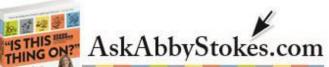




If you're trying to decide which is best for you — a desktop, laptop, or tablet — make a trip to the computer store solely to help you determine which device you should buy. Try a couple of models of each. While you're at it, think about your workspace and how you're planning to use the machine. Keep in mind that all the basic hardware components are the same on a laptop or a desktop and between tablets. What you're considering is how the size of each type of device suits your needs and whether you want something portable. Once you think you've made a choice or if you're feeling overwhelmed, leave the store. Either go have lunch and return in the afternoon or come back another day to continue your field trip. If you feel you've absorbed all you can, take a break. This is an important decision, and you want to make a thoughtful choice. Initially, the computer store can sometimes add to any confusion you might have, especially after you get home and try to remember all you saw. The **Test-Drive Form** that follows will give you a written record to reference at your own pace in your own home. Copy these pages to bring with you to the store. If you have any questions or need any advice, feel free to email me at abby@AskAbbyStokes.com. (Also review Ch. 7 — "Would You Buy A Car Without Test-Driving It?" p.56)

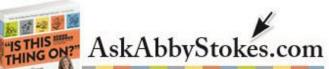
TEST-DRIVE FORM		
1. Store:		
Sales	person:	
	address and phone number of the store and the name of the son you spoke with.	
2. Brand	& Model of Computer or Tablet:	
	ny numbers that follow the brand name—this will indicate el. For example: Dell Inspiron 15 3000.	
3. Cost:		
	basic cost and any additional costs. For example: \$499 plus AM upgrade = \$549.	
SYSTEM	INFORMATION	
4. Comp	uter Case: All-in-One Tower	
	buying a desktop, is the computer case an all-in-one or a odel that will go on the floor?	





5. CPU Speed:	_ Upgradable 🔲 Yes 🔲 No
want to splurge, you could go as h	PU with at least 1.7 GHz, but if you igh as 3 GHz, or even higher. Tablets tion as a computer. Comparing CPU
6. RAM:	Upgradable
The random access memory (RAM specifically gigabytes (GB) for RAM least 1 GB—but 8 GB or higher is n	M. You will want a RAM size of at
7. Hard Drive:	Upgradable
	gh as a terabyte (TB = 1,000 GB). It you start with at least 250 GB. terabyte, but it all depends on how music you store on your computer. ard drive is 16 GB, but you can go
8. Monitor Size:	
Monitor size is measured in diagon the opposite bottom corner of the computer screen is better, but con you want—you can judge what sui different sizes.	screen itself. For most, a bigger
9. Touch Screen:	☐ Yes ☐ No
Touch screen technology is not lin and desktop computers offer touc yourself and see if you have a pref	h screens as well. Touch for





10. Media (CD/DVD) Drive: CD-RW DVD-RW				
Tablets and netbooks do not have built-in media drives. CD-RW				
stands for "Compact Disc Re-Writable." Information can be brought				
onto the computer using a CD. You can take information off the				
computer as well—it could be that you want to have a backup of all				
the information you have on your computer. With a CD-RW drive,				
you can copy, or "burn," information onto a CD from your computer.				
DVD stands for "Digital Versatile Disc" and/or "Digital Video Disc."				
Whatever the name, you may want to strongly consider having a DVD				
drive. For most of us layfolk, we'll use a DVD drive to watch movies.				
If you don't already have a DVD player in your home, now is your				
chance to be able to watch DVDs on your computer!				
11. Number of USB Ports:				
USB stands for "Universal Serial Bus." It is today's most commonly used				
type of computer port to plug in a mouse, keyboard, printer, or scanner.				
It's also where you insert a flash drive (see page 53). If you're buying				
a computer, you want to be sure your computer has at least two USB				
ports. If it has only one USB port, you can purchase a USB hub, which				
offers additional USB ports off the hub, but a computer with additional				
USB ports is preferable. Tablets vary. Some do and some don't have				
ports—that might make your decision right there.				
ports that high have your decision right diere.				
12. Ethernet: ☐ Yes ☐ No				
This port is used to connect your computer to an external DSL or				
cable modem for a high-speed Internet connection. An ethernet port				
looks like a phone jack, but it is slightly wider. Even if you aren't				
interested in a high-speed Internet connection at the moment, you'll				
want your computer to have the capacity for it down the road. Tablets				
don't use an ethernet port.				
13. Wireless:				
13. Wireless:				
13. Wireless:				





latter, you will have the choice limits you to connecting only monthly fee for cellular data, Be sure to ask if the tablet is li	when w which g	ri-fi is a tives yo	vailabl	e) or paying a nnection 24/7.	
14. Speakers Included:		Yes		No	
15. Webcam Built-In:		Yes		No	
16. Type of Mouse:		Notes	on Fe	el:	
If you are buying a desktop, it you are buying a laptop, note of (touch pad or touch point). Jo each. Remember, you can't be point, but you will have an impositioned in a place that seer cramped while using it? Your when you're on the computer, control. But generally speaking. 17. Notes on Keyboard: Note the feel of the keyboard. resistant? Or are they just right.	which let down expect pression ms easy mouse so it m ng, cont	sind of some ed to r n of ho to acc will be ust be rol will	mouse notes o naster t w it fee ess or i your co comfor I come	it comes with In the feel of The mouse at this Els. Is the mouse Is your hand Instant companitable to access With practice.	ion and
18. How Will It Fit in Your Wo Take notes on how you picture SUPPORT	-		ter syst	em in your hom	— е.
19. Warranty: The length of the warranty will warranty? Ask if the screen is device.				-	
20. Extended Warranty:					

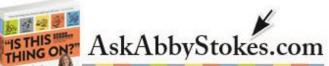




It's more than likely that the computer store where you make your purchase will offer you an extended warranty. This is an agreement with the store or mail-order company, not the manufacturer. The agreement is valid only if the store is still operational for the duration of the extended warranty—a good reason to make sure you are shopping at a reputable store. Because a single repair on a computer can run into the hundreds of dollars, consider a warranty. 21. Money-Back Guarantee: Yes No This may be an agreement with the manufacturer that you have a certain number of days to return the machine—kind of like the lemon law. Beware: Some manufacturers will not exchange a computer even if it is defective. They may offer only to repair the machine. In that case, you may want to engage your credit card company as an advocate for you. Or, before contacting the manufacturer, call the store you purchased it from and ask if it is willing to exchange the defective computer. **22. Technical Support:** ☐ Yes □ No This is crucial. You want to make sure that the store or mail-order company you purchase from has technical support. The last thing you want to have to do is pack up your computer and mail it to the manufacturer. It is irritating enough to have to bring it to the store for repairs. Ask specifically about telephone technical support. A lot of questions or problems can be answered by a telephone call to a technician. You should be getting free support for the length of your warranty, whether you have a problem with your computer or you have a question about how to use the machine. If the manufacturer, not the store, provides the technical support, ask your salesperson for the technical repair numbers of the manufacturers you are considering. When you are home, call the

numbers and see how long it takes for you to speak to a technician.





	0 1	uter you purchase.
23. On-Site Repair:	☐ Yes ☐	No Cost:
Can someone come to yo much will it cost if it is st expired?	= '	-
24. On-Site Installation: Can someone come to yo	our house to install	your system? (This is
more relevant for deskto	ps than laptops or	tablets.)
SOFTWARE		
Note: Software questions	s are only for comp	uters, not tablets.
25. Operating System:		
Preinstalled Softwa	re:	
Note the operating system	m in your compute:	r (Windows 8.1 or 10,
Mac Mavericks, Yosemite	e, other) and any pr	reinstalled application
software. For example, n		
processing program, such	h as WordPad or N	otePad, already installed
26. Additional Software	:	Cost:
Additional Software	:	Cost:
Additional Software		
You may want to buy won	rd-processing softv	vare or some other
You may want to buy wor		
You may want to buy wor		
You may want to buy wor software based on your it		
You may want to buy worksoftware based on your in Chapter 8. PRINTER	nterests. We'll talk	about this choice in
You may want to buy wor software based on your is Chapter 8.	nterests. We'll talk	about this choice in



29. Type of Printer:
An ink-jet printer is less expensive at purchase time, but a laser printer proves cheaper over the long term because it uses toner cartridges, which last much longer than ink cartridges purchased for the ink-jet. However, that only proves true if you're doing a large volume of printing. Most individuals opt for an ink-jet printer, and most businesses purchase a laser-jet.
30. Features: Color Black & White Only Scanner
You will choose features based on your specific needs. Some printers send faxes and/or make copies. A color printer and scanner might be helpful if you decide to create something like a family newsletter or your own greeting cards. Color is definitely fun if you're printing from a website or want to print pictures. With a color printer, you have to purchase both a black ink cartridge and a color ink cartridge. Be prepared; cartridges can be pricey.
31. Paper Loading:
It is important to note whether the printer is front or top loading so you can arrange your workspace accordingly.
32. Wireless:
Some newer printers don't require a cable between computer and printer. It is possible to print from a tablet, if you purchase a wireless printer.
33. Number of Pages Printed per Minute:
If you are anticipating a lot of printing, how quickly the printer works may be quite important to you.
34. Number of Pages Printed per Ink Cartridge:
This is an important issue. I have a student who was interested in having a small portable printer. She was unpleasantly surprised when





	200monte:			
35. Cost of Ink Cartridge Replacements: 36. Length of Warranty:				
you make your purchase will off an agreement with the store, not is valid only if the store is still on	In likely that the computer store where fer you an extended warranty. This is to the manufacturer. The agreement perational for the duration of the son to make sure you're shopping			
- ·	the manufacturer that you have a n the machine. Ask the store if you redit.			
39. Toll-Free Support:	☐ Yes ☐ No			
,	vant to make sure that the store or n has technical support. You should ength of your warranty.			
40. On-Site Repair:	Yes No Cost:			
Even with the printer, ask if som	neone can come to your home to			
repair it.				
41. Did You Ask if All of the Pe	ripherals Are Compatible?			