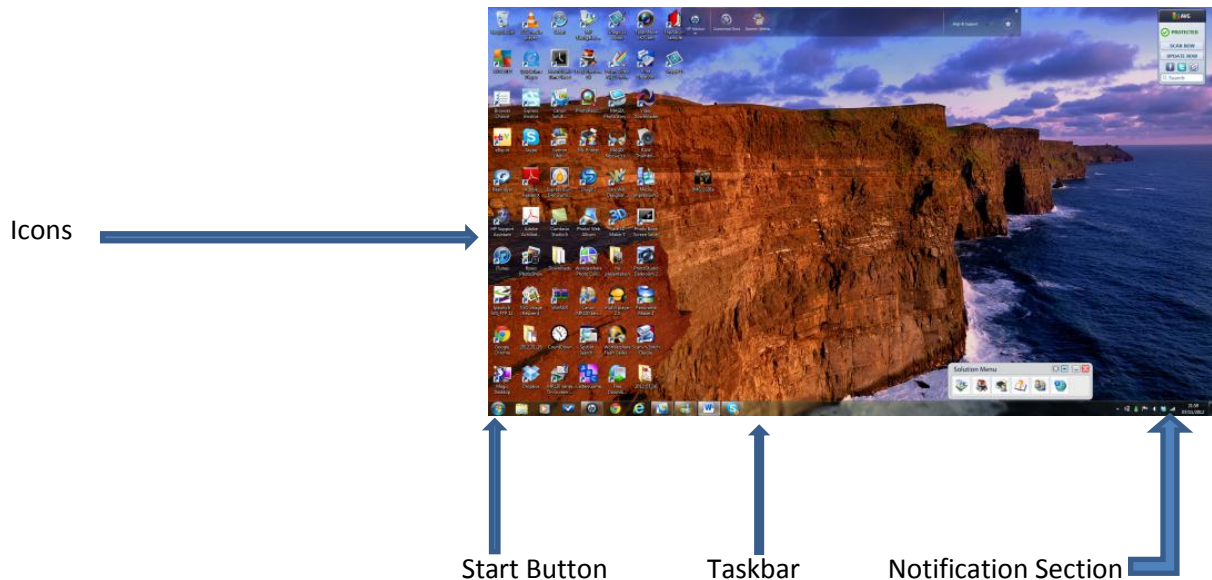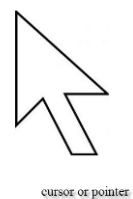# Introduction to the Laptop

Section 1

When you start up your laptop the opening screen that you see is called the **desktop**. You will notice a number of pictures on the desktop. These are called **icons** and they represent shortcuts to work previously created, or programs that you have loaded onto the laptop.

Icons

Start Button   Taskbar   Notification Section

The **taskbar** is the long narrow strip that appears along the bottom of the desktop. It contains a number of **icons** in the form of **buttons**. A button is an icon that you can click on to perform a specific action, i.e. open a document or program. Some buttons are always on the taskbar such as the **Start** button, while others may only appear when you have a particular program open. When a button has a pressed-in appearance, it indicates that that is the **active** program. Clicking a button on the taskbar makes the program it represents the active item.
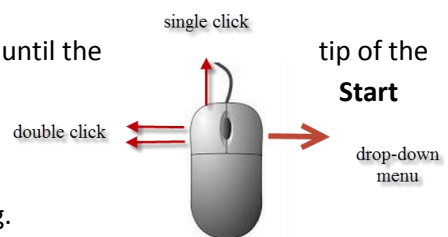
The Mouse

There are two ways to control what takes place on your desktop, the **touchpad** and the **mouse**. The touchpad is really a built-in mouse. It consists of a sensitive pad with two buttons. However laptop touchpads can be sensitive and awkward to use so it is better and easier to use a mouse. The most basic mouse has two buttons, one left and one right. As you move the mouse around on the mat or desk, a **pointer** (called a **cursor**), in the shape of a small arrow, moves on the screen and can be used to point to an icon or a section in a document.

cursor or pointer

There are three actions that you can perform with a mouse – pointing, clicking and dragging.

single click

1. To point to an object on the desktop, move the mouse until the   tip of the
   pointer is on or inside the icon. **Practice: Point to the   Start
   Start button.**

   double click

   drop-down
   menu

2. To select an object, first **point** to it. Then quickly **press**
   and **release** the **left-hand button**. This is called clicking.

Practice: Click on the Recycle Bin icon. The icon darkens to show it is highlighted or **selected**. **A single click** selects the object. **Now try clicking on a number of other icons**. A **double click** means clicking twice in quick succession. This action **opens** a program or folder**.** **Practice: Double click on the Recycle Bin**. A window will open to show you the contents of the bin. If the bin has nothing in it, the window will be empty.

3. To drag an object means to move it on the desktop to a new location using the mouse. **Practice: Place the tip of the pointer on an icon on the desktop. Hold down the left-hand mouse button and move/drag the mouse. An outline of the icon moves with the mouse. Release the button and this drops the icon into a new position.** It may spring back into its original position depending on how the laptop has been set up)

Pointers

The mouse pointer can have different shapes for different purposes. These are generated automatically, depending on the action being performed. Some of the more common pointers are:

- **Arrow pointer**, probably the most common. It is used to select objects, to click buttons and to choose options in menus
- The **busy pointer** or **hourglass** pointer. This appears when the laptop is busy and will take a few moments to carry out a function. When this pointer appease, please wait until the pointer resumes its original shape.
- The **help pointer** (**question mark**) appears when you click on **What's this** on the **Help** menu. When you point to an object or menu with this pointer, a pop-up explanation is displayed.
- The pointer in a text document is called the **I-beam**. Its thin shape allows it to be placed between letters in the text.
- The flashing vertical line you see in a text page is called the **insertion point** or **flashing cursor** (not cursing flasher!!). It indicates where text will appear if you start typing.
- The **crosshair pointer** is used as a drawing tool or to select a specific section of the graphic
- The **resize pointer** can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. It appears when you select shapes or graphics to be resized.
- The **move pointer** is used to move graphics form one position to another on the desktop or page.