Vocabulary List

central processing unit (CPU)	microprocessor chip
cloud storage	monitor, *n*
configuration, *n*	motherboard, *n*
data, *n pl*	mouse, *n*
data storage	peripherals, *n pl*
dedicated memory	process, *v*
display, *n*, *v*	program, *n*, *v*
flash drive	Random Access Memory (RAM)
graphic(s) processor	Read Only Memory (ROM)
hard disk	software, *n*
hardware, *n*	speaker, *n*
input/output device	storage device
keyboard, *n*	system unit
main memory	three-dimensional, *adj*

B. Reading

What Is a Computer System?

by Santiago Remacha Esteras

A computer system consists of two parts: the software and the hardware. The software is the information in the form of data and program instructions. The hardware components are the electronic and mechanical parts of the system. The basic structure of a computer system is made up of three main hardware sections: the Central Processing Unit (CPU), the main memory, and the peripherals.

The CPU is a microprocessor chip which executes program instructions and coordinates the activities of all the other components. In a way, it is the "brain" of the computer. Larger computers may have two or more CPUs, in which case they are simply called "processors" because each is no longer a "central" unit. Nowadays, personal computers contain specialized graphic processors, with dedicated memory, for handling the computations needed to display complex graphics, such as for three-dimensional simulations and games.

The main memory holds the instructions and data which are currently being processed by the CPU. The internal memory of a microcomputer is usually composed of two sections: RAM (Random Access Memory) and ROM (Read Only Memory).

The peripherals are the physical units attached to the computer. They include input/output devices as well as storage devices. Input devices enable us to present information to the computer; for example, the keyboard and the mouse. Output devices allow us to extract the results from the computer; for example, we can see the output on the monitor or in printed form. Auxiliary data storage is usually provided by an internal hard disk and may be supplemented by other media such as flash drives or cloud storage services.

These are the main physical units of a computer system, generally known as the configuration.

Exercise 3. *Ordering*

Put the lines in this telephone conversation in the right order and then choose a title for it. The first line has been marked for you as an example.

Conversation title:_____

  ___ **B:** Yes, it's Asus Z97-K.

  ___ **B:** That sounds alright. How much is it?

  ___ **B:** One module – 4 gigabytes.

  ___ **B:** Um, I'm afraid, I can't afford it for $81. Have you got anything cheaper?

  ___ **A:** Uh-huh. And how much memory have you got at the moment?

  ___ **A:** Well, we have 4GB RAM for only $44.99, but it is not currently in stock.

  _1_ **A:** *PU Computer Parts.* Can I help you?

  ___ **A:** Well, there are different memory modules available. Do you know the model of your motherboard?

  ___ **A:** $80.99.Would you like to order it now?

  ___ **A:** I see… Then, perhaps, you'd be interested in this one – Kingston DDR3 8GB.

  ___ **B:** What a shame… OK, thank you. Good-bye.

  ___ **B:** Yes. I bought one of your machines a month ago and now it looks as though I need more memory.

Exercise 4. Short Response

*As you know there are three types of memory used by computers: **RAM, ROM,** and **storage memory**. Look through this list of features and decide which type of memory they refer to.*

1. Any section of the main memory can be read with equal speed and ease.
2. It is available in magnetic, optical and flash drives.
3. A certain amount of this memory can be designated as "cache" memory to store information in applications that are used very frequently.
4. It stores basic operating instructions, needed by the CPU to function correctly.
5. Memory which can be expanded by adding memory modules of 2GB, 4 GB, 8GB or other major increments.
6. Information is permanent and cannot be deleted.
7. You can save and store your documents and applications.

D. Role Play

Student A   You want to buy a personal computer for up to $1000.

Student B   You are a sales assistant in a computer shop. Do your best to sell the most expensive equipment from your pricelist.

Note: *you can either make your own pricelists (e.g., see the table below) or use the original ones.*

Products available	CPU speed	Min/Max RAM	Hard disk	Disk drives	Monitor	Price
…	…	…	…	…	…	…

Begin your conversation as follows:

Assistant: Hello. Do you need any help?

Buyer: Yes, I'm looking for a personal computer...