BIOS (basic input/output system) is the program a computer's [microprocessor](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/microprocessor-logic-chip) uses to start the computer system after it is powered on. It also manages data flow between the computer's operating system (OS) and attached devices, such as the hard disk, video adapter, keyboard, mouse and printer.

**Uses of BIOS:** The main use of BIOS is to act as a middleman between OS’s and the hardware they run on. BIOS is theoretically always the intermediary between the microprocessor and I/O device control information and data flow. Although, in some cases, BIOS can arrange for data to flow directly to memory from devices, such as video cards, that require faster data flow to be effective.

**The 4 functions of BIOS**

BIOS identifies, configures, tests and connects computer hardware to the OS immediately after a computer is turned on. The combination of these steps is called the *boot process*.

These tasks are each carried out by BIOS' four main functions:

1. **Power-on self-test (**[**POST**](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/POST-Power-On-Self-Test)**).** This tests the hardware of the computer before loading the OS.
2. [**Bootstrap loader**](https://searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/definition/boot-loader-boot-manager)**.** This locates the OS.
3. **Software/drivers.** This locates the software and drivers that interface with the OS once running.
4. **Complementary metal-oxide semiconductor (CMOS) setup.** This is a configuration program that enable users to alter hardware and system settings. CMOS is the name of BIOS' non-volatile memory.