Exploring the IDE

To launch the Visual Basic Integrated Development Environment click Start, All Programs, then select the Visual Basic menu item:

Almost immediately the Visual Basic Integrated Development Environment (IDE) appears from which you have instant access to everything needed to produce complete Windows applications – from here you can create exciting visual interfaces, enter code, compile and execute applications, debug errors, and much more.

The Visual Basic IDE initially includes a default Start Page, along with the standard IDE components, and looks like this:
Start Page elements

The default start page provides these useful features:

- **Recent Projects** – conveniently lists recently opened projects so you can select one to reopen, or create a brand new project.
- **Get Started** – contains helpful hyperlinks offering assistance on Visual Basic topics.
- **Latest News** – feeds the latest online news direct from the Microsoft Developer Network (MSDN).

Visual Basic IDE components

The Visual Basic IDE initially provides these standard features:

- **Menu Bar** – where you can select actions to perform on all your project files and to access Help. When a project is open extra menus of Project, Build, and Data, are shown in addition to the default menu selection of File, Edit, View, Debug, Tools, Window, and Help.
- **Tool Bar** – where you can perform the most popular menu actions with just a single click on its associated shortcut icon.
- **Toolbox** – where you can select visual elements to add to a project. Place the cursor over the Toolbox to see its contents. When a project is open “controls”, such as Button, Label, CheckBox, RadioButton, and TextBox, are shown here.
- **Solution Explorer** – where you can see at a glance all the files and resource components contained within an open project.
- **Status Bar** – where you can read the state of the current activity being undertaken. When building an application a “Build started” message is displayed here, changing to a “Build succeeded” or “Build failed” message upon completion.