



## Computers - How does a computer work?

### Fact

- A computer works using programmes which are lists of instructions it needs to follow to complete a task.
- You use different programmes to do different jobs like writing a letter in a word programme and painting a picture in a drawing programme.
- A computer has a CPU, a central processing unit that works a bit like your brain. The CPU sends and receives messages.
- When you use the keyboard or the computer mouse you're sending a message to the CPU and the CPU passes that message onto different parts of the computer, telling what you want it to do.

### Do you know

- Computers can't think for themselves, they have to follow a programme telling it what to do.
- There are computers in just about everything. From washing machines to microwaves, cars to television sets.

### Experiments you can do

Give a friend or family member a programme to follow just like a computer would. Remind them that computers can't think for themselves, they have to follow the instructions completely. If you give your friend or family member a list of instructions on brushing their teeth but... leave something out or put something extra in that's the way they have to brush their teeth!

### Other Investigations

How many things in your house use a computer? Some of your big electrical appliances will but how about some of the smaller ones?

Make some kiwi biscuits like the "Suzy Computer" did. Input the data by reading the recipe. You're the computer working with a programme while you make the biscuits and your output is the end result - cooked biscuits. And then I guess you get to input again by eating the biscuits!!

#### *Kiwi Biscuits*

150 grams of flour  
1 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
2 cups flour

2 tablespoons of golden syrup  
1 teaspoon of baking powder  
1 cup of rolled oats

Get an adult to help you, especially when you take the biscuits out of the oven. Cream the butter and sugar. Then add the eggs and golden syrup and mix again. Sift in the baking powder and flour and mix them in then add the rolled oats and give it another good stir. Put tablespoonfuls of the mixture onto a baking tray and cook the biscuits for about 25 minutes on 180 degrees Celsius.

### Jokes

What did one computer say to the other? Have you got any dip to go with your chip?