard and are used to perform a specific task that may differ from program to program. For example, if you are using Microsoft Word, F7 will start spell check tool or open the *Layers* panel in Adobe Photoshop.

B. [Keyboard Shortcuts](#)

Keyboard shortcuts are combinations of two or more keys that can be used to execute certain tasks which would usually require a mouse click. They provide a quick way to implement certain tasks. For example,

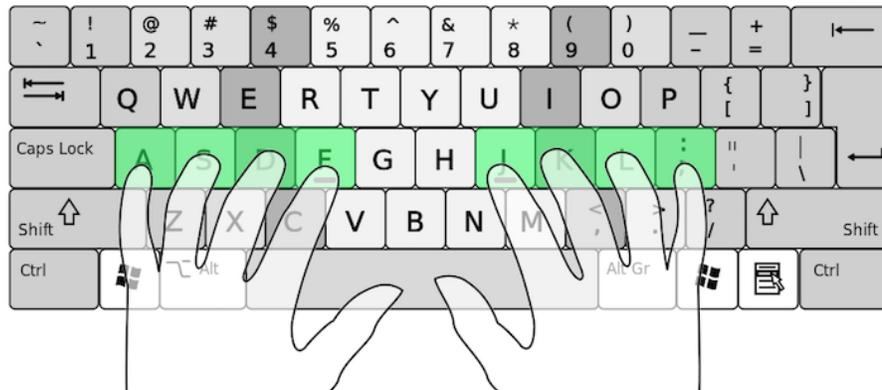
CTRL + C is the shortcut key used to copy highlighted text or other objects.

CTRL + X is the shortcut key used to cut highlighted text or other objects.

CTRL + V is the shortcut key used to paste the copied or cut text or objects.

C. How to Position Hands on a Keyboard

The basic hand placement on a keyboard takes some practice.



- Rest both thumbs on the space bar.
- Starting with the little finger of your left hand on the letter “A”. The other three fingers will rest on the next three letters “S” “D” and “F”.
- Skip “G” and “H” and put the index finger of your right hand on the “J” key. The other three fingers of your right hand will rest on “K” “L” and the semi-colon key.

Note: Hunting and pecking is good, too. Use whatever is most comfortable to you!

VI. Practice Typing

A. Typing Tutorial

- In Google Chrome’s address bar, type “typing.com.”
- Under Students, left click on “Typing Lessons”.
- You’ll notice the different lessons under “Getting Started.” The first lesson is for the keys J, F, and Space. Left click on “Start”.

Once you are done with that lesson, move on to the next. We may not be able to get through all of the lessons in class, but practice what you can.

B. Free Resources for Practicing Typing

<https://www.typingclub.com/>

<https://www.typing.com>

Typing test: typingtest.com

Universal Class Typing and Keyboard 101 course, offered through Henrico County Public Library:

<https://henricountyva.universalclass.com/register.htm>

*Note: To access all library databases, visit henricolibrary.org, click on **Research and Learning**, and then **Explore All Databases**. Also, you will need your library card number to access the databases outside the library.*