

What is a Kindle?



Print

A Kindle is a small hand-held electronic device for reading books, which has been developed by online retailer [Amazon](#). Rather than you download an iPod or MP3 player with music, you download books (via wireless technology) on to a Kindle and read them on it. The latest model is the Paperwhite, which has a touchscreen, and is available from December 2012.

Launched in early 2012 was the Kindle Fire, and latterly the Kindle Fire HD, with more functionality than previous Kindles and similar to a tablet device, based on an operating system called [Android](#). It has a colour screen and offers basic features such as the ability to stream video and music as well as continue to be an e-reader.

You buy these books as Kindle versions of 'e-books' from the Amazon website. In addition, you can also download [PDFs](#) of any sort of document, which makes this an ideal way of reading for work and study.

Even though the device is extremely lightweight and portable, you can keep a huge number of books on the Kindle. It has a six-inch screen to read from, plus a small keyboard that lets you perform internet searches and other relatively simple web-oriented activities.

Most people use a wifi connection to download books on to their Kindle. However, newer, more expensive models come with 3G mobile phone technology, which makes it possible to download books no matter where you are. With both versions, you can also download books to a PC or Mac and then transfer them to the Kindle via a USB cable.

Key benefits and features of a Kindle:

- Stores up to 1,400 books.
- Special high-contrast screen allows you to read even in bright sunshine with no glare.
- Clear text and fonts, and a sharp display – what you see resembles a book page.
- Adjustable text size.
- Built-in wifi or 3G connection.
- Battery life of at least a month if wifi is turned off.
- Page-turning function so you feel as if you're reading a real book.
- Integrates with Facebook and Twitter and allows searching on Wikipedia.
- Never heats up like a laptop.

- Books can be categorised or stored as collections.
- Automatic archive function: you can delete books and download them another time.
- Screen can be rotated for better viewing of pictures, diagrams, maps, etc.
- Also able to read newspapers, magazines and web pages.
- In-built keyboard enables searching within a book, a library or online.
- You can add your own annotations to the text.
- Automatic bookmark.
- Built-in *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Password protection.

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