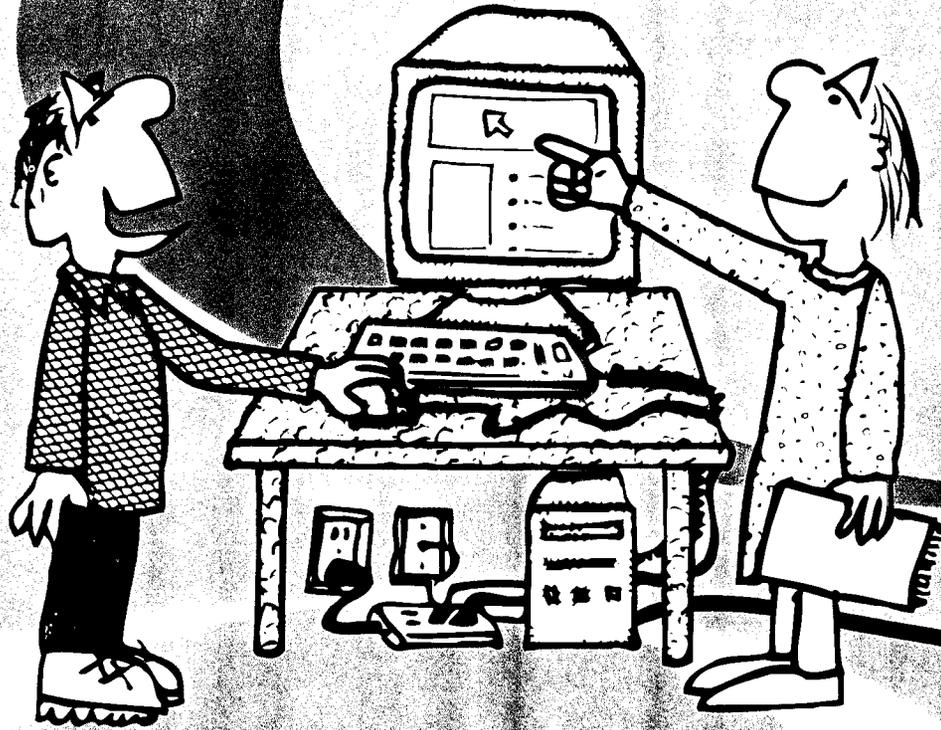


IOWA'S LEGAL SERVICES TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP PRESENTS

# LOW-INCOME IOWANS' GUIDE TO THE INTERNET



**IMPORTANT NOTICE: READ THIS INFORMATION BEFORE USING ANY PART OF THIS PUBLICATION**

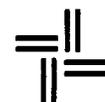
This booklet is a general summary of the law. It is not meant to completely explain the subjects in this booklet.  
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The information in this booklet was correct as of the date it was printed (see back cover). The laws may have changed.  
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You should see a lawyer to get complete, correct, and up-to-date legal advice. Do not rely on the general information in this booklet for your specific case.

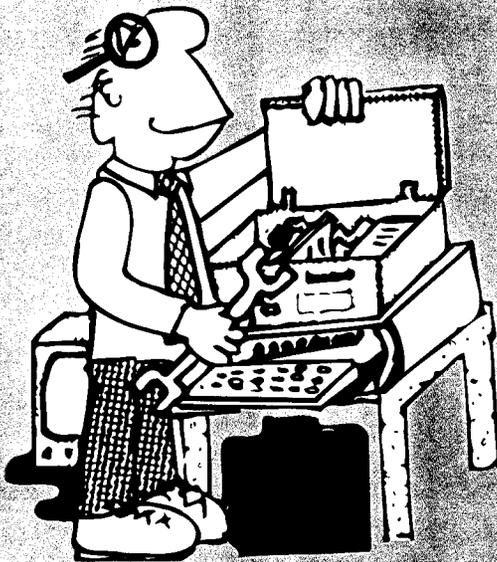
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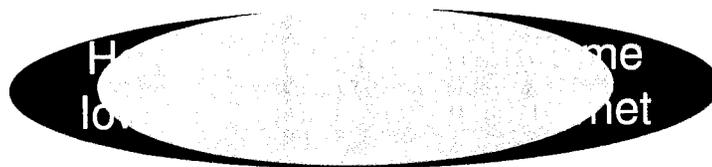
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## Start Here

### Welcome to the Low-Income Iowans' Guide to the Internet

Welcome! Iowa's Legal Services programs are anxious to help you learn more about the Internet. The Internet is a useful tool to help you get information that can help you. If you have never used the Internet or a Personal Computer (PC), this guide will provide you with the tools needed to get you surfing the Internet. Are you excited? Well, let's get started!



This guide is meant to help assist you in becoming comfortable with the Internet and its resources. The best way to use the material presented in this guide is to refer

to it while you are at a computer and to read this information while you are sending e-mail and using the Internet.

Computers require hands-on experience, so working on the computer is even more important than just reading the material. Reading this guide alone will not build all the skills you need to be successful at surfing the Internet, sending e-mail, and taking full advantage of the Internet. To develop these skills, take time to do the review questions and exercises at the end of each chapter. These questions and exercises are designed to be fun and also help review the material within each chapter.

This guide is not meant to be read in one sitting. You should read a chapter, work on the questions and exercises, and make sure that you have a good, solid understanding of the material before moving on to the next chapter. If you do this, the information will make more sense. The material will also give you



the necessary tools for building upon the information you already know. If you don't do this, you risk taking time to read all the material and not understanding what you read, or how to use the skills about which you just read.

This material may seem difficult to understand. That's OK! You are about to start learning a whole new language. It is common that you probably won't understand everything that is presented to you within this guide. Just don't stop trying and don't get frustrated. If you cannot understand some material, re-read it and do the exercises again. Don't give up. Think about how much more meaningful the Internet will become to you after you know how to take full advantage of its resources.

Each chapter is designed to show you a specific skill. To accomplish this, each chapter contains an overview and list of terms found within the chapter. This is done so that you have an understanding of the points you should be learning. At the end of each chapter there will be some review questions

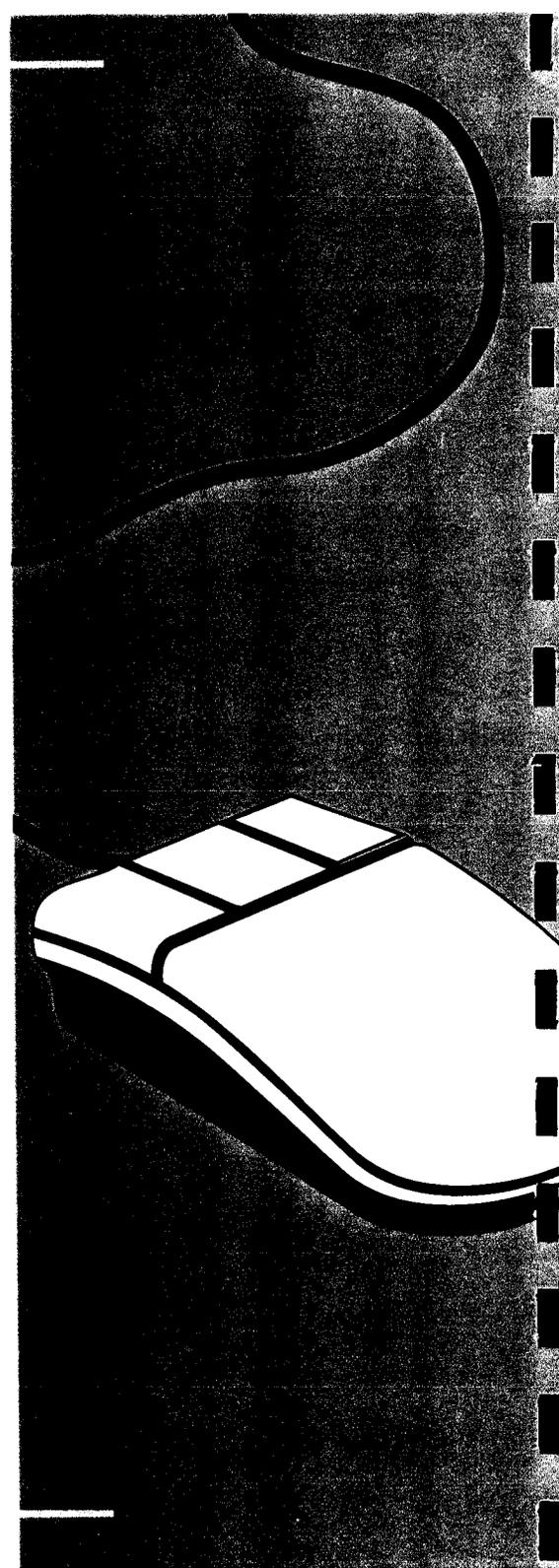


and exercises to help reinforce the material within that chapter.

Now it's time to jump into the material of this guide. Buckle your seat belt and hold on tight because we are going to take a drive down the Information Super Highway.

## Chapter Overview and Related Terms

Computers, Computers, Computers! Computers and technology seem to be what everyone is talking about these days. The Internet is providing individuals with powerful search tools, tools to help stay-in-touch with family and friends, and tools for shopping at home. This chapter focuses on what the personal computer can do. It also tells us about the parts that are in the personal computer. By the end of this chapter you will understand some of the functions that a PC can perform and the parts that make up a computer.

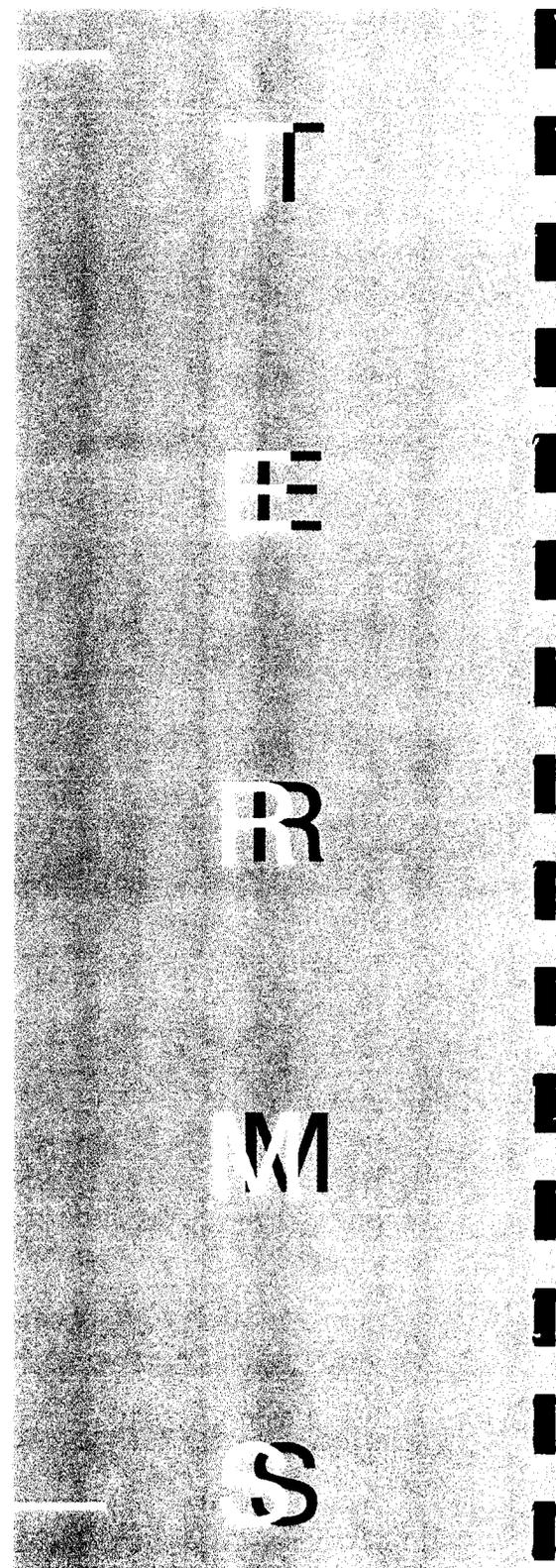


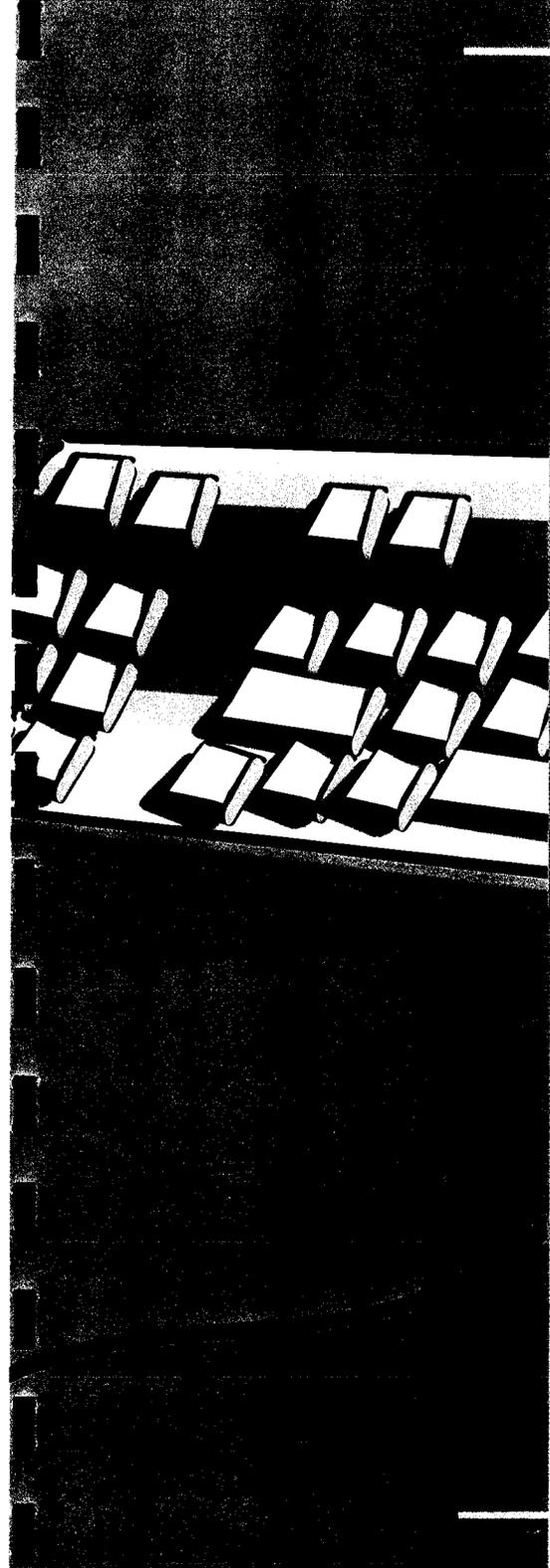
# COMPUTER



- PC (Personal Computer) - A personal computer is a technological invention that lets you store, change, and manufacture data. A PC refers to any IBM compatible computer. There are other types of personal computers such as the Apple Macintosh.
- CPU (Central Processing Unit) - The Central Processing Unit is the brain of your computer. Most often the term CPU refers to the box of the computer where disks are inserted and where the hard drive is located.
- Byte - Byte is the abbreviation of "binary term" which is a unit of storage that is capable of storing a single character. A character is a letter, number or other mark, such as a punctuation mark.
- RAM (Random Access Memory) - RAM stores information and data in the computer. RAM is a type of memory that can be accessed randomly, that is, one byte can be accessed without touching the preceding byte. RAM is the most common short-term memory found within computers. RAM is not used for long term storage. When the computer is turned off, whatever has been stored in RAM goes away.
- Peripherals - A peripheral is an external device connected to a computer. Examples include the monitor, mouse, printer, keyboards, external ZIP drive, etc.

- **Hardware** - Hardware refers to all of the physical elements of a computer. These elements are ones you can actually touch. For example, the CPU, keyboard, disks, monitor, printer, mouse, etc.
- **Software** - Software refers to any of the features you cannot touch. Software is the concepts, ideas, and programs. A good way to explain this is to compare it to a book. The book, its pages and the ink are the hardware of the book. The book's software is the words, sentences, paragraphs and overall meaning of the book. Software is the instructions that make a computer do a certain task.
- **Input** - Input is the flow of information away from you. Usually input is an action that you as a user would be doing. For example, writing an e-mail is an example of inputting information.
- **Output** - Output is the flow of information to you. Usually output is an action that the computer would be doing to you, for example, showing all the new e-mail messages that you have within your e-mail account.
- **Word Processing** - Word processing is software that you use to create, edit, and print documents. Of all computer applications, word processing is the most common.
- **Spreadsheet** - A spreadsheet is software used in the collection of data within a table of rows and columns where each relate to one another, so making a change to one value will cause a change in the other value.





## Computer Basics

At first, working with a computer can seem difficult. This is because computers do what they are told, and sometimes you don't know how to tell a computer what to do. Remember, computers are made by humans, are designed to help humans, and require the assistance of humans to make them "think."

The Personal Computer (PC) has come a long way, and can now help you perform everyday tasks. Computers can help you balance your check book, develop a budget, provide you with entertainment, manage your day-to-day activities, and even teach you what you want to know, even how to use a computer.

Within a computer system, there are four major components. The first component is hardware. Hardware is anything that you can touch that is part of the computer. Software is the second component. Programs and anything that you cannot

physically touch would be considered software. The third component is Data. Data values are the numbers, letters, and information stored in the memory of your computer. The most important part of a computer system is the final component, people. Without people, the other three components are meaningless.

## How Can a Personal Computer Help Me?

You can't even imagine all the different ways a computer can help you. The personal computer is a device that has a main goal of providing you with necessary tools to make your life easier. Technological advancements are based on that simple notion: make life easier for those who use technology. For example, the microwave has greatly reduced the time it takes to cook a meal, thus making your life easier. The computer aims at making your life easier through many different ways.



One way is through the Internet. The Internet allows you to do many different things, like buying items on-line, checking your banking account status, researching, reading the newspaper, and so on. In this guide, you will learn how the Internet can help you.

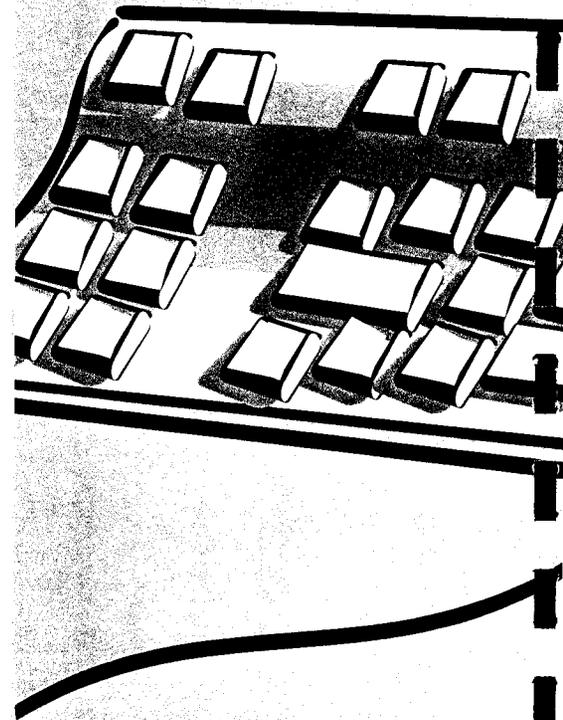


As discussed earlier, the personal computer system is made up of four components: hardware, software, data, and people. The main “parts” of the computer are located within the hardware, the physical components of the computer. Within the hardware you will find three main parts of hardware: the CPU, memory components, and peripherals.

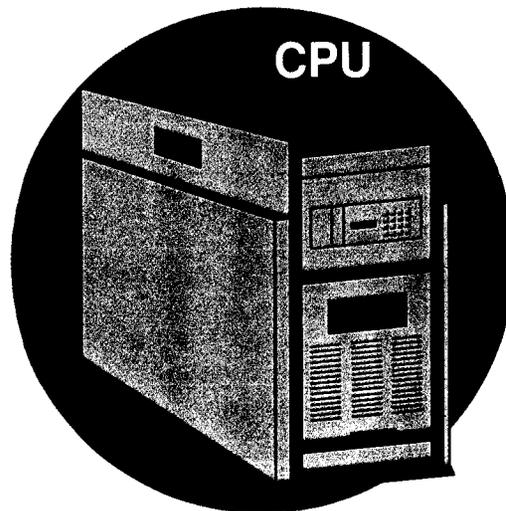
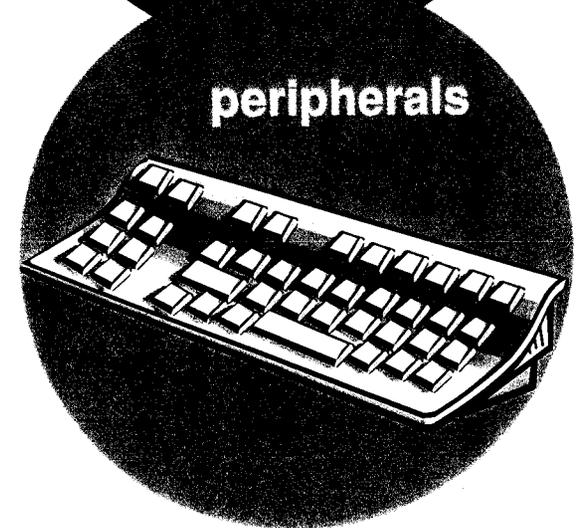
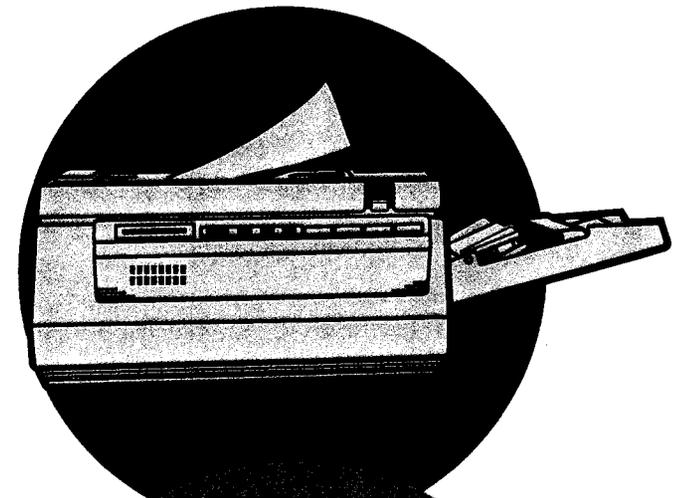
The CPU is the central processing unit. The CPU acts as the brain of the computer and does all computing and processing. After commands are processed by the CPU, this information is either presented

to the user through a peripheral or stored in the memory.

There are many different memory components to a computer. Some of these include the hard disk drive and RAM (random access memory). You can think of memory in terms of long and short term. Computers have both long and short term memory just like humans. Hard disk drives are the long term memory components of a computer. Hard disk drives store information that can be retrieved at any time. This information sits and waits to be accessed. RAM (random access memory) is the short term memory of a computer. RAM is constantly used when you are using a computer. The differences between RAM and hard disk drives are that hard disk drives can hold much more information than RAM and when you turn a computer off, hard disk drive information remains and RAM is lost. Don't worry, anything that you save is placed on the hard disk drive, so you don't have to worry about losing any information.



The third component of hardware is peripheral devices. A peripheral is an external device that is connected to the computer that either inputs or outputs data. If information is shown to you, you would be using an output device to see information. Examples of output device peripherals would be the computer monitor or a printer because these peripherals display information to you. If you are inputting information, you would be using an input device peripheral, such as a keyboard on which you can type, a mouse to move the cursor, a microphone to talk, or a camera to take pictures. Peripherals are the hardware devices that allow a user to see information from the computer or input information into the computer. Now that you understand how



a computer can help make your life easier, and the parts within the four components that make up a computer, test your knowledge to see how well you understand the information.

# Test Your Knowledge

1. The four major components of a computer system are...

People, Data, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name three different ways that a computer could help simplify your life.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The three main parts of hardware are the CPU, memory components, and peripherals.

CPU stands for \_\_\_\_\_

Short-term memory is stored in \_\_\_\_\_

Long-term memory is stored in the \_\_\_\_\_

Name an input peripheral and an output peripheral \_\_\_\_\_

