

Vocabulary is an important part of teaching and learning. In this glossary, we explain a selection of the computing-specific vocabulary derived from the Teach Computing Curriculum and aim to support your understanding of these key terms.

When used correctly, vocabulary can unlock a wealth of understanding; however, when used inconsistently, it can cause alternate conceptions (misconceptions) that can interfere with pupils' learning. You can read more about this in [our quick read on alternate conceptions](#). As a teacher, your regular and consistent use of accurate, technical vocabulary can support pupils' conceptual understanding.

In many instances, vocabulary acts as a label that identifies the concept. To connect a concept with the appropriate term, begin by introducing and explaining the key term, then unpack the related concept; this makes it more concrete for your pupils, before you repack it and then once again apply the vocabulary label. This will ensure that you connect these labels with the concepts that they describe and embed the concept in your pupils' understanding and, subsequently, the terminology will become part of their own vocabulary. The Teach Computing Curriculum incorporates this unpacking and repacking approach and you can find out more in [our quick read on semantic waves](#).

Throughout the Teach Computing Curriculum, we introduce new terms progressively and revisit them often. As such, this glossary is a first release that will be added to, revised, and updated regularly.

Glossary

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Algorithm	1&2	A precise set of ordered steps that can be followed by a human and implemented on a computer to achieve a task
Attribute (property)	1&2	A word or a phrase that can be used to describe an object such as its colour, size, or price
Browser	2	SEE: Web browser

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Code	1&2	The commands that a computer can run
Code snippet	1&2	A section of a program viewed in isolation
Command	1&2	A single instruction that can be used in a program to control a computer
Computer	1&2	A programmable machine that accepts and processes inputs and produces outputs (input, process, output; IPO)
Computer network	2	A group of interconnected computing devices
Computer system	2	A combination of hardware and software that can have data input to it, which it then processes and outputs . It can be programmed to perform a variety of tasks.
Condition	2	A statement that can be either True or False
Condition-controlled loop	2	SEE: Loop (condition-controlled)
Count-controlled loop	2	SEE: Loop (count-controlled)
Data	1&2	A letter, word, number etc. that has been collected for a purpose, but stored without context

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Data set	2	A collection of related data
Debugging	1&2	The process of finding and correcting errors in a program
Decompose	2	To break down a task into smaller, more achievable steps
Digital device	2	A computer or a device with a computer inside that has been programmed for a specific task
Domain name	2	The part of a website's URL that is user friendly and identifies that it is under the control of a particular person or organisation e.g. raspberrypi.org
Execute (run)	2	SEE: Run
Hardware	2	The physical parts of a computer system
HTML (HyperText Markup Language)	2	A standardised language used to define the structure of web pages
Hyperlink	2	(Also: link, weblink) Text or media that when clicked, takes the user to another specified location (URL)
Infinite loop	2	SEE: Loop (infinite)

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Information	1&2	Data put into a context that provides meaning
Information technology	1	The study, use, and development of computer systems for storing, processing, retrieving, and sending information
Input	2	Data that is sent to a program to be processed
Input device	2	A piece of hardware used to control, or send data to, a computer
Internet	2	The global system of interconnected computer networks
Loop	2	(Count-controlled, condition-controlled, or infinite) Commands that repeatedly run a defined section of code
Loop (condition-controlled)	2	A command that repeatedly runs a defined section of code until a condition is met
Loop (count-controlled)	2	A command that repeatedly runs a defined section of code a predefined number of times
Loop (infinite)	2	A command that repeatedly runs a defined section of code indefinitely
Network	2	SEE: Computer network

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Object	1	Something that can be named and has other attributes (properties) , which can be labelled
Object	2	Something that is uniquely identifiable and has attributes
Output	2	The result of data processed by a computer
Output device	2	A piece of hardware that is controlled by outputs from a computer
Procedure	2	A named set of commands that can be called multiple times throughout a program . This type of subroutine does not return a value.
Process	2	A program , or part of a program , that is running on a computer
Program	1&2	A set of ordered commands that can be run by a computer to complete a task
Property (attribute)	1	A word or a phrase that can be used to describe an object such as its colour, size, or price
Repetition	2	Part of a program where one or more commands are run multiple times in a loop
Router	2	A device that manages the flow of data between computer networks

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Run (execute)	1&2	To action the commands in a program
Selection	2	Part of a program where if a condition is met, then a set of commands is run
Server	2	A networked computer that manages, stores , and provides data such as files to other computers
Software	2	The programs used to control computers and perform specific tasks
Stored (data)	2	Data kept digitally so that it can be accessed by a computer
Subroutine	2	A named sequence of commands designed to perform a specific task
Switch (network switch)	2	A device that manages the flow of data packets within a computer network
Technology	1	The use of scientific knowledge for practical purposes
URL (Uniform Resource Locator)	2	The address of a file on the internet
Variable	2	A named piece of data (often a number or text) stored in a computer's memory, which can be accessed and changed by a computer program

Term	Key Stage	Definition
Web	2	SEE: WWW (World Wide Web)
Web address	2	SEE: URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
Web browser	2	A program used to view, navigate, and interact with web pages
Web page	2	A HTML document viewed using a web browser
Website	2	A collection of interlinked web pages , stored under a single domain
WiFi	2	A technology that allows devices to wirelessly access a network and transfer data
WAP (Wireless Access Point)	2	A network device that allows wireless computing devices to connect to a wired network
WWW (World Wide Web)	2	A service provided via the internet that allows access to web pages and other shared files