## University of Bejaia

## Department of Computer Science

## First year students

## Module : Technical English

## Lectured by Mrs Hadjara

**Lesson two : Computer hardware**

**Computer hardware** is the collection of physical parts of a computer system. This includes the computer case, monitor, keyboard, and mouse. It also includes all the parts inside the computer case, such as the hard disk drive, motherboard, video card, and many others. Computer hardware is what you can physically touch.

## Definitions

A computer system consists of two major elements: hardware and software. Computer **hardware** is the collection of all the parts you can physically touch. Computer **software**, on the other hand, is not something you can touch. Software is a set of instructions for a computer to perform specific operations. You need both hardware and software for a computer system to work.

Some hardware components are easy to recognize, such as the computer case, keyboard, and monitor. However, there are many different types of hardware components. In this lesson, you will learn how to recognize the different components and what they do.

## Types of Computers

Before looking at the various components, it is useful to distinguish between two different types of computers: desktop computers and laptop computers. A **desktop computer** consists of a computer case and a separate monitor, keyboard, and mouse. As the name suggests, this type of computer is typically placed on a desk and is not very portable. A **laptop computer** has the same components but integrated into a single, portable unit. While these two types of computers look quite different, they have the same general hardware components.

## Hardware Components

Let's start with the **computer case**. This is the metal enclosure that contains many of the other hardware components. It comes in various shapes and sizes, but a typical **tower** model is between 15-25 inches high. Want to know what's inside? Okay, go get a screwdriver and let's open it up. Seriously, if you are really into computers, the best way to learn is to actually get hands-on. To save us some time, however, have a look at this desktop computer case. A computer enthusiast replaced the metal side panel with a transparent one, so we can have a look inside.

Although that photo looks pretty cool, it is a bit hard to recognize the individual components, especially with all the connecting wires running through it. This figure shows

|  |
| --- |
|  |