




Functions of Computers

Computer is one of the inventions of the 20th century that changed the world greatly. The first computers of the 1940s were enormous. But now they are almost in every family and in every office building.



Most machines do only one job, some are multifunctional (e.g. a TV set + + DVD player). But no device is as multifunctional as computer. The parts of the machine (or its hardware) remain the same, you change only the program (software) and your computer immediately learns to do various things.





A browser program is designed to look at pages on the Internet (you can also say to browse, this accounts for the word browser). A word processor program lets you to print text and then change styles of fonts and sizes of pages.

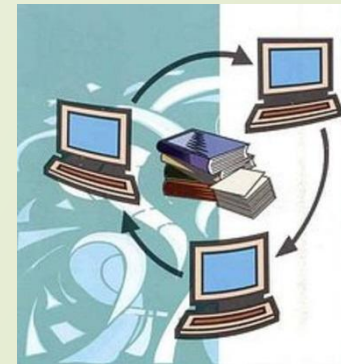
A database program is used for searching and sorting records. Such program is used in shops, libraries, hospitals, accountant offices, and so on. They make work with great amounts of data much quicker.



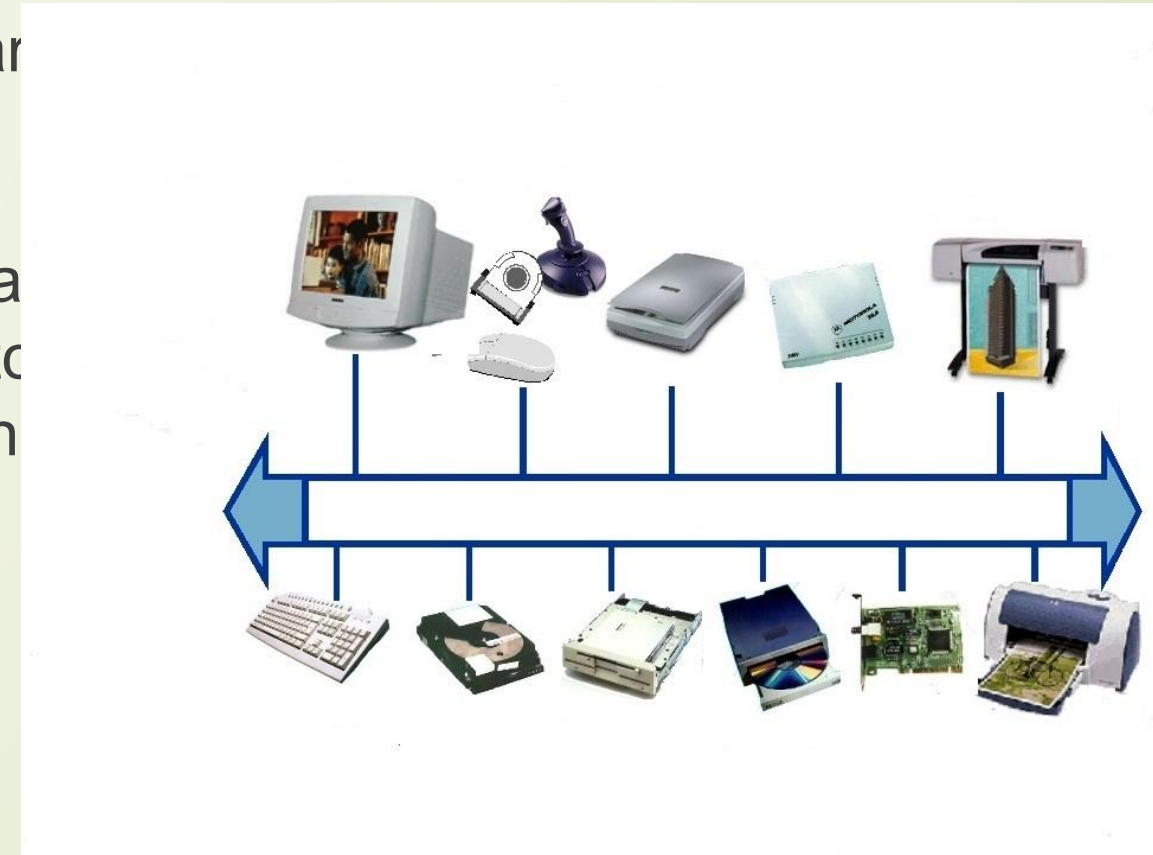
Computers are found everywhere and used in every sphere of life. In a plant one can make a computer model of a car or plane and check its resistance to stress. Such calculations without a computer could have taken several months. Computer is used at school: children watch films, presentations and web pages. This helps them to study effectively.



Computers also have some disadvantages. There is a famous joke that computers are designed to solve problems but half of the time they are the problem. As computer is a complicated device, one small breakage may stop its work. Moreover, the equipment is soon out of date.





Besides, there is a problem of compatibility. First of all, there are hardware devices which can't work with the old operating systems, such as a processor, a hard disk drive, a video card, etc. Then, there are programs which need more resources than computer actually has.



Thirdly, computers become more and more complicated, and much effort is required to learn how to work with them. Fourthly, computer viruses cause a lot of trouble — they can spoil, remove or steal computer data, and every user knows it well from his experience.





And on top of all, computer is a multifunctional device, as we already know, so it can be used both to do work and to entertain oneself. Children often fall prey to computer and Internet: they play computer games, spend their free time chatting with friends on the Internet and doing practically nothing. This aspect can't be denied.

To crown it all, computer is a good device like many others, designed to help people. But it's our own free will that lets us use it in order not to waste time but to get best results.





Answer the following questions to the text.

1. When computer invented?
2. Were there many computers in the middle of the 20th century? Why do you think so? Find a possible explanation in the text.
3. Is computer a multifunctional device?
4. What types of computer programs can you name?
5. In what spheres of life can computers be used?
6. Computers have many disadvantages, don't they?
7. What are their main disadvantages? Are there any that you have met using your computer?