

Basic Computer Terminology

1. **Hardware** – the physical parts of the computer: the main computer; the monitor; keyboard; mouse; hard drive; speakers; CD/DVD drive etc.
2. **Software** – all programs on your computer (operating system, word processor, games, programs etc.)
3. **Modem** – you need a modem to connect to the internet. Most computers have a modem installed that can be used for dial-up access to the internet. If you need high-speed internet access, you will need a DSL or cable modem which you typically get from your internet or cable provider.
4. **CPU (Processor)** – The CPU or Central Processing Unit determines the speed of your system. The speed is measured in gigahertz (GHz). Typically, the higher the gigahertz, the faster your processor.
5. **Hard Drive** – this is the storage unit of the computer. All of your information (files, programs, etc.) is stored on the hard drive. Hard drive capacity is measured in gigabytes (GBs). The more GB your hard drive has, the more you can store (photos, documents, files etc.).
6. **RAM** – stands for Random Access Memory. RAM is a storage space independent of your hard drive that keeps track of what you are working on right now. RAM is measured in both megabytes (MB) and gigabytes (GB). [1 GB = 1000 MB]. RAM also determines how fast your computer runs. Memory is relatively inexpensive and can be added to your computer at any time. If your computer is not “up to speed,” you may want to check the memory.
7. **CD/DVD Drives** – most computers come with at least one DVD drive (that is also able to read CDs). If you want to be able to create your own DVDs/CDs, make sure your computer has a DVD-RW drive. (The RW stands for read-write.)