

## What is a PC?

**B**efore you can talk about PCs at all, you need to know what you're talking about. The question is simple: what is a PC? Defining exactly what makes up a personal computer is one of those tasks that seems amazingly straightforward until you actually try to do it.

The meaning of the term changes with the person you speak to and depends on the circumstance in which you speak. A personal computer is a computer designed to be used by one person. In this, the age of the individual, in which everything is becoming personal, a computer designed for use by a single person seems natural. But the personal computer was born in an age when computers were so expensive that neither the largest corporations nor governments could afford to make one the exclusive playground of a single person. In fact, when the term was first applied, "personal computer" was almost an oxymoron, self-contradictory, even simply impossible.

Personal computers were for people who had to make computations, to quantify quadratic equations. About the only people needing such computing power were engineers, scientists, statisticians, and similar social outcasts. Then a strange thing happened, the digital age. Suddenly anything worth talking about or looking at turned into numbers – books, music, even art.

As the premier digital device, the PC is the centre of it all.

### 1. Choose the correct answer.

#### 1 Before you can talk about personal computers, you need

- a to know what a personal computer is.
- b to buy a personal computer.
- c to learn how to use a personal computer.

#### 2 Personal computers have been around long enough

- a to grow obsolete.
- b to become well known by everybody.
- c to remain a mystery for most people.

#### 3 Defining exactly what makes up a computer is

- a a simple task.
- b easier to say than to do.
- c impossible.

#### 4 A personal computer is designed to be

- a used only by one person.
- b a piece of personal property.
- c something very personal.

#### 5 The personal computer was born in an age when

- a not even the largest corporation used computers in its offices.
- b computers were very affordable.
- c computers were so expensive that each machine had to be used by more than one person.

**6 In the age before personal computers, computers were machines for**

- a** people who had to make difficult calculations.
- b** kids who wanted to play computer games.
- c** journalists who used computers to write their articles.

**2. Give a corresponding adjective for each adverb.**

- 1 exactly .....
- 2 amazingly .....
- 3 actually .....
- 4 simply .....
- 5 suddenly .....

**3. Match each verb with its definition.**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 to try    | <b>a</b> to be able to do or to pay for something |
| 2 to change | <b>b</b> to employ                                |
| 3 to seem   | <b>c</b> to attempt                               |
| 4 to afford | <b>d</b> to make or become different              |
| 5 to apply  | <b>e</b> to give the effect of being              |