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I have received many requests for a list of recommended books in the fields of computer literacy and introductory programming. There are some very good books available for elementary and junior high school students, others that were good but are now out of date, and a few which I definitely do not recommend. My list is highly subjective and includes only books that I have read myself. As is true of any booklist, there are undoubtedly good titles with which I am not familiar. Readers may disagree with my selections, and I will welcome your comments and suggestions. Recommendations for additions to the bibliography will be appreciated, especially for titles listed in sections E and F.

A. Top Choices

Exploring with Computers by Gary G. Bitter (Messner 1981)

This very readable, well-illustrated book is highly recommended for both upper elementary and junior high school students. It provides current information on the development of computers, their uses and misuses in the world today, an introduction to how computers work and to the special vocabulary of the field, suggested student activities and a brief section on careers.

Computers for Kids by Sally G. Larsen (Creative Computing Press 1980)

A simple introduction to programming in BASIC makes this a good first book for either elementary or junior high school collections. Special editions are available for the Apple, Atari and TRS-80 microcomputers, so the programs used as examples in each book are carefully designed for the specific microcomputer. There are separate chapters on machine operation, flowcharting, vocabulary and simple graphics. Commands introduced include PRINT, GOTO, INPUT, RND, IF-THEN, LET, LIST and RUN. Notes for parents and teachers are helpful. You may want circulating copies in all three editions if students in your school have a variety of micros in their homes. Certainly buy several copies of the edition that correlates with any microcomputer you have at school.

Be a Computer Literate by Marion Ball and Sylvia Charp (Creative Computing Press 1977)

This oversize paperback uses large print, lots of white space and simple language to present a great deal of information in a clear and very readable style. Cartoon illustrations that are definitely geared to teenagers make this an introductory book that can be highly recommended for both elementary and junior high. Although somewhat dated, the wealth of still relevant information, appealing format and reasonable price make this a good purchase. A brief introduction to programming in BASIC and a very good glossary are added features. Hopefully, a new edition including microcomputers will be issued soon.