Keyboarding and Mouse Basics

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Introduction to the Keyboard

This class is designed for people who have not had formal training in keyboarding. It is intended to introduce you to the basics of working with the computer keyboard and the mouse.

The US standard keyboard is also known as the QWERTY keyboard. Why is the keyboard called QWERTY? Look at your keyboard. The third row from the bottom and from the left reads Q-W-E-R-T-Y.

Keyboard picture – Look at the color code as shown above. Pay attention to how the hands are positioned. Keys of one color are typed by the corresponding home row key finger. For example, the left hand’s little finger is above the home row key “A” and handles all the keys of the same color: A, Q, 1, Z, Shift, Tab, Caps, and ` (the back quote key).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Hand: ASDF</th>
<th>Right Hand: JKL;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – little finger</td>
<td>J – forefinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S – ring finger</td>
<td>K – middle finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – middle finger</td>
<td>L – ring finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F – forefinger</td>
<td>; – little finger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home row keys – keys where your fingers are resting or positioned. You have home row keys assigned for each hand. From the home row key, you reach to a key you want to type and return back to the home row. (Usually, one of the home row keys, one for each hand, has a dent, bump, or mark that lets you know, without looking, that your fingers are positioned on the keyboard correctly.)
Capital keys – To type capital letters you have two options:

1. **For individual letters** – Press and hold down the “shift key” and press the desired letter.

2. **For multiple letters** – Press the “Caps Lock” key and continue typing. All letters will appear in upper caps. **Note:** if you type capital letters with the “Shift Key” and “Caps Lock” is ON, those letters you type will appear as lowercase letters. Keyboards usually have a light or type of signifier which lets you know if the “Caps Lock” option is active.

### Learning to Type

Learning to type will take a lot of self-discipline and patience. It is important that you do not get frustrated. You need to view the process as a skill you are attempting to master. It takes practice to achieve good technique.

It is also important that you establish the foundation of having the correct technique rather than speed. Speed and accuracy are results of establishing a good technique. Here are some tips:

- Memorize the letters by not looking at your hands while typing.
- Good posture helps your form. Keep your feet flat on floor, hips touching the back of chair, back straight, and sit up tall.
- Additionally, the way you position your arms, wrist, and fingers will help deter any discomfort from typing. Remember to keep your fingers curved, arms close to body, and wrists straight and not touching keyboard.
- Strike the keys with the proper finger, and then return those fingers to home row keys.

**Rhythm** – You will eventually learn and develop a good rhythm. This will hopefully keep you from potential tension and anxiety, and it may even minimize mistakes. Instead of focusing on a “quick where is the next” letter approach, an even rhythm will allow you to focus on what to type. If you slow down to achieve an even rhythm, you will find that you actually speed up.

**Errors** – The acceptable number of typing errors is one error per minute, regardless of how fast you type. Of course, as a beginner, expect to have more. These numbers will lower as you learn to master keyboarding.

**WPM** – This stands for “words per minute” typing rate. A word is considered to be on average of five keystrokes, including spaces. If you type 50 keystrokes per minute, your typing rate is 10 wpm.

**Note:** A speed of 40 wpm is the basic minimum standard required by many employers and government positions. Effective typing speeds should be at least three to four times your handwriting speed.
Basic Mouse Skills

What is a Mouse?

A mouse is a palm-sized device used to control the movement of an object on the computer screen called a cursor or pointer. The cursor (on the screen) acts as our virtual finger inside the computer screen, allowing us to press buttons, to select items from menus, and to interact with other objects on the computer screen.

We move the cursor or pointer on the screen by moving the mouse (in our palm) over a flat surface, such as a mouse pad or a clear part of a desk.

Mouse Buttons

The typical mouse will have two buttons, though some may have additional buttons or a wheel. To interact with objects on the screen, we move the cursor or pointer over the object and click a button (usually the left mouse button, on the mouse. The cursor is an arrow on the screen that moves as you move the mouse. The majority of the time it is an arrow, but sometimes it can be a pointing finger, an l-cursor, or a blinking vertical line.

Positioning the Mouse

The mouse rests on the mouse pad (or desk) next to the keyboard with the cord pointing away from you toward the back of the desk. Right-handed people usually position the mouse on the right side of the keyboard. Left-handed people sometimes keep this position, but may be more comfortable moving the mouse to the left side of the keyboard.

Holding the Mouse

Rest your wrist on the mouse pad or desk, with the palm of your hand resting on the back portion of the mouse. Hold the sides of the mouse with your thumb and last two fingers, keeping your wrist on the surface of the desk or mouse pad. Place your index finger on the left button, middle finger on the right button.
### Moving the Mouse

Slide the mouse around on the mouse pad or desk. Watch the screen to see what happens to the cursor. If you run out of room to move the mouse, you can lift it up and set it down a few inches over as needed. The cursor will not move while the mouse is in the air.

### Clicking the Mouse

Clicking the mouse button is one way of sending commands to the computer (another is using the keyboard). To click:

- **GENTLY** press and release the left mouse button (without lifting your finger off the button). Be careful not to move the mouse while you are clicking. The secret is to keep your hand relaxed on the mouse as you press down and release the button.
- Keep your thumb and other fingers in the "holding" position discussed earlier. Use as much pressure and speed as you would if you were idly tapping your finger on a tabletop.

### Clicking and Dragging

"Clicking and dragging" is a way to move certain objects on the screen and to highlight text or images. To move an object:

- Place the cursor over it.
- Press and hold down the left mouse button.
- Then move the mouse while still holding down the left mouse button.
- When you have "dragged" the object to the location you want, let go of the mouse button.

### Right-Clicking

Clicking the right button of the mouse opens up what is called a “Context Menu.”

### Double-Clicking

A double-click is the act of pressing a computer mouse button twice quickly without moving the mouse. Double-clicking allows two different actions to be associated with the same mouse button. Often, single-clicking selects (or highlights) an object, while a double-click executes the function associated with the object. However, different applications have different double-click functions. For example: Double-clicking in a text document highlights the word; double-clicking on a desktop opens the application.
Common Clicking Problems

1. Pressing too hard or too long. If you press the button too hard or hold it down, the mouse will move, making your click ineffective. Clicking should be a very gentle action, requiring only enough force to push the button down. Remember, a quick and light depression of the button that produces a "click" sound is all you need.

2. Letting go of the mouse. If you let go of the mouse while you click, the mouse will move. You should continue to hold it while clicking. Many people keep one hand on the mouse continually while using the internet, only letting go when they need both hands on the keyboard.

3. Clicking the scroll wheel or the wrong mouse button. Remember to click the **left mouse button**. People who are unfamiliar with a mouse that has a scroll wheel are tempted to click the wheel because it stands out. You want the button that is to the left of the wheel.

Practice Web Sites

**www.powertyping.com**
To begin, click on the “Qwerty” link, and then select your lesson from the choices on the right side of the screen. Then click on the start button at the bottom.

**www.learn2type.com**
You will need to setup a login and password if you wish to keep track of your progress. The login is free.

**www.rapidtyping.com**
Learn how to use your keyboard in a fun and entertaining way for absolutely free.

**www.keybr.com**
This site generates readable random words using the phonetic rules of your native language.

**www.typingweb.com**
TypingWeb includes entertaining typing games, typing tests, and free official typing certification.

Mouse Tutorials

**http://www.pbclibrary.org/mousing/**
This site provides a tutorial, exercises, and practice games for the mouse.

**http://www.seniornet.org/howto/mouseexercises/mousepractice.html**
This site provides simple exercises to help you get better acquainted with the mouse.