# PC Basics

Bronze Level

Keyboard

Learning Guide

Getting Started: Using the Keyboard

The Keyboard is, along with the mouse, vital to controlling your computer. Keyboards work by translating your keystrokes into a signal that a computer can understand. Keyboards usually have a standard layout but there are some "special keys" and "shortcuts" which are helpful to know about:
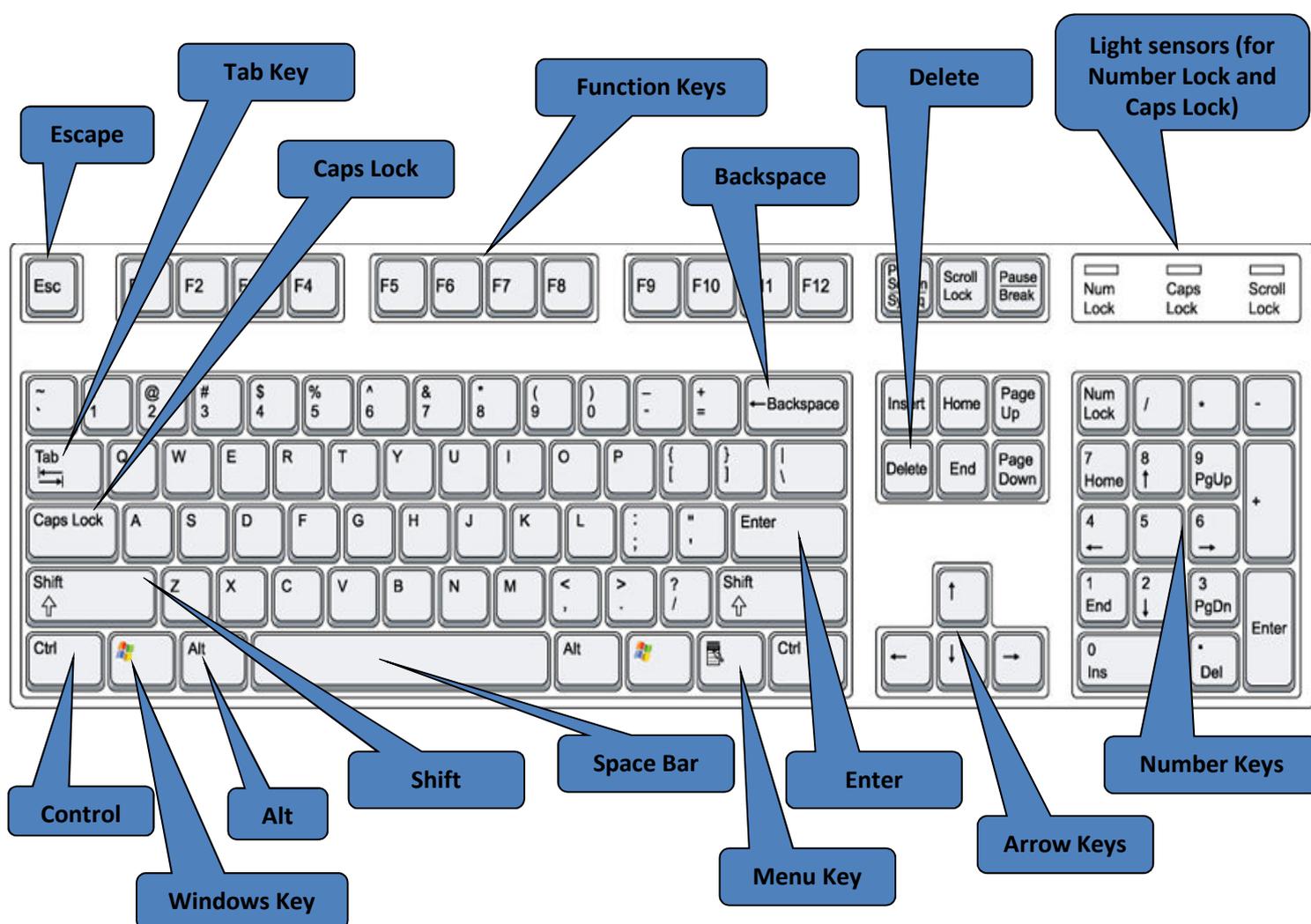
Tip : The keyboard shown above is the FULL version that would come as a separate piece of equipment when you have a DESKTOP computer. The keyboard that is built-in on LAPTOPS is sometimes a smaller version of the one above.

Please see over for a full explanation of all the above keys and buttons…

Learning Guide

Keyboard Commands

Tab: Tab is used to advance the cursor to the next "tab spot", which could be in a form (on the Internet) or in a letter (word processor)

Caps Lock: Locks the keyboard so that anything you type is in CAPITAL LETTERS. Usually the computer shows some kind of warning that you have pressed this key e.g. a light on the keyboard

Shift: Holding down the **Shift** key (usually denoted with a ↑on the key) has a number of uses, both to type capital letters and to access the symbols on the upper part of a key, e.g. the £ sign above the number 3. There are Shift keys on both sides of the keyboard.

Ctrl: The Ctrl (Control) keys are used for keyboard shortcuts, e.g. holding down Ctrl and then the "Z" letter (Ctrl-Z) will usually *undo* anything you just did (good for correcting mistakes!). See later Chapters for more Shortcut tips

Alt: Alt is used in similar ways to Ctrl. If you have several windows open on your computer you can press Alt and Tab together to switch between them (Advanced use)

Windows Key: The Windows Key brings up the *Start Menu* so is essentially a quicker way of pressing the Start Button. It can also be used in combination with other keys for shortcuts.

Space Bar: The Space Bar inserts a space between words when typing.

Enter: Enter is used for many functions. It is used to submit a form when you have completed it on the Internet, to skip a line on a page (e.g. when using a word processor), and so on. **Enter** is also called **Return** (like the old carriage return on a typewriter!)

Backspace / Delete: Back space deletes the last letter you typed **to the left of the cursor.** You can use it to correct mistakes as you type. The **Delete** key deletes letters to the **right of the cursor**.

Arrow Keys: The Arrow Keys move the screen or page up and down, left or right.

Menu Key: The Menu Key brings up a menu of commands, relevant to what has been **selected**.

Scroll Keys: The Scroll keys are used to move around a web or word processor page but are usually unnecessary (since you can use the mouse to do this): **Home** takes you to the top of the page you are viewing, **End** takes you to the bottom, **Page Up** and **Page Down** move up or down.

Number Keys and Number Lock: The Number Keys let you type numbers quickly. The **Number Lock** button must be pressed for this to work – there will be a light above it to show that it's on.

Esc: Esc (Escape) is used to exit a screen or exit a document.

Function Keys – F1-F12: The Function keys have an array of different uses, from making your screen brighter to changing the volume on the computer speakers. They can be very useful!

Learning Guide

Keyboard Exercises

Now that you have learnt what most of the buttons on the keyboard do, it's a good idea to practice using them, especially the important ones (Shift, Caps Lock, Enter and Backspace). Open up a typing program (e.g. Microsoft Word, Open Office or WordPad) to practice:

1. **Using the SHIFT button.**

The SHIFT button is used to either make CAPITAL letters (i.e. upper case) or to access the secondary functions of the keys (i.e. the symbol on the TOP half of the keys). This is done by holding down the shift button and pressing the button which has the symbol you require. Try this now by copying the symbols below:

<div align="center">

< @ " % * (& + { ~ !

</div>

2. Using the CAPS LOCK button

You should also practice using the CAPS LOCK button, which puts everything you type into UPPER CASE. Try pressing the Caps Lock button and typing the two sentences below, one with it ON and one with it OFF.

<div align="center">

THIS IS A SENTENCE WITH CAPS LOCK ON

this is a sentence with caps lock off

</div>

3. Using ENTER and BACKSPACE

Understanding the ENTER and BACKSPACE buttons is crucial to typing on the computer. The ENTER button simply skips / moves the writing DOWN by one line, and the BACKSPACE button is used to simply go back and REMOVE the writing, i.e. to delete it, or move the writing back UP. Try it out as follows:

<div align="center">

Type this line as it is written

Then use ENTER to come down two lines to this level and type this line

When you are ready hold down BACKSPACE to delete it all, from <u>HERE!</u>

</div>

Tip: If you tap a key once you will type (or delete) a single character. If you hold down the type you will get or delete lots of characters!

Once you have finished these exercises, try combining them all and type out a few sentences which utilise all the buttons, i.e. words, symbols, capital letters and spaces between the lines.