



Ideas for helping students become more familiar with computers

- Learn word processing: type a sentence, paragraph, (or letter, story, etc.). Edit it, save it, reopen it, rename it. Learn about spell-checker, formatting, etc.
- Learn to use mail: open a free email account. Send someone a message. Open, read, reply, delete email. Open/send an attachment. Recognize and delete junk mail (especially note the tell-tale signs of scam operations).
- Become more familiar with the online resources:
 - Search for
 - news/information about your native country, or for news/information sites in your native language
 - information about a particular need (e.g. health issue, consumer/financial, childcare, legal etc.*) or interest (e.g. sports, gardening, cooking, entertainment)
 - job listings
 - apartments for rent or homes for sale
 - local services (e.g. painters, pediatricians, computer repairs, barbers, etc.)
 - Practice keyboarding with a typing tutor program such as www.typingweb.com
 - Use a free online translation program
 - Learn how people list things for sale on sites like Craig's List or how they buy/sell things on sites like E-Bay. Look at online catalogs for something you're interested in buying (but never conduct a financial transaction on behalf of a student--see the note at the bottom of this list).
 - Look at the website for a son or daughter's school and learn about activities, policies, schedules/calendar, parent/guardian organization, etc., or look at a son or daughter's Amherst Middle School or High School grades and assignments (using a Power School password)
 - Look at an events calendar (e.g. Jones Library, the Gazette, etc.)
 - Learn how to interact with online questionnaires (e.g. job applications, on line registration forms, surveys, etc.) or surveys
 - Look up someone's phone #, or find the phone # of a local business or agency
 - Check and see what information is already online about yourself or someone else (e.g. google name search, white pages/phone number)
 - Look up your home (and other familiar places) on a map website or Google Earth. Look up your home and places of interest in your native country.
 - Look at bus schedules and route maps
 - Get directions and a map to a place you want to go (e.g. MapQuest)
 - Take a practice test online (e.g. TOEFL, GED, SAT, etc.)
 - Use a free site to design a resume (but make sure it's not a scam outfit)
 - Use the USPS.com website to figure out postage for a letter or package
 - See how much your home is worth according to the town assessor's office and real estate sales sites
 - See whether a particular airline flight is on time; find/compare prices for airline tickets to a specific destination
 - View a traffic or weather webcam
 - Look for today's (or this week's) weather forecast

- View YouTube videos (e.g. entertainment, do-it-yourself, Ted Talks, news, sports, etc.) or watch TV (e.g. on Hulu or a network website)
- Work on English listening and reading skills (suggested links here: <http://www.joneslibrary.org/esl/info/adult.html>)
- Store photos on an image sharing site like Flickr. Make an album or design a photobook.
- Students who are working on their own computers may want to download and learn to use programs like Skype and iTunes.

*Recommendations for informational web sites:

- legal info: <http://www.masslegalhelp.org/>
- medical topics: <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en.html>
- financial topics: <http://www.mymoney.gov/>

Note: be careful with confidentiality issues. Students should keep and enter their passwords by themselves, privately. Do not ask a student to share private information (such as social security numbers) or financial information (such as bank account or credit card numbers).

Never conduct a financial transaction for a student. Instead, show the student how the information would be entered by using a “dummy” (invalid) number. If the student chooses to, she/he can then make the actual transaction at a later date—never with you. This is important because you don’t want a student coming back to you (or the ESL program) at some point in the future, claiming that he/she was guided into making an unwise purchase or financial transaction without fully understanding or consenting to it.