Personal Computers Then and Now

Background:

Personal computers are a far cry today from their original versions. Their evolution has been just as dramatic, if not more so, than the evolution from the post-World War II ENIAC to the minicomputers of the late 1970s.

Activity:

Five of the most influential machines of the first decade of personal computing were:

• Altair 8800
• Apple II+
• Commodore 64
• the original IBM PC
• the original MacIntosh

Research each of these machines, looking at such factors as hardware specifications, available software, target user market, price at introduction, and distinguishing characteristics. Provide a basic description of each machine summarizing this information; make sure you cite your sources.

Based on what you find, discuss, by comparison and contrast, how the personal computer changed over its first ten years of existence. Also, compare and contrast these initial personal computers with your current computing device (desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone, your choice).