

# WHAT IS A COMPUTER



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,  
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY



OP Vzdělávání  
pro konkurenceschopnost

INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

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# A computer

- an electronic machine which can accept data in a certain form, process the data, and give the results of the processing in a specified format as information
- First, data is fed into the computer's memory.
- Then, when the program is run, the computer performs a set of instructions and processes the data.
- Finally, we can see the results – the output – on the screen or in printed form.

## **Hardware**

- any electronic or mechanical part you can see or touch
- three basic hardware sections: the central processing unit (CPU), main memory and peripherals.

## **Software**

- set of instructions, called a program, which tells the computer what to do

# CPU

- executes program instructions and coordinate the activities of all the other units
- The data and instructions processed by the CPU are stored in the main memory ( a collection of RAM chips).

## Peripherals

- physical units attached to the computer
- they include storage devices and input/output devices (a modem, a digital camera, a scanner, a printer etc.)

## **Storage devices**

- hard drives, DVD drives or flash drives – provides a permanent storage of both data and programs, disc drives are used to read and write data on disks

## **Input device**

- enable data to go into the computer's memory ( the mouse and the keyboard, the scanner and the camera)

## **Output devices**

- enable us to get the finished product from the system, for example, the computer shows the output on the monitor or prints the results onto paper by printer.

# Main types of computers

## Mainframes

- the largest and most powerful computers
- the central system of the mainframe processes big amounts of data very quickly
- provides information and computing facilities for hundreds of terminals connected together in a network
- are used in big companies, banks and universities

## **Personal computers**

- carry out their processing on a single microchip
- a desktop PC is designed to be on your desk
- is used as a home computer or as a workstation for group work

## **A laptop**

- a portable computer that has a flat LCD screen and uses batteries for mobile use
- small laptops are also called notebooks

## **A tablet PC**

- a type of notebook computer that has an LCD screen on which you can write with a digital pen
- you can also input text by using speech recognition or a small keyboard

## **A Personal digital assistant (PDA)**

- very light and small computers – palmtops and pocket PCs
- for input you use a small keyboard or a special pen, which helps you to select items on the screen



- PDAs can also be used as mobile phones, personal organizers or media players
- they have the Internet access and some include a GPS navigation system