Reading 2

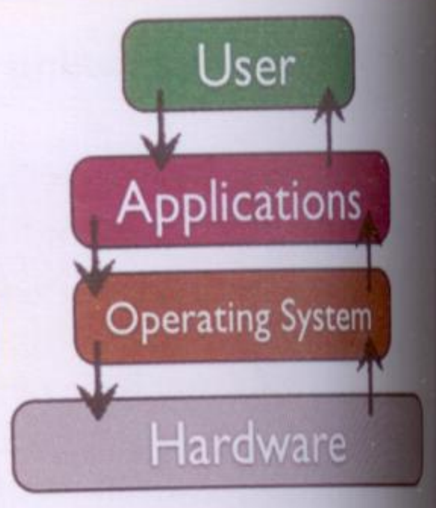
► **Before you read the text below, decide if the following (a-f) refer to a) an operating system, or b) an application program. Then, read the text and check your answers:**

a) *Microsoft Windows:* _____
b) *Microsoft Excel:* _____
c) *loads automatically and controls everything on the computer:* _____
d) *helps the user accomplish a certain task, such as browsing the Internet, or playing a game:* _____
e) *runs a computer's programs:* _____
f) *creates documents and tables:* _____

► **The following text is split into two parts, each of which goes with various activities. While you read Part One, a) make a timeline of the most important turning points in the evolution of software; b) underline all the operating systems mentioned in the text. You can work in pairs:**

Types Of Software

Software can be broadly divided into two categories: operating systems and application software. *Operating systems* manage the hardware and create the interface between the hardware and the user. *Application software* is the category of programs that do something useful for the user.



PART ONE - OPERATING SYSTEMS

The operating system provides several essential functions, including:

1. managing the hardware resources of the computer;
2. providing the user-interface components;
3. providing a platform for software developers to write applications.

All computing devices run an operating system. For personal computers, the most popular operating systems are Microsoft's Windows, Apple's OS X, and different versions of Linux. Smartphones and tablets run operating systems as well, such as Apple's iOS, Google's Android, Microsoft's Windows Mobile, and Blackberry.

Early personal-computer operating systems were simple by today's standards; they did not provide multitasking and required the user to type commands to initiate an action. The amount of memory that early operating systems could handle was limited as well, making large programs impractical to run. The most popular of the early operating systems was IBM's Disk Operating System, or DOS, which was actually developed for them by Microsoft.

In 1984, Apple introduced the Macintosh computer, featuring an operating system with a graphical user interface. Though not the first graphical operating system, it was the first one to find commercial success. In 1985, Microsoft released the first version of Windows. This version of Windows was not an operating system, but instead was an application that ran on top of the DOS operating system, providing a graphical environment. It was quite limited and had little commercial success. It was not until the 1990 release of Windows 3.0 that Microsoft found success with a graphical user interface. Because of the hold of IBM and IBM-compatible personal computers on business, it was not until Windows 3.0 was released that business users began using a graphical user interface, ushering us into the graphical-computing era. Since 1990, both Apple and Microsoft have released many new versions of their