



What Defines a Computer?

Instructional Days: 1-2 days

Topic Description: Students will decide what defines a computer by doing a series of activities that ask the students to think about what types of objects are computers and what types of objects are not computers.

Objectives:

The student will:

- Briefly learn about the first computer ENIAC
- Try to decide what types of objects are computers and what are not computers
- Define what it means to be a computer

Outline of the Lesson and Teaching Strategies:

- Introduce the “what is a computer” debate
 - Talk about the first computer, the ENIAC computer
 - Watch the Intro video: “What is a Computer?”
- Complete the “Is This a Computer?” activity
 - Introduce that activity and ask the class to think of some examples of computers found in the classroom
 - Have students complete the activity in small groups
 - Discuss the activity as a class by answering the “Activity Debrief” questions
- Complete the “Debating Computers” activity
 - Explain how the activity works and make sure all the students understand how to complete the activity
 - After completing the activity, talk about the discussion questions in small groups or as a class

Lesson Plan: What Defines a Computer?

- Complete the “What Defines a Computer” activity
 - Have students complete this activity on their own or in small groups
 - Have students share their definitions with other students in the class. You may even want to have volunteers share their definitions with the whole class
 - Talk about the discussion questions
- Wrap up the day
 - Watch the “Simulating the Brain with a Computer” video
 - Have students pair up and talk about the questions in the “Video Discussion” section

Resources :

- All the resources including the worksheets are available on the What is a Computer Overview page of the muddX website (http://muddx.com/unit/HMC.MyCS.Middle-years_Computer_Science/branch/draft/block/vertical7d0)