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A **central processing unit (CPU)**, also called a **central processor** or **main processor**, is the [electronic circuitry](#) within a [computer](#) that carries out the [instructions](#) of a [computer program](#) by performing the basic [arithmetic](#), logic, controlling, and [input/output](#) (I/O) operations specified by the instructions. The computer industry has used the term "central processing unit" at least since the early 1960s.^[1] Traditionally, the term "CPU" refers to a [processor](#), more specifically to its processing unit and [control unit](#) (CU), distinguishing these core elements of a computer from external components such as [main memory](#) and [I/O](#) circuitry.^[2]