

MAIN IDEA AND KEY DETAILS

“What is a Computer”

Use the chart and the word bank to fill in your notes.

Word Bank

computer	device	calculating
change	analyzing	military
research	abacus	electronic
	perform	data

Key Details

1. Abacus used for calculating
2. Analyzing military data
3. Guiding planes, cars, ships
4. Self-driving cars
5. Research
6. Finding answers and videos

Main Idea:

Key Details:

1.



2.

3.

What Is a Computer?

Today, we think of computers as electronic devices. But the word *computer* dates back to at least the 1600s—long before humans learned to control electricity. *Computer* means “one who calculates.” A computer is any device that can carry out a task automatically. An early example of a computer was the abacus. This device helped people count and perform math calculations by moving beads on a simple frame. Later, human “computers” were hired to analyze data for the military and other groups.

There are many types of abacuses. Different colors of beads often stand for different amounts. For example, orange beads might count as 10, while yellow ones count as 100.



The first self-driving cars were built in the 1980s.

All new cars produced today contain computer systems.

In more recent years, computers have become capable of much more than simple calculations. They guide planes, tanker ships, and cars to their destinations. They can help you research the answers to life's biggest questions or help you find the funniest cat video of all time. Each year, new technology enables computers to take on more exciting and complicated tasks.