Activity 01-1: Getting to Know Your Device

Big Idea

A computing "system" is made up of many component parts--some are hardware components and some are software. Knowing exactly which hardware and software versions you are working with is essential to providing the best support for every device.

Materials

Laptops, Desktops, Tablets, even Smartphones--any device students can learn about, including peripherals. Students should have access to view System Settings.

Vocabulary

Settings or System Settings
Notifications
Multitasking (in Windows)
Windows Hello

Background

Every device has Settings that can help you identify the exact hardware and software that it uses. In this activity, you'll identify as much information about the component parts of a computing device and any peripherals it uses. You can repeat this activity using different devices.

Activity Directions

1. Open the Settings for your device. Some examples are provided, but you can find how to access the Settings for any device with a simple Internet search. (Windows 10 Settings | Windows 11 Settings | Mac System Settings).
2. Explore the type of information available to you in the Settings. It can take some time to review ALL of the settings on a device. On some devices, you may have to dig a little to find all of the settings. For example:
   a. In Windows, there are not only settings for hardware and software but also for tools that help you use your device, like setting up Notifications or Multitasking.

Focus on reviewing the System Settings and any settings related to hardware, peripherals, and apps/software.

    b. On Mac OS, begin with General settings under the System Settings but drill down to the About menu to run a System Report that has extensive information about Hardware, Network, and Software.

3. Record the basic settings for the device you are exploring, such as Model, Memory, OS version, Displays, Storage, Memory, Ports, and Peripherals, such as Printers, Storage Devices, Webcams, Speakers, or others.

4. Explore at least one type of Settings category you would like to know more about and become an expert in it. You may want to view options for Appearance/Themes or see how your device can support Accessibility/Ease of Use. You're going to share what you've learned, so you may want to have people select different settings to explore.

Meet with others and share what you have learned about Settings. Compare basic Settings. Are they all the same or are there differences? Did others find settings you didn't? Ask them to show you where they found them.

Take a few minutes to teach others the new Settings you explored. If everyone in your class/team explores different Settings, you can learn a lot of new Settings quickly!

Extensions

If possible, explore these other Settings to better understand how they function. Not all may be accessible on school/district-provided devices.

Security and Maintenance Drill. How to use [Windows Hello](#) (Biometrics), Windows Security, and scheduling updates.

Power Management and Customization Challenge. Explore power settings. Experiment with different power plans and observe how these affect battery life and performance.