

Buying a new computer

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- **S Mode** - Try not buy a computer that mentions "S Mode" in the advertising description. This is a version of Windows that is more secure, but does not allow installing any program that is not from Microsoft or at least approved by them. There is an option to turn this off in Windows settings but that option does not always work. Example: HP 15.6" Laptop with Windows Home in S Mode
- **Brand** - The brand is not that important as long as it's not Apple. HP is the most common brand I see. Walmart is a good place to buy one. Cost varies from \$300 on up for a desktop or laptop.
- **All In one** - Some new desktop computers are called "All In One". This is not as good as a normal desktop because everything is built into the monitor. That means when one part goes it all goes.
- **Laptop** - Only buy a laptop if you are sure you will be moving it around. I like a normal desktop computer because of the larger screen, and a normal mouse and keyboard. Chromebooks are cheaper laptops designed only for internet access and don't have the hard drive space.
- **Hard drives** - make sure it is an "SSD" or "Solid State Drive" which is much, much faster. Also you want only one hard drive inside the computer not two. Look for the word "Storage" in the advertising. It should be at least 256 gb but bigger is better, like 512 gb or 1 tb. If you see a smaller number like 64 gb that means it is designed for internet access only.
- **Memory** - The amount should be at least 4 gb but try to buy more like 8, 16, or 32 gb.
- **Processor** - This is the brains of the computer. If you see a reference like i5, i7, i9 that's good. It means it's made by Intel and will be faster. If you see a GHz number like 1.5, 2, 3, try to get at least 2, but the higher the better. Examples: Intel Core i5-6400T or AMD 3.10 GHz.
- **DVD drive** - The computer most likely will not come with a DVD drive. But if you need one Walmart and Amazon sell external DVD drives that plug into a USB port. I have a link for one on my webpage.
- **Monitor** - With a desktop computer you can usually use your old monitor. But some new computers do not have the old style blue SVGA connection. You'll need to buy an HDMI to VGA adapter.
- **Speakers** - They will not come with a new desktop computer but you can use your old ones.
- **Printer** - Usually you can use your old printer as long as it's not more than 5 years old. If you plan on buying one I would recommend a "Brother" printer. They are easier to setup than HP.
- **Microsoft Office** - If you need to buy Microsoft Office be sure to buy a version labeled with a year like "Office Home & Student 2021". Try not to buy "Microsoft 365" otherwise you rent it with a yearly fee. There is a free alternative called Libre Office which can be downloaded from my webpage.
- **Setup time** - setting up a new computer typically takes about 6 hours but can take longer. It depends mostly on what files and programs you need to bring over from your old computer. To help with the time move your old computer out to the kitchen table and plug everything in so it can be started up. Then clear out the spot where the new computer will be placed.