

A guide to computer basics

What's inside?

This booklet provides introduction information about computers.

It includes the following sections:

What is a computer?

The computer mouse

The keyboard

Computer ports

What is a computer?



A computer is an electronic device that processes information.

With a computer you can create documents, look up information on the Internet, watch movies, play games, and much more.

The computer in this picture is called a desktop.

A desktop computer is meant to be used in one set location and not be moved around very much.



This computer is a laptop.

Whereas the desktop is meant to stay in one place, this kind of computer is easy to set up and use in different locations.

Tablets are another type of computer.

Tablets can't do everything that a desktop or laptop can do but they are very easy to use and are the easiest to transport. They are also terrific for accessing content from the Internet such as movies.





MAC



PC

There are different types of computers.

Many computers out there are known as PCs, which stands for personal computers. The computer on the right is a PC. PCs are made by companies like Dell, HP, etc.

Another type of computer is a Mac, which stands for Macintosh. These are made by Apple. The Mac is the computer on the left.

These two types of computers work a bit differently to achieve the same outcomes.



A desktop computer has different parts.

The computer case is what holds the main parts of the computer that make it work and process information.

The monitor is the part of the computer that shows the visual information such as the text and images.

The keyboard and mouse are tools used to help you communicate with the computer and tell it what to do, similar to how a remote is how you tell your TV what to do.

The computer mouse



The mouse is one way to communicate with your computer.

The mouse is a tool to help you move around different parts of the computer screen.

As you move the mouse around, you will also move a corresponding pointer that appears on the computer screen.

Once you have that pointer on something you want to do or select, you click a button on the mouse to tell the computer to do something.



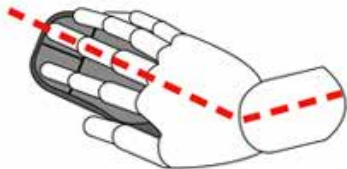
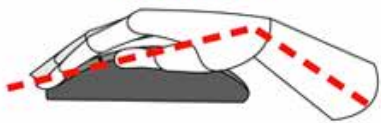
A Trackpad or Touchpad is another type of mouse.

Touchpads are common on laptop computers. They track the touch of your fingers to move the pointer.

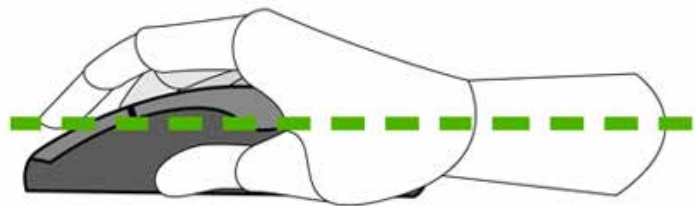
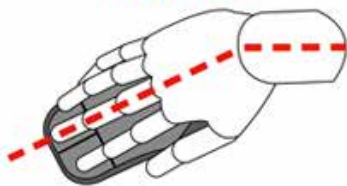
To click on a touchpad, you just press down on it, rather than hitting a button like you do on a mouse.



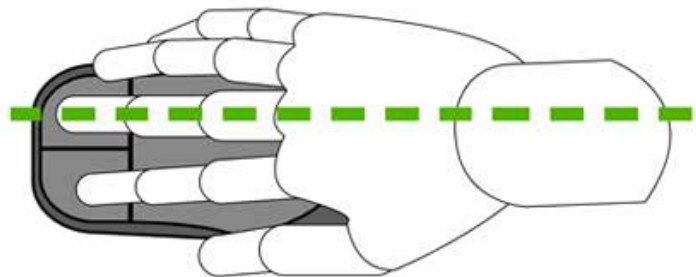
INCORRECT



INCORRECT



CORRECT



This is the best way to hold the mouse.

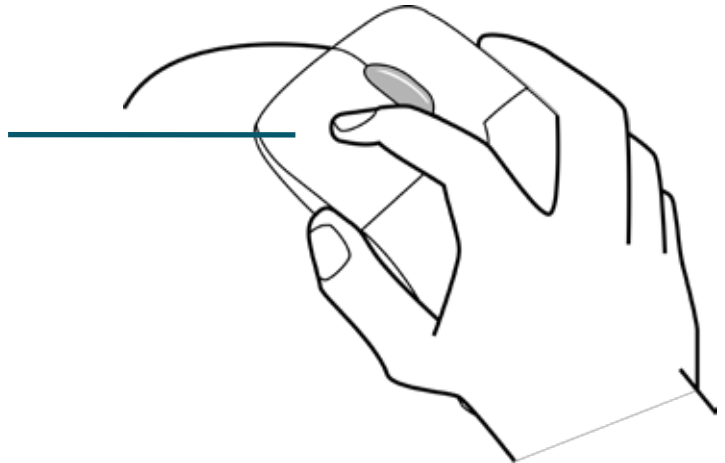
In order to use a mouse effectively, it is best to hold the mouse as seen in the picture.

Place your whole hand on the mouse. Position your index finger on the left button and your middle finger on the right button.

The rest of your fingers rest on the side of the mouse to help you move the mouse. When you are moving the mouse, remember that you are just sliding the mouse around, not turning it.

Using the mouse takes some practice. Ask your BFS tutor to help you develop this skill.

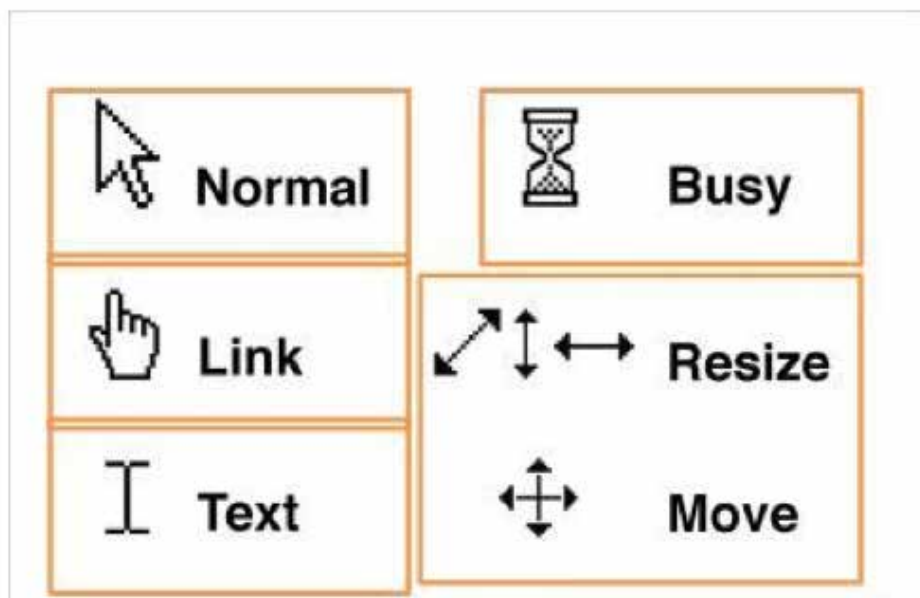
**Left click with
the button on
the left.**



Most of the time, when you want to select something on a computer, you will move the mouse to get the pointer where you want and then press down on the button on the left of the mouse.



The button on the right is often used to show a menu of options. Pressing down the right button is called right clicking.



The pointer of the mouse that appears on the computer screen appears differently based on what the mouse does over certain parts of the screen.

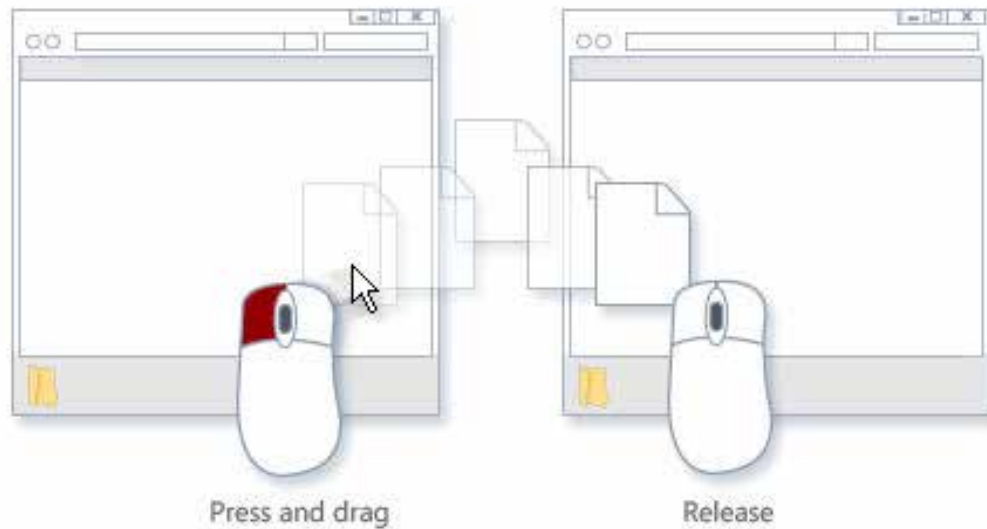
The pointer will look like the arrow labelled normal when it is just moving around the screen. The normal pointer is also what you will see when you are on a desktop icon or other similar items you can click on to open.

When the pointer is on a link to a website, a button or other items you can also click on, it will appear as a hand.

If the text on a computer screen can be highlighted, inserted or changed, the pointer will look like a capital 'I'.

When the computer is thinking, the hourglass will appear to tell you to wait.

The pointer will appear as arrows when you are resizing or moving windows.



Drag and Drop is another thing you can do with a mouse.

To move something from one area of a computer to another, you place your pointer above the item you want to move.

Then press down on the left button and don't let go.

Keep holding that button down while you move the pointer where you want the item to go.

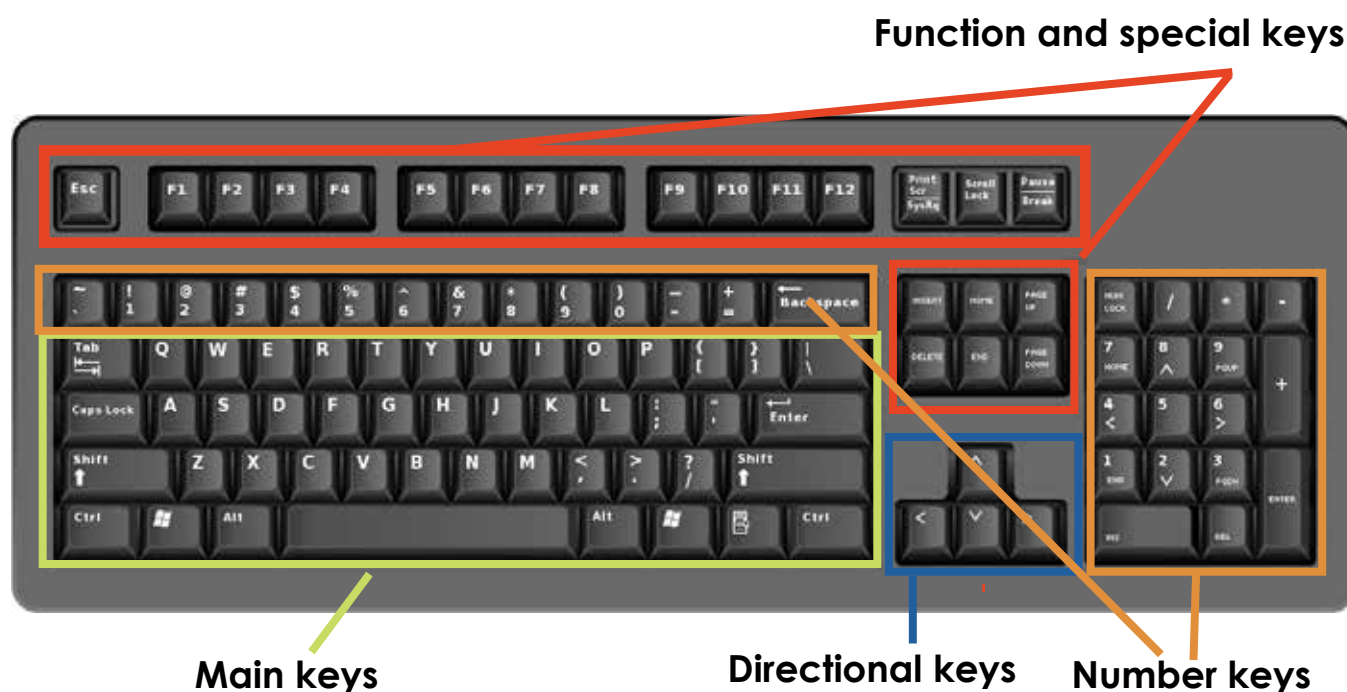
Once you have the pointer and the item where you want it, lift your finger to stop holding down the left button.

The keyboard



The keyboard is one of the main ways to communicate with the computer.

You use the keyboard to type in a lot of the information in your computer documents and files.



There are sections of keys on the keyboard.

The main portion of the keyboard includes the keys you will use most often, such as the letter keys, the space bar, and more.

This section has the directional keys, which help you move through a document and website with the arrows.

The number keys are located in two places on the keyboard. They are in the main section above the letters and in the number pad on the right side of the keyboard.

The area of number keys on the right can either be arrow keys or number keys depending on whether the number lock key is on or off.

At the top of the keyboard are the function keys and special keys, which have more specific uses.



Let's go over some the specific keys themselves.

Space Bar – This bar adds a blank space.

Shift – This key is used for either capitalising a letter or to access the symbols above the number keys and punctuation keys. When you hold down the shift key, either the capital letter is typed or you are typing the icon that appears on the top left of the key.

Backspace (on some keyboards this is Delete) – Use this button if you have typed something that you want to delete.

Enter – Enter is the key that you press to submit something or go to the next step. For example, you would press enter to go to the next line in a word processing document or to go to a website after typing in the address.

Caps Lock – When you press this button, everything that you type will be CAPITALIZED. To turn it off and go back to typing lower case letter, just press it again.

Tab – This button is used if you want to indent in a word processing document or an email or you can use in to jump to the next field if you are filling out a form.



More about the keyboard

Arrow Keys – These are navigation keys that can help you go up, down, left and right when you are working on a word processing document or when you want to scroll up and down a webpage.

Number Lock – Some keyboards have a number pad on the side, and if you turn on the Num Lock, the number pad will display numbers. If the Number Lock is not on, the number pad becomes a navigation pad like the arrow keys.

Computer ports



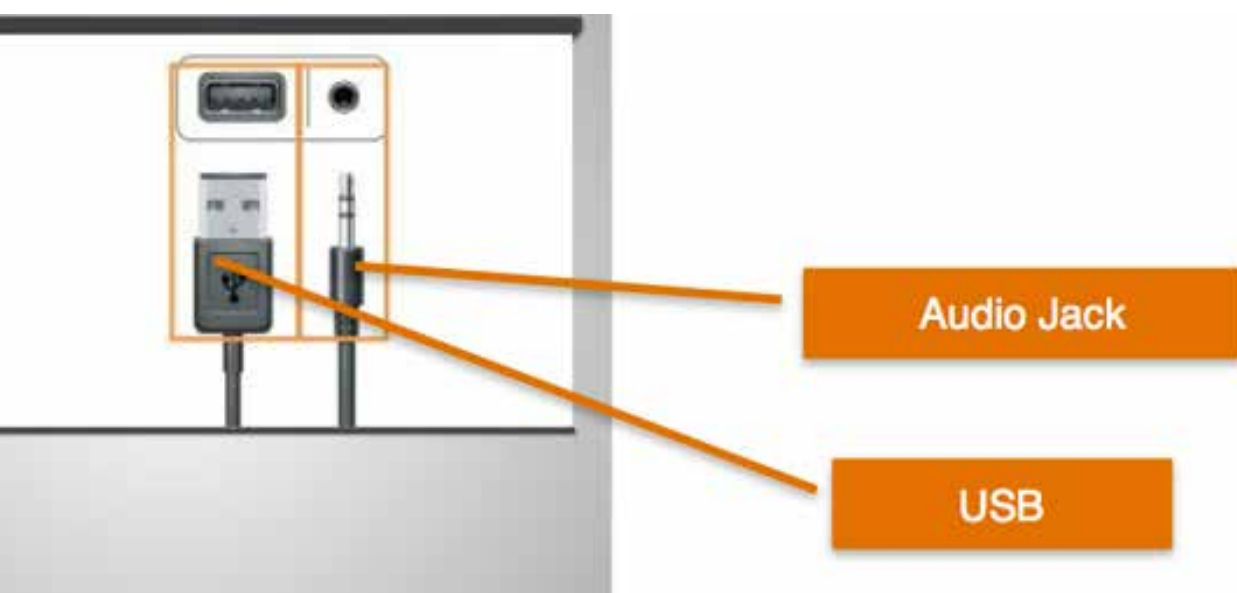
Computer ports are located on the front or back of a computer. They give you access to external devices.

There are various things you can connect to a computer through computer ports, such as a mouse, headphones and a computer printer.



Computer ports are located on the front or back of a computer or the side of a laptop. They give you access to external devices.

There are various things you can connect to a computer through computer ports, such as a mouse, headphones and a computer printer.



Two of the most common types of ports you will find yourself using are the USB, seen on the left here, and the headphones jack, seen on the right of this image.

USB web cam



USB drive



The USB is a common plug for things like a mouse and a web camera.

It is also used for a storage device called a USB drive. These drives, as shown in the picture above, are a great way to save your work if you are using a computer at a Broadband for Senior kiosk or other shared computer. They can be plugged into the USB drive of the computer and then you can save documents, images, and other things to them. Once you are done working, you can just take the drive with you and you will have all your work. USB drives are also called flash drives and thumb drives.



The USB is a common plug for things like a mouse and a web camera.

Headphones can either use a USB port or sometimes they use the audio jack.