

Getting the best from your Home Computer Course

This is the first comprehensive guide to the world of home computers, designed to help you make the most of your machine. It is divided into a number of parallel study 'streams'; to make it easy to follow one stream through from the beginning to the end of the work, each has been allocated a distinctive coloured stripe, which runs right across the head of the page and can be spotted at once as the pages are riffled through.

It may be that you are still trying to make up your mind before buying your first computer, and find it difficult to disentangle the manufacturers' sweeping claims from the necessary basic specification; or perhaps you have been baffled by the ill-digested jargon hurled at you by the salesman in your High Street shop. On the other hand, you may be looking for a more up-to-date, more powerful machine to replace your present model. In either case, **HARDWARE FOCUS** is for you. We take a penetrating look at all the popular micros in turn, removing the cover and keyboard to look at the interior layout, providing a rationally tabulated list of specifications that makes it simple to compare one machine with another, and detailing the various peripherals available.

Once you have your computer, you'll immediately want to try it out and discover what it can do. The course in **BASIC PROGRAMMING** begins by showing you what a computer cannot do — you can write a simple program for it that will force it to make mistakes, and it will have no means of correcting them. From this point on we take you through exercises of increasing complexity, at the end of which you should have a complete understanding of programming in Microsoft **BASIC**.

What's going on inside the computer as you write your programs? **PASSWORDS TO COMPUTING** helps you to understand the inner workings of your micro, explaining electronic logic and how it is applied in computer design. And as you develop more sophisticated skills, **SOUND AND LIGHT** leads you through the complexities of generating music, sound effects and graphics in the most popular micros.

Then there are the peripherals: disk drives and printers, joysticks and modems. The aptly-named **INSIGHTS** stream lets you look into the interiors of these machines, revealing the details of their mechanical construction and explaining the electronics that govern them.

And, of course, **SOFTWARE** has not been forgotten. This stream does not only review the most outstanding of the fascinating range of programs commercially available; it also outlines the principles upon which the programs are written and looks into the many external facilities that can be accessed. And to round out your understanding of how computers have developed we introduce you to the achievements of some **PIONEERS IN COMPUTING**. Welcome to The Home Computer Course — the future starts here!