

Chapter 1

Computers: What are They?

Computers are machines that let us do many things. We can write documents, spell check them, save them and print a final copy. Talking to friends through email, messaging and blogs is another use of the computer. When we want to learn about new things, or learn more about something we already know, the internet gives us millions of pages of information. Programs already on the computer allow us to use a calculator, play games and organize our documents. Store bought programs give us more advanced games, ways to write documents, do art, and even organize our homes. Banking can be done on the internet, and in programs on the computer. Endless possibilities exist for uses of the computer. Perhaps the most attractive feature of modern computers is the entertainment value. Music, movies, games and even television can be used on the computer. Telephones can be attached to the computer which allows a cheap method of making local, long distance, and calls to other countries. FAX documents can be sent from the computer. Flexibility is one of the greatest features of modern computers.

People with eye sight, without eyesight, physical limitations, reading and writing needs, to name a few, can all make good use of the computer in everyday life. People who cannot read or write can talk to the computer and have it type for them. They can either obtain books from the internet, or scan in books and other items, and have the computer read to them. Imagine being able to place a utility bill on a scanner, press a key, and have the bill read to you! For those who have spelling issues, the modern word processor allows the typing of a document, then an easy way to spell check to make sure all of the words are correct. For those people with low vision, the computer screen can be enlarged with numerous programs. People with no vision can have the computer say everything from menu items to the text in a document or on a web page. With simple adaptations the computer is accessible to nearly all ages and abilities.



Chapter 1 Review

Test Your Knowledge

1. Name three (3) things that you can do with a computer.
2. Name two ways that you can talk to other people using a computer.
3. Name one thing you think you can do with a computer that was not covered in Chapter 1.