

## Lesson 1-17: Identifying Ports

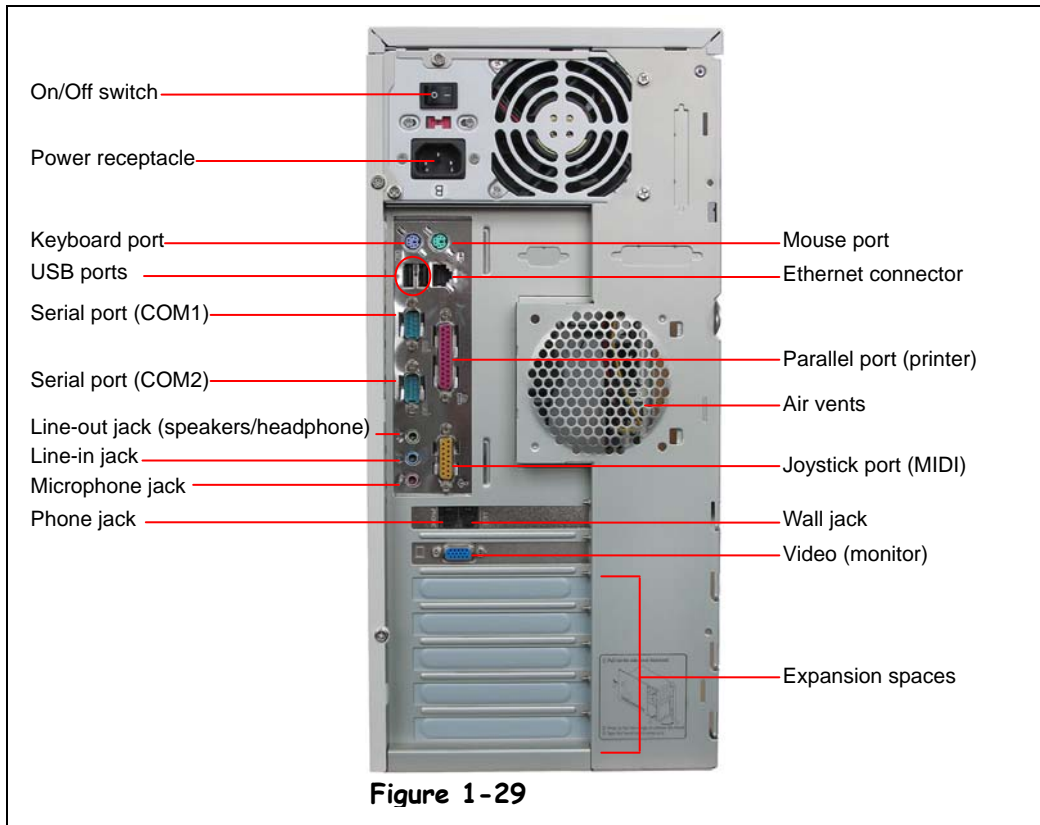
**Figure 1-29**

The back of a computer case.

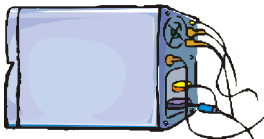
**IC3**

Objective: 1.1.2.6

Req. File: None



**Figure 1-29**




























You may feel a bit overwhelmed the first time you look at the back of a computer.

When you look at the back of a computer, you may feel a bit overwhelmed by all the slots and holes. Fortunately, manufacturers have added some fairly standard icons and color coding to help you identify what should be plugged into your computer and where. Before long, you'll recognize those icons and colors, and the configuration won't seem so mysterious. It's rather like hooking up cable and a DVD player to the back of your television—unless you're one of those people who just wait for the cable guy to take care of that heinous task. In any case, this lesson will review each item piece by piece so you won't get completely lost.

Before we begin, let's define a couple of terms. The first thing you'll notice is that the back of your computer has lots of holes. Those holes are called (depending on who you ask) *jacks*, *ports*, or *connectors*. You may notice that some of the connectors have holes, but some have what look like stickpins (which are aptly named *pins*). The ones that have holes are called *female* connectors; the ones that have pins are called *male* connectors. Let's leave it at that.

Now let's begin. Compare Figure 1-29 to Table 1-14: *What's on the Back of a Computer Case?* The back of your computer may be arranged differently but should include the same elements.

Table 1-14: What's on the Back of a Computer Case?

Port	Icon	Description
 Keyboard & Mouse		<p>The keyboard and mouse jacks look identical on most PCs, so look for colors and icons to help you with plugging in these devices.</p> <p>Some mice and keyboards use USB ports. Older mice may use a serial port.</p>
 Serial or COM		<p>Serial (or COM) ports are a very versatile type of port. Some of the things you can plug into a serial port include a mouse, modem, scanner, or digital camera. Most computers have two serial ports: COM1 and COM2.</p>
 Parallel or Printer		<p>You plug your printer into the parallel, or printer, port. Many newer printers may use a USB port.</p>
 USB		<p>Designed to replace older Serial and Parallel ports, the USB (<i>Universal Serial Bus</i>) can connect computers with a number of devices, such as printers, keyboards, mice, scanners, digital cameras, PDAs, and more. Better yet, the USB port supports <i>plug-and-play</i>, so you can simply plug in a USB device and start using it.</p> <p>USB 1 ports can transfer information at a speed up to 12 Mbps (<i>Megabytes per Second</i>). Newer USB 2 ports can transfer information at a speed up to 480 Mbps. Most computers come with two USB ports.</p>
 Video or Monitor		<p>You plug your monitor into the video port.</p>
 Line Out		<p>Plug in your speakers or headphone into the Line Out jack.</p>
 Line In		<p>The Line In jack allows you to listen to your computer using a stereo system.</p>
 Microphone		<p>You can plug a microphone into this jack to record sounds on your computer.</p>
 Joystick or Game		<p>If you have a joystick, musical (MIDI) keyboard, or other gaming device, this is where you plug it in.</p>
 Phone or Modem		<p>The phone or modem jack is where you plug your computer into a phone line.</p>
 Network or Ethernet		<p>You can connect your computer to a network by plugging in an Ethernet cable in this port.</p>
 SCSI		<p>A SCSI port is one of the fastest ways to connect a hard drive, CD-ROM drive, or other device to a computer.</p>
 FireWire		<p>A FireWire (IEEE 1394 or i.LINK) port lets you connect such devices as hard disks and digital camcorders to a computer. A FireWire port can transfer information at a speed up to 400 Mbps (Megabytes per Second).</p>

### Quick Reference

#### Ports on the Back of a Computer Include:

- Keyboard and Mouse
- Serial or COM
- Parallel or Printer
- USB
- Video or monitor
- Line in, line out, microphone
- Joystick or game
- Phone or modem
- Ethernet or network
- SCSI
- Firewire