Computers for Absolute Beginners

Terminology

Computer: An electronic device that can store and process data.

Desktop Computer: A computer that has a separate monitor, computer case, keyboard, and mouse.

Laptop Computer: A portable computer that contains the monitor, keyboard, and other parts all in one unit.

Hardware: The physical pieces of the computer.

Software: Instructions that tell the hardware what to do and how to do it.

Monitor: The screen where the computer displays visual information.

Computer Case: On a desktop computer, contains all the machinery that makes the computer work, including the hard drive, which stores all the data. Laptops do not have a separate computer case.

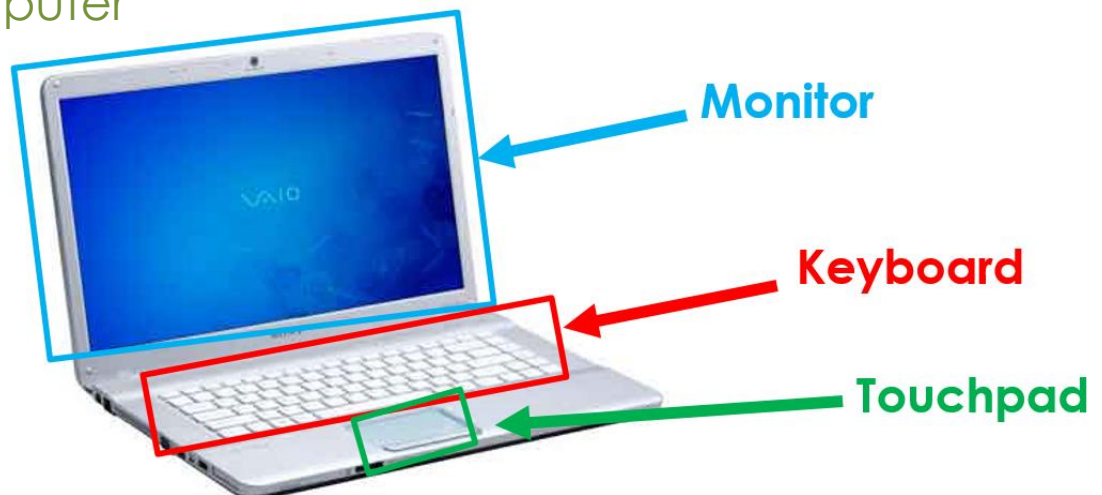**Keyboard:** Allows you to type text and give the computer commands.

Mouse: Allows you to interact with images on the screen.

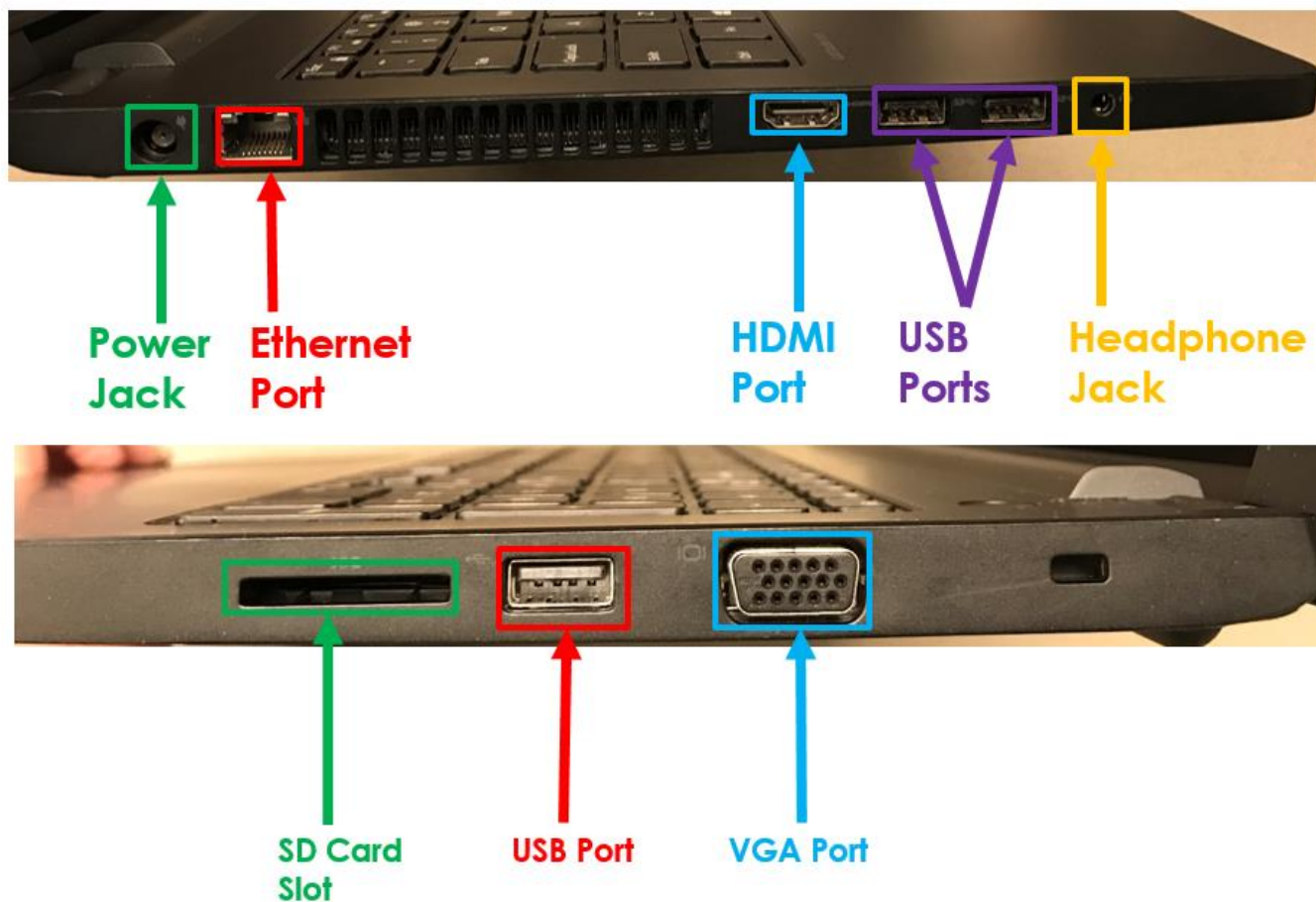**Touchpad:** An alternative to the mouse. Found on laptop computers only.

Desktop Computer

Laptop Computer

Ports

Ethernet Port: Plug in an Ethernet cable to connect to the Internet. If you're using wireless internet (Wi-Fi) you won't need this.

HDMI Port: Used to connect your computer to a TV or monitor with an HDMI cable. Can transmit both sound and images.

Headphone Jack: Plug in headphones.

Power Jack: Plug in your laptop charger.

SD Card Slot: Insert an SD memory card from a smartphone or camera to access saved images/data on your computer.

VGA Port: Used to connect your computer to a TV or monitor with a VGA cable. Transmits images only.

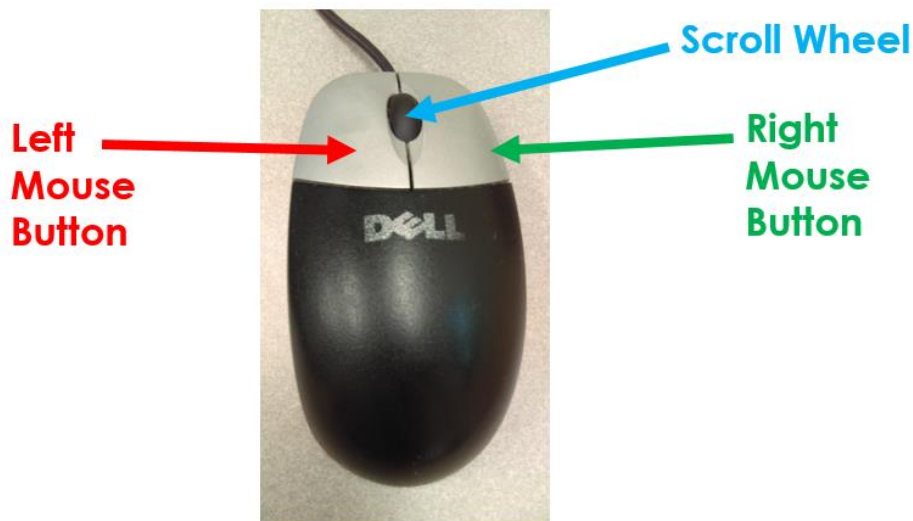**USB Port:** Allows devices to share data with the computer and/or draw power from it.

USB connectors have two open square holes on one side and two square holes with plastic below them on the other side. On most computers, you'll plug USB connectors in with the open square holes on the top.

Turning the Computer On

If the computer is **off**, turn it on by pressing the power button once.
If the computer is in **sleep mode**, you can wake it up by moving the mouse or pressing any key on the keyboard.

The Mouse

Place your hand on top of the mouse with your palm covering the rounded part below the buttons.
Rest your pointer finger on the left button and your middle finger on the right button, with your other fingers against the sides of the mouse, out of the way.
To move the mouse, slide it along the table. The cursor will move across the screen in the direction you move the mouse.

Mouse Terminology

Click: Press the left mouse button and release it. The most common mouse action.
Double-click: Press the left mouse button twice quickly. Mainly used for opening files.
Right-click: Press the right mouse button and release it. Will usually bring up a menu of options.
Click and drag: Hold the left mouse button down while moving the mouse. Used to move something, highlight text, or select multiple objects.
Scroll: Spin the scroll wheel to scroll up and down in a document.

The Cursor

The cursor (normally a black or white arrow) shows you what the mouse is pointing to. Aim the tip of the cursor where you want to use it.

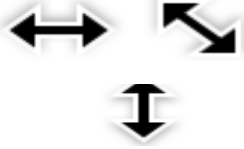The cursor changes shapes to let you know about special things it can do:

The hand icon lets you know when your mouse is over something you can click to open.

A blue circle next to the cursor lets you know the computer is working on what you have asked it to do.

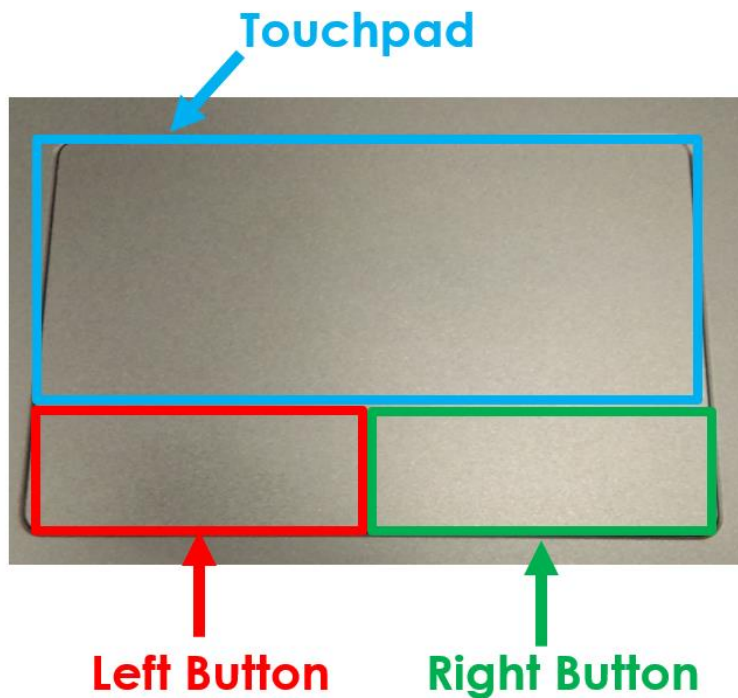The I-beam cursor appears when you have your mouse over a place you can type in.

The double-headed arrow cursor appears when your mouse is at the edge of an object on your screen to let you know that you can resize the object by clicking and dragging the corner or edge until it is the size you want.

The four-headed arrow cursor appears when you have selected an object that can be moved in any direction. You can click and drag the object to move it.

The Touchpad

Touchpad

Left Button   **Right Button**

The touchpad, found on laptops, is an alternative to the mouse.

When you move a finger along the touchpad, the cursor will move in the same direction as your finger.

The buttons below the touchpad perform the same actions as the mouse buttons.

The Keyboard

The keyboard is mostly similar to a typewriter keyboard, but has some differences.

Here are a few of the special keys you need to know:

Spacebar: Often not labeled. Puts spaces between words or letters.

Arrow Keys: Used to move up and down or side to side in a document.

Shift: Hold down when typing to get capital letters or to use the top symbol on a symbol or number key.

Caps Lock: Press to turn on Caps Lock (makes all letters capitalized). Press it again to turn it back off.

Backspace: Deletes text to the left of where you are typing.

Delete: Deletes text to the right of where you are typing.

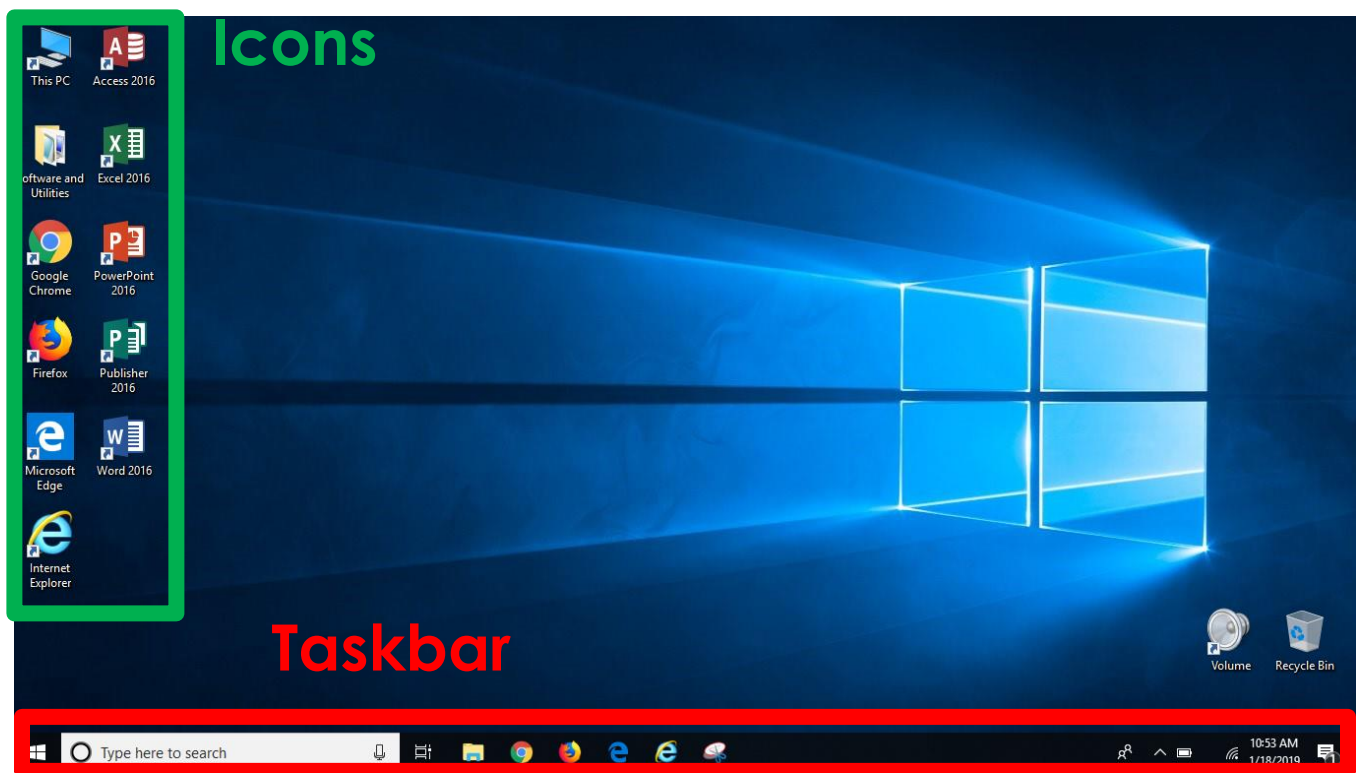**Enter:** When you are typing, starts a new line. Can also be used to confirm a command.

Ctrl, Alt, and Windows keys: Used in combination with other keys to make keyboard shortcuts.

Number Pad: A second set of number keys.

Num Lock: Press to activate/deactivate the number pad.

Function Keys: Used to execute special commands.

The Desktop

The Taskbar

Windows Button: Opens the Start Menu, where you can find programs or shut down/restart the computer.

Cortana: A virtual personal assistant who searches the Internet or your computer for you.

Task View: Allows you to quickly switch between different programs you have open.
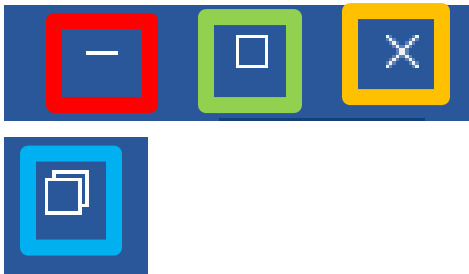
Libraries Folder: Lets you browse through the files saved on your computer.

Program Shortcuts: Clicking on a shortcut will open the corresponding program. You can tell that a program is open if there is a blue line below the icon on the taskbar.

System Tray: See the clock, connect to Wi-Fi, check laptop battery life, and more.

Windows

When you open a program, it will open in a window, which is an area of the screen that displays information for a specific program, independent of other parts of the screen. The symbols seen below are common to all windows and can be found in the top right corner of a window:
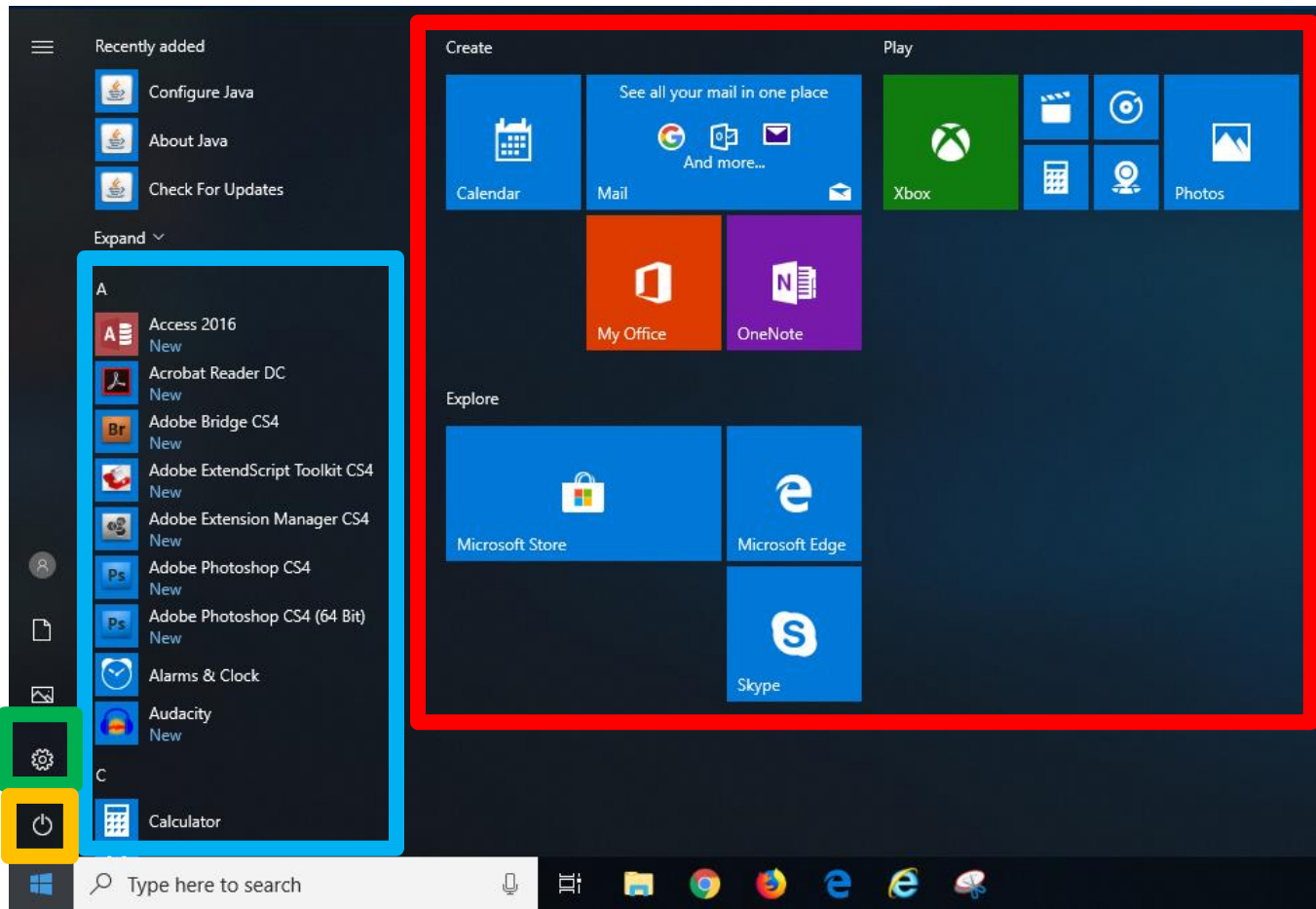

Minimize: Hides the window without closing it. Click on the program icon on the taskbar to see it again.

Full Screen: Makes the current window take up the whole screen.

Close: Closes the window.

Restore: If the window is already full screen, clicking Restore will return it to a smaller size.

Start Menu

List of Programs: In alphabetical order. Click on one to open it.
Smart Tiles: Popular programs suggested by Windows.
Settings: Brings you to a menu where you can change various settings.
Power: Allows you to properly shut down your computer.

Turning Off Your Computer

Click on the Windows button to bring up the Start Menu.
Click on the Power symbol to bring up these options:
- **Shut Down:** Completely turn off your machine.
- **Restart:** Turn the computer off and back on again.
- **Sleep:** Put your computer to sleep until you need it again. You'll press the power button to wake it back up.

Mouse and Typing Practice

This is a list of websites useful for practicing your mouse and keyboard skills.

You will need to open a web browser and type the website address into the address bar to find them.

Ask for help from our Tech Center if using a library computer, or call from home: 630-868-7506.

Mouse Skills:

Mousercise: http://www.pbclibrary.org/mousing/mousercise.htm

Mouse Games: http://minimouse.us

Keyboard Skills:

Keyboard Tutorial: https://www.gcflearnfree.org/typing/

Senior Typing: http://sense-lang.org/typing/