

Q. What is computer? Explain the different characteristics of computers.

The word computer derived from the Latin word “compute” which means to calculate. A computer is an electronic device which takes the input from the input devices, stores in the memory and processes them according to given instruction and displays the result through the help of output device. It can perform all type of mathematical calculations at very high speed. Generally it is used in trade, education and research etc.

Father of Computer: Charles Babbage is often known as "Father of computer". He was born in London on December 26, 1791, England.

Note: Each character of computer have a special meaning i.e.

C : COMMON O : OPERATE M : MACHINE P : PARTICULAR
U : USED T : TRADE E : EDUCATION R : RESEARCH

Characteristics/Features of Computer:

- ❖ **Speed:** Computer can work very fast. It takes only few seconds for calculations that we take hours to complete. It can perform millions (1,000,000) of instructions and even more per second. Therefore, we determine the speed of computer in terms of microsecond (10⁻⁶ part of a second) or nano-second (10⁻⁹ part of a second).

- ❖ **Accuracy:** In addition to speed, the computer should have accuracy or correctness in computing.
The accuracy of computer is very high and every calculation is performed with the same accuracy. The accuracy level is determined on the basis of design of computer. The errors in computer are due to human and inaccurate data. The accuracy for a particular computer depends upon its design. Generally, programmers are responsible for these errors.

- ❖ **Storage:** Computers can store a lot of information in the form of files, which can be recalled at any time. This type of storage is known as electronic storage system.

- ❖ **Diligence:** Computers do not suffer from carelessness and tiredness. Moreover, their efficiency does't decreases with age.

- ❖ **Versatility:** It means the computer can perform different work at a time (i.e. Multitasking). You may use your computer to prepare payroll slips. Next moment you may use it for inventory management or to prepare electric bills.

- ❖ **Power of Remembering:** Computer has the power of storing any amount of information or data. Any information can be stored and recalled as long as you require it, for any numbers of years.

Q. What are the limitations of computer?

Answer: Limitations of a computer:

1. **Programmed by human:** Computer can work efficiently, fast and accurately but it is programmed by human beings. Without a program, computer is nothing. A program is a set of instructions. Computer only follows these instructions. If the instructions are not accurate the output of computer will also not accurate.
2. **Thinking:** The computer can't think itself. The concept of artificial intelligence shows that the computer can think. But still this concept is dependent on set of instructions provided by the human beings.
3. **Self Care:** A Computer can't care itself like a human. A computer is dependent still to human beings for this purpose.
4. **Feelings:** One of the main limits in the computer is of feeling. A computer can not feel like a human being. A computer can't meet human in respect of relations.
5. **No IQ:** Computers do not have own intelligence and their Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is zero. So a computer cannot take its own decision.