

# Basic Computer Terms

## Hardware: *The physical parts of a computer -*

1. CPU: *Central processing unit*, the brain of the computer; controls the other elements of the computer
2. Disk Drive: A peripheral device that reads and/or writes information on a disk
3. Hard Drive: A device (usually within the computer case) that reads and writes information, including the operating system, program files, and data files
4. Keyboard: A peripheral used to input data by pressing keys
5. Monitor: A device used to display information visually
6. Mouse: A peripheral device used to point to items on a monitor
7. NIC: *Network interface card*; a board inserted in a computer that provides a physical connection to a network
8. Printer: A peripheral device that converts output from a computer into a printed image

## Software: *Instructions executed by a computer -*

1. Applications: Complete, self-contained programs that perform a specific function (ie. spreadsheets, databases)
2. Boot: The process of loading or initializing an operating system on a computer; usually occurs as soon as a computer is turned on
3. Browser: A program used to view World Wide Web pages, such as Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer
4. Click: Occurs when a user presses a button on a mouse which in turn, generates a command to the computer
5. Database: A large structured set of data; a file that contains numerous records that contain numerous fields
6. Double Click: Occurs when a user presses a button on the mouse twice in quick succession; this generates a command to the computer
7. Download: Transferring data from another computer to your computer

8. Drag: Occurs when a user points the mouse at an icon or folder, presses the button and without releasing the button, moves the icon or folder to another place on the computer where the button is released
9. Driver: Software program that controls a piece of hardware or a peripheral
10. FAQ: *Frequently asked question*; documents that answer questions common to a particular website or program
11. File: Namable unit of data storage; an element of data storage; a single sequence of bytes
12. Folder: A graphical representation used to organize a collection of computer files; as in the concept of a filing cabinet (computer's hard drive) with files (folders)
13. Freeware: Software provided at no cost to the user
14. Gigabyte: 1,073,741,824 bytes or 1,024 megabytes; generally abbreviated GB
15. GUI: *Graphical user interface*; uses pictures and words to represent ideas, choices, functions, etc.
16. Icon: A small picture used to represent a file or program in a GUI interface
17. Internet: A network of computer networks encompassing the World Wide Web, FTP, telnet, and many other protocols
18. IP number: *Internet protocol*; a computer's unique address or number on the Internet
19. Kilobyte: 1,024 bytes; usually abbreviated KB
20. Megabyte: 1,048,576 bytes or 1,024 kilobytes; enough storage to approximately equal a 600 page paperback book; generally abbreviated Mb
21. Memory: Any device that holds computer data
22. Menu: A list of operations available to the user of a program
23. URL: *Uniform resource locator*; the address of a site on the World Wide Web; a standard way of locating objects on the Internet
24. Virus: A deliberately harmful computer program designed to create annoying glitches or destroy data