

M1206 Unit 2 Computer essentials

- 1 What devices do you use?
- 2 How often do you use them? What do you use them for?
- 3 What are the main components and features (the configuration) of your computer system? (laptop-tablet-smartphone)
- 4 What input, output and storage devices do you use?

Reading

What is a computer?

Computers are electronic machines which can accept data in a certain form, process the data and give the results of the processing in a specified format as information.

Three basic steps are involved in the process: *First*, data is fed into the computer's memory. *Then*, when the program is run, the computer performs a set of instructions and processes the data. *Finally*, we can see the results (the output) on the screen or in printed form.

A computer system consists of two parts: hardware and software. **Hardware** is any electronic or mechanical part you can see or touch. Software is a set of instructions called a program which tells the computer what to do. A standard computer system consists of three main sections: the Central Processing Unit (CPU), the main memory and the peripherals.

Perhaps the most influential component is the **Central Processing Unit**. Its function is to execute program instructions and coordinate the activities of all the other units. In a way, it is the 'brain' of the computer. The **main memory** holds the instructions and data which are currently being processed by the CPU. The **peripherals** are the physical units attached to the computer. They include storage devices and input/output devices.

Storage devices provide a permanent storage of both data and programs. **Input devices** enable data to go into the computer's memory. The most common input devices are the **mouse** and the **keyboard**. **Output devices** enable us to extract the finished product from the system. For example, the computer shows the output on the **monitor** or prints the results onto paper by means of a **printer**.

On the rear panel of the computer there are several ports into which we can plug a wide range of peripherals. They allow communication between the computer and the devices.

Match these words from the text (1-9) with the correct meanings (a-i).

1 software	a the brain of the computer
2 peripherals	b physical parts that make up a computer system
3 main memory	d the information which is presented to the computer
4 hard drive (also known as hard disk)	e programs which can be used on a particular computer system
5 hardware	e results produced by a computer
6 input	f input devices attached to the CPU
7 ports	g section that holds programs and data while they are executed or processed
8 output	Magnetic device used to store information
9 central processing unit (CPU)	h magnetic device used to store information sockets into which an external device may be connected