

Computer Basics  
Getting Started

Lesson Plan

A student with no prior knowledge of computer use learns how to use the mouse to navigate around a windows PC.

Lesson Objectives

At the end of the class, the student will:

* Be able to identify the basic parts of a computer.
* Understand the difference between hardware & software.
* Be able to minimize, maximize, restore and close windows.
* Be able to use a mouse confidently.

Lesson Prep Work

(30 min, at a minimum, prior to student arrival)

* get in early to test for technology failure, because it will happen :-)
* pre-load Mousercise ([www.pbclibrary.org/mousing](http://www.pbclibrary.org/mousing) - click on “Mousercise”.)
  + Minimize to taskbar before class starts.
* pre-load videos or web demos.
* print handouts.

Lesson Outline

The lesson is completed in one 90 minute class session.

*(10 minute) Introduction*

* Introduce instructor, students.
  + Ask students at introduction: What is your experience with computers? How would you rate your skill level?
* Let students know that it’s okay to take phone calls, but ask them to put their phone on vibrate and answer calls outside the classroom.
* Inform students that they can sit back and watch if the class is too advanced.
* Inform students they can go to the bathroom, they don’t need permission.
* Show order in which class will happen. Explain scope of class.

*(70) Activities*

* (10) Overview of a computer
  + Start with what’s in front of them: Hardware. These are the parts of the computer you can touch.
    - External:
      * Show monitor, mouse, keyboard, tower.
      * Indicate USB ports – for connecting flash drives, camera, etc.
      * Show components from inside case.
        + *Teachers Tip: We have a bin with computer parts located in the classroom.*
      * Indicate power button on monitor and tower case.
        + Ask if class has seen the symbol on any other device.
      * Have class turn monitors on and off.
  + Software is what translates the language of the computer to something we can understand and vice versa. It comes in two main parts:
    - The operating system (OS) is like the main language of the computer. Windows, Mac OS, and Linux (among others) provide a way for us to communicate with the computer, save files, use the mouse and keyboard, and all the basic operations of the computer.
      * *Metaphor: The OS is like the autonomic nervous system. You don’t need to think about breathing, or about your heart beating, it just works. The OS controls the basic functions of the computer so you don’t have to.*
    - Show desktop – this is like the “home base” of OS.
    - Programs are built to perform a specific task – like write documents or make a spreadsheet and they “live” within the operating system.
    - Show commoncraft video: Computer software in Plain English:
      * <http://www.schooltube.com/video/ebf30d707055052c71d9/Computer-software-in-plain-english>
* (5) The Desktop
  + The Desktop is what you’ll see when the computer first starts. This is your home base for opening programs and finding files. Indicate following items:
    - Icons are shortcuts to programs (or files and folders), like little keys that open up different programs or places on your computer.
      * Be sure to point out My Documents (where most of your files and pictures will be saved) and Mozilla Firefox (to get to the internet).
    - The start menu is where you go if you can’t find the programs you want on the desktop.
      * Open up Word as an example.
    - The Task Bar shows us all the programs we have open and allows us to switch between them.
      * Demonstrate switching between programs using task bar.
      * Show how icon in task bar is same as icon on desktop.
* (5) How to hold a mouse
  + Positioning your hand:
    - Put your pointer finger on the left button and your ring finger on the right button.
    - When you click, be gentle and keep your hand still – this is easier if you are relaxed and keep your wrist on the table.
      * A few more tips:
        + Keep mouse arm parallel to ground.
        + Don’t lift your fingers when clicking.
        + *Teachers Tip:**Remind students the mouse is not a hammer, it is a scalpel. Precision is required or the computer won’t understand what you want.*
  + The mouse buttons:
    - Left button – Action button.
      * “Click” or “double-click” mean “left click” and “double left click”.
      * Double clicking is used for opening things – like a folder or a program from the desktop.
        + *Metaphor: The double left click is like a knock-knock to be let in. There is a certain rhythm to it.*
    - Right button – Option button, opens a contextual menu.
      * The menu will change depending on what software you are using or where you are located in the OS.
      * Don’t worry about the right button right now
        + *Teachers Tip: Have students right click and then left click away from the menu to close it. Explain that if something funny happens try left clicking away from it.*
* (10) Windows and how to use them
  + The operating system we’re using is called Windows for a reason: It’s a visual metaphor. Different programs are shown in different windows, making switching between them and looking at multiple windows easy.
  + Controlling windows is mostly done by using the three system buttons in the top right hand corner of each window.
    - Demo then do:
      * Open up internet browser by double clicking
      * Minimize browser.
      * Point out that the browser is not closed or gone, instead it’s located in the task bar.
      * Have class restore browser.
        + *Teachers Tip: It’s worth pointing out that items minimized to the taskbar will retain some metadata (like the name of the software, or the current web page).*
      * Click the restore button
      * Point out that the window has been resized and the middle button has changed its appearance.
        + Restore button will resize window by either maximizing the screen real estate the software takes up, or reducing the size of the window for more fine tuned manipulation.
      * (Optional - depending on level of class) have class move window by clicking and dragging the top most blue bar.
      * (Optional - depending on level of class) have class resize window by clicking and dragging along edge of window.
        + *Teachers Tip: Though it is covered in the mousing exercise, it may be prudent to point out the scroll bar along the right hand side of the screen (and demonstrate a few ways to manipulate it).*
      * Close the browser window.
        + Explain that by closing the window, you will have to re-open the program from scratch and you will lose any unsaved information.
* (45) Mousercise
  + Have class open browser window that says “Mousercise” which should be in the task bar.
  + Have class click on mousercise.
  + Hang out and help everyone get through mousercising!
    - *Teachers Tip: Students who complete the exercise get a certificate at the end! Print it out if the student wants it (you’d be surprised at how many do).*

(5) Conclusion

* Go over handout, review material, and emphasize contact info & further resources on handout.
* Mention practice sheets!
* Any questions? Final comments?
* Remind patrons to practice; assign take-home-practice - remind them they can ask for help.
* Remind to take survey (you may need to assist with this! It’s a great summation of skills learned in the class).