

DEC introduces the VAX

1977 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

technology — tools and methods people develop to solve problems

network — connected people, places, or machines

industry — work that makes goods or provides services

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

Digital Equipment Corporation introduced the VAX-11/780 computer. The Massachusetts company was part of the region's growing technology industry. Computer systems helped researchers and businesses work in new ways.

The Route 128 technology region grew through companies, universities, investment, and skilled workers. No single machine created the whole system. Ask who gained access to technology and who made it possible.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: The Blizzard of '78

1978

A major blizzard brought deep snow, strong winds, and coastal flooding. Roads became blocked, and people helped one another. The storm affected Massachusetts communities in different ways.

The February storm joined snowfall with dangerous coastal conditions. Compare inland and shoreline accounts. A statewide summary can hide differences in damage, preparation, and recovery.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Digital Equipment Corporation introduced the VAX-11/780 computer. The Massachusetts company was part of the region's growing technology industry. Computer systems helped researchers and businesses work in new ways. The Route 128 technology region grew through companies, universities, investment, and skilled workers. No single machine created the whole system. Ask who gained access to technology and who made it possible.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.