Basic Computer Terms

1. Bits (Binary digits): The two values that result from current passing through magnetic cores.
2. Byte: A group of bits used to store a single character.
3. Central Processing Unit (CPU): The brain of a computer, controlling the execution of processing instructions. The CPU consists of three parts the control unit, the Arithmetic logic unit, and a storage unit generally referred to as the main memory.
4. Central Processor: The combination of computers control unit and its arithmetic logic unit.
5. Compiler: A special computer program designed to translate a program for a high level English like programming language into a machine readable binary format such as machine language.
6. Computer Hardware: The physical equipment used for processing information by a computer. Such equipment includes the computer, which is electronic in operation and made up of individual devices that are interconnected.
8. Computer Program: A list of instructions telling the computer what work to perform and how to perform it.
9. Computer Software: The list of instructions (Programs) and other procedures a computer system uses in information processing.
10. Computer System: A specific group of physically attached devices that perform processing operations.
11. Control Unit: Part of the central processing unit that interprets the instructions in a computer program. The control unit calls on the input devices, the storage unit, the arithmetic logic unit, and the output devices as needed to have the instructions carried out. A term for a collection of computerized data, organized into records, and fields to permit easy access and retrieval.
12. Data Field: An area in the computer's main memory where a data record is stored.
13. Data Processing: The varied activities performed to convert data into useful information.
15. **Direct Access**: The ability to go directly to the storage location for the particular data required for processing without having to search through all the records from the beginning of the file.

16. **Disk Drives**: Devices used to write or store data on disks and to read or retrieve data already stored.

17. **Electronic Bulletin Board**: A communications network that permits the posting of messages by personal computer users for other such users.

18. **Electronic Mail**: The name given to a mail system that uses computers and communication lines to transmit messages from one computer user to other users. Messages may be in the form of letters, memos, or graphic displays.

19. **Electronic Spreadsheet**: Computer software that allows the user to set up worksheets arranged as a series of rows and columns in a matrix format. A spreadsheet is used for doing calculations such as addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication automatically.

20. **File**: A collection of records about a particular business activity. Data is stored in a file and retrieved from a file regardless of the type of storage device used.

21. **Floppy Disk**: A round record like object used for storing input data, processing instructions and output data.

22. **Hard Disk**: The name for rigid metal platters that have many times the storage capacity of floppy disks.

23. **Input**: A collection of raw data at the start of an information processing cycle.

24. **Input/Output Devices**: Mechanisms for reading in data to be processed and for reporting the results of processing.

25. **Local Area Network (LAN)**: A type of private network that links by communication lines computers terminals and other electronic equipment located within a relatively small geographic area.

26. **Main Frame**: Another name for central processing unit of a large computer system.

27. **Menu**: A program's list of user choices or possible actions usually shown on a video display terminal.

28. **Microcomputer**: The name given to small low-cost computer system with a microprocessor in its brain. A microcomputer can perform input, processing, storage and retrieval and output operations rapidly accurately automatically and economically despite its small physical size.
29. **Microprocessor**: A complete central processing unit of a computer placed on a single large scale integrated circuits.

30. **Networks**: Communication systems that connect computer terminals and other electronic office equipment to accelerate the exchange of information.

31. **Operating System**: A set of manufacturer developed programs that perform three functions. They provide coded instructions for certain repetitive operations, to keep track of running time for each job and to schedule a sequence of jobs to perform the work in the shortest possible time.

32. **Output**: Useful information available at the end of the information processing cycle.

33. **Program**: A series of instructions the computer is given for processing. The instructions are written by a computer-programmer.

34. **Programming Language**: The special language used in writing a computer program.

35. **Random Access Memory** (RAM): The term for the most common type of main memory because the data contained in each storage address can be directly retrieved without regard for the sequence in which it was stored.

36. **Read Only Memory** (ROM): The term for the type of main memory with data permanently or semi-permanently recorded in it.

37. **Retrieval**: The operation of searching for and finding data that is stored.

38. **Storage**: The saving of data for future use in information processing. The length of the time data is stored can vary between moments, days or even years.

39. **Word Processing**: The processing of textual data to produce letters, reports, manuals, catalogs, newspapers, books, or other documents.