

What device is right for me?

While some devices are more suited to certain tasks than others, they're all capable of doing most things. So the most important thing to think about when buying a computer is how you'll use it.

Ivi from Weston Super Mare says, 'Think about what you want the computer for before you buy anything'

Dave from Southwark Libraries adds 'Don't spend more than you need to'

Desktop computers

Not too long ago, most computers lived on a desktop like this one.

If you like to tinker, this style of computer is easier to upgrade and update.

However, they're not easy to move around!



Laptop computers

A full size laptop computer can do everything a desktop computer can and still has a good screen size.

It's somewhat portable but can feel a little heavy if holding or carrying it for long periods.

Notebook computers

These look like a slimmed down laptop and in many ways they are. The screen tends to be a little smaller and the whole computer is thinner and lighter.

These types of computers generally have less storage and need to be connected to the internet to get the best out of them.

Being smaller and thinner, they're very light and easy to carry around and the performance is still excellent.



Tablet computers

In the last few years the tablet computer has quickly become a popular choice. They're not as powerful as other computers but if you are only doing a few simple tasks they're easily up to the job.

Tablets are lightweight and easy to use, which can make them a great choice for a first computer, but to make the most out of one you need to be able to access the internet.

Not what you were looking for?

If you're not at the stage of wanting to know about **What device is right for me**, try taking a look at the [Why use a computer and the internet](#) resource for more guidance.

Common terms

There are a few things that you'll see on all devices, but will be described in a different way depending on which device you have. The next few slides will take you through some of the terms you'll need to be aware of before buying a computer.

Memory - A device has two different types of memory. 'RAM memory' is used for what the computer is doing NOW, whereas 'hard disk memory' is for storing things for a longer time.

Memory is measured in bytes which can be mega, giga or tera. Megabytes is the smallest measure, gigabytes are bigger and terabytes are bigger again. Always

compare the same type of byte as one Terabyte is the same as more than one million Megabytes.

Processor - the brains of the computer. Processor speed is measured in Ghz - the bigger number the faster the processor. Sometimes they're also rated by the number of cores. More cores mean the processor is quicker and able to do many things at once.

Optional extras

These things can make your computer easier to use or more useful, but they're not essential.

Mouse - If you have a desktop computer you'll probably have a mouse but did you know that you can plug one into a laptop or notebook? Or if you find a mouse difficult, you can get a trackball that does the same job but might be easier to use.

Keyboard - Bigger keys, colour coded areas to make keys easier to see, altered shapes to make them more comfortable - there's a great variety of keyboards that you can use with desktop, laptop or notebook computers. You can even connect some keyboards to tablet computers.



Screen readers - New computers all have the ability to read information from the screen. If the built-in system doesn't work for you there are also custom screen readers that you can try.



Memory stick - If you want to swap and share pictures or other files between computers, or even just take a back-up copy, a memory stick can be an easy way to do this.

External hard drive - If you have lots of files, it's a good idea to make a safe copy of them.

An external hard drive could be the answer. They're easy to use like a memory stick but give masses of storage.

Cloud storage

If you save something 'locally', it means that it's saved directly onto your device and you can only access it from there.

Saving things to 'The Cloud' simply means saving things online, rather than to your computer. Many services like Google Drive mean that you can save files to a secure place on the internet and access them from anywhere with an internet connection. If you're a little bit nervous about saving things to the cloud, it's best to start off with a USB or Hard Drive until you're a little bit more confident.

Still unsure?

If you are still unsure about devices or any of the information in these documents, try visiting the [Glossary](#) to find out more about any of the terms you are unsure of.