# Computer Vocabulary

**anti-virus software** - a [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) that finds and removes [viruses](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#virus) from a computer

**app** - a self-contained [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) or piece of software; an application, especially when downloadable to a mobile device

**application** - a self-contained [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) or piece of software

**backup** - a copy of files from a computer's [hard disk](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#harddisk), usually made on some external medium such as [CD-ROM](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#cd) or [flash drive](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#flashdrive). A backup is made in case the hard disk file(s) are erased or damaged.

**bit, bytes** - a bit is the smallest piece of information that computers use. For simplicity, a PC uses bits in groups of 8 called bytes (8 bits = 1 byte).

**Bluetooth** - a way of communicating wirelessly over short distances between electronic devices (for example computer and mobile telephone)

**boot, boot up, boot disk** - You boot (or boot up) your computer when you switch it on and wait while it prepares itself. Instructions for startup are given to the computer from the boot disk, which is usually the [hard disk](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#harddisk).

**browser, to browse** - A browser is a [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) like Firefox or Internet Explorer. You use it to view or browse the [Internet](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#internet).

**bug** - a (small) defect or fault in a [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program)

**cache** - a kind of [memory](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#memory) used to make a computer work faster

**CD-ROM** - a disk for storing computer information. It looks like an audio CD.

**CPU** - Central Processing Unit. This is a PC's heart or "brains".

**data** - Usually means the information (text, pictures, audio etc) that you create or share on a computer, as opposed to the [programs](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) that manipulate the data.

**DOS** - Disk Operating System. The original system used for PCs, where you typed in commands instead of pointing and clicking.

**driver** - a small [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) that tells a PC how a [peripheral](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#peripheral) works

**ebook** - an electronic book that can be downloaded and read on a computer or other device

**electronic mail (email, e-mail)** - messages sent from one computer to another. You can see email on the screen or print it out.

**file** - a specific computer record. It could contain [data](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#data) such as text (e.g. essay.doc), or a [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) such as paint.exe.

**floppy disk** - a cheap, removable disk used for storing or transferring information. It is floppy (soft) because it is plastic. (Now virtually obsolete.) *See* [hard disk](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#harddisk).

**floppy drive** - The device used to run a [floppy disk](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#floppy) (usually drive "A".) (Now virtually obsolete.)

**folder (directory)** - a sub-division of a computer's [hard disk](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#harddisk) into which you put files

**font** - a particular sort of lettering (on the screen or on paper). Arial is a font. Times New Roman is another.

**format** - All [hard disks](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#harddisk) and [floppy disks](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#floppy) have to be electronically prepared for use by a process called formatting. Hard disks are pre-formatted by the computer manufacturer. If you buy a floppy disk that is not pre-formatted, you format it yourself, using a [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) that comes with your PC.

**graphics card** - the equipment inside a computer that creates the image on the screen

**hard disk** - the main disk inside a computer used for storing [programs](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) and information. It is hard because it is metal. *See* [floppy disk](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#floppy).

**hotspot** - an area that has an available wireless signal for Internet access (usually public)

**icon** - a small image or picture on a computer screen that is a symbol for [folders](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#folder), disks, [peripherals](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#peripheral), [programs](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) etc

**Internet** - International network of computers that you connect to by telephone line. Two popular services of the Internet are the [World Wide Web](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#www) and [electronic mail](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#email).

**iPad** - a [tablet](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#tablet) computer created by Apple.

**Kb, Mb, Gb** - kilobytes, megabytes, gigabytes. Used to measure computer [memory](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#memory) and storage.

**Kindle** - a device for downloading and reading [ebooks](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#ebook), developed by Amazon.com.

**memory** - Memory is for the temporary storing of information while a computer is being used. *See* [RAM, ROM](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#ram) and [cache](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#cache).

**MHz** - Megahertz. This describes the speed of computer equipment. The higher the MHz the better the performance.

**modem** - equipment connected to a computer for sending/receiving digital information by telephone line. You may need a modem to connect to the [Internet](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#internet), to send [electronic mail](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#email) and to fax.

**notebook** - a notebook computer; a laptop computer; a folding, portable computer.

**operating system (OS)** - the basic software that manages a computer (for example, Windows 10, OS X, Unix, iOS).

**OCR** - Optical Character Recognition. OCR lets a PC read a fax or scanned image and convert it to actual lettering.

**palmtop** - a computer that is small enough to sit on the palm of the hand

**parallel port** - a socket at the back of a computer for connecting external equipment or [peripherals](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#peripheral), especially printers

**PC card** - a device that is the same size as a thick credit card, for plugging into a slot on notebook computers. You can buy [memory](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#memory), [modems](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#modem) and [hard disks](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#harddisk) as PC cards.

**PDA** - abbreviation of "personal digital assistant"

**peripheral** - any equipment that is connected externally to a computer. For example, printers, [scanners](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#scanner) and [modems](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#modem) are peripherals.

**pixel** - the image that you see on the screen is made of thousands of tiny dots, points or pixels

**program** software that operates a PC and does various things, such as writing text (word-processing program), keeping accounts (accounts program) and drawing pictures (graphics program)

**QWERTY** - The first 6 letters on English-language keyboards are Q-W-E-R-T-Y. The first 6 letters on French-language keyboards are A-Z-E-R-T-Y.

**RAM, ROM** - two types of [memory](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#memory). RAM (Random Access Memory) is the main memory used while the PC is working. RAM is temporary. ROM (Read Only Memory) is for information needed by the PC and cannot be changed.

**resolution** - the number of dots or [pixels](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#pixel) per inch (sometimes per centimetre) used to create the screen image

**scanner** - equipment for converting paper documents to electronic documents that can be used by a computer

**serial port** - socket at the back of a PC for connecting [peripherals](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#peripheral) (obsolescent)

**smartphone** - a mobile phone that includes a [palmtop](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#palmtop) computer or [PDA](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#pda) and also gives access to Internet and email

**tablet** - a tablet computer; a mobile computer consisting of a screen only, and controlled by touching the screen

**TFT** - Thin Film Transistor, a type of high quality screen for notebook computers

**USB** - abbreviation of "universal serial bus"; a standardized connection for attaching devices to computers etc

**USB flash drive** - a small, external device for storing data; it connects through the USB socket.

**virus** - a small, unauthorized [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program) that can damage a computer

**Wi-Fi** - a system for communicating without wires over a computer network

**Windows** - an operating system used by the majority of PCs

**World Wide Web, WWW, the Web** - WWW are initials that stand for World Wide Web. The Web is one of the services available on the [Internet](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#internet). It lets you access millions of pages through a system of links. Because it is "world-wide", it was originally called the World Wide Web or WWW.

**WYSIWIG** - "What You See Is What You Get." With a WYSIWIG [program](https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/computer.php#program), if you print a document it looks the same on paper as it looks on the screen.