

- Sometimes computer breakdowns are easy to solve; a computer that suddenly shuts off can simply have a failing power supply, so checking that the computer is properly plugged in is enough. What technical advice would you give to solve the problems described in Exercises 1 and 2? Work in small groups.
- Read the text about the components of a desktop computer and complete the missing headings with the titles in the box:

Additional ports   Computer monitor   Expansion cards   Random Access Memory   Hard-disc drive

#### Computer case or system box

It contains the CPU (Central Processing Unit). It can also house RAM (Random Access Memory).

#### Input devices

The primary input devices are the keyboard and mouse.

1

It is a television-like device that can display text, images and video. Most computers have flat screen Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) or LED monitors.

#### Motherboard

The majority of parts making up a functional computer connect, directly or indirectly, to an electronic circuit board: the motherboard.

#### Central processing unit

All computers process data. The hardware handling the majority of this workload is the Central Processing Unit, or CPU. It consists of one or more processing chips.

2

As a computer operates, it needs a place to store and retrieve data. A computer's fast memory is in storage chips known as RAM. Data stored there is lost when the computer is shut down or restarted.

3

The primary hardware used to store data for long-term access is the hard-disc drive.

#### CD/DVD drive

A method of storing data for the long-term is a compact disc (CD) or DVD (digital video disc). A CD or DVD drive is used to read, and sometimes write, these discs.

#### Floppy drive

An older type of disc drive is the floppy drive. The discs it reads and writes are flimsy and flexible.

#### Power supply (PSU)

A computer's power supply unit regulates the electricity needed by the other components to operate. Most computers use between 300 and 500 watts. This can be provided by a battery or a power outlet.

4

Most motherboards provide one or more expansion slots for different types of card, including for example, for graphic cards, network cards and sound cards.

5

Small receptors through which additional (or peripheral) external devices can be connected to the computer: serial, parallel and Universal Serial Bus (or USB) ports.

#### Cooling devices

Fans are the most common device used to cool a PC. The CPU is also covered by a metallic block called a heat sink, which draws heat away from the CPU.

#### Cables

All the components are connected by a combination of cables designed to carry data, power or both.

Any piece of hardware that isn't inside a PC's casing is called a peripheral. This includes monitors, keyboards and mice. But also printers, speakers, headphones, microphones, webcams and USB flash drives. Anything you can plug in to a port on the PC is one of its peripherals.

