

# The Saga guide

*...to laptops and tablets*



- Key features
- Buying for work and leisure
- Windows or Mac?
- And much more...



# Welcome

Whether you want to watch the latest films, surf the internet or manage your finances, a laptop or tablet can be a smaller, portable and more user-friendly alternative to a hefty desktop machine.

Numerous models are available. Some offer dazzling, high-definition displays, perfect for streaming TV shows. Others have big memories for storing music. Some are just very good value.

But with wide choice can come uncertainty, so this guide will take you through the main factors to consider when buying a laptop or tablet that is right for you. We'll focus on how the devices work, their key features and capabilities, ease of use and prices.

Armed with this clear, concise, comprehensive information you'll be able to buy your next laptop or tablet with confidence.



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For more on tablets and laptops, visit [saga.co.uk/magazine/technology](http://saga.co.uk/magazine/technology)

The Saga guide to laptops and tablets offers practical tips for choosing a laptop, tablet or hybrid to meet your day-to-day work or home entertainment needs. It includes details of brands, prices, features and accessibility.

# Should I buy a laptop or a tablet?

Don't know which to choose? Start here to learn which option will suit you best



If you're used to a bulky desktop computer, then a laptop is a revelation. It wraps all the bits you need into one package, including keyboard, screen and a rechargeable battery so it can be used anywhere, from your kitchen to the train to balanced on your lap.

Speedy processors and lots of memory mean laptops can handle all the PC tasks you need, and you can store your collection of music, photos, documents and files on them.

A laptop's full-size keyboard makes typing easier than on a tablet's small on-screen version, and connecting gadgets such as digital cameras to your laptop is simple too.

Large quality screens up to 17 inches make watching films and TV easier on the eyes than doing so on a tablet. Laptops are more durable – closable lids mean there's less chance of damaging the screen.

However, laptops are heavier than tablets, with shorter battery life, and they are more at risk of malware and viruses.

LEARN MORE ABOUT LAPTOPS ON [p4](#)



Tablets are a wonder – they're small, skinny computers around the size of a book and as light as a cup of coffee. They excel at entertainment such as reading ebooks, viewing videos and photos, playing games, the latest apps and surfing the web.

The front of a tablet is dominated by a glossy touchscreen. Instead of a keyboard, you tap or swipe the screen to open and navigate through files, and enter type using an on-screen virtual keyboard.

The real star is a tablet's battery life. You typically get around 12 hours of constant use between recharges. Unlike laptops, tablets switch on instantly – great for quick web searches – and there are lots of free apps available that add games and features to your machine.

Tablets lack the processing oomph of a laptop, even if they sometimes cost more. While a tablet is ideal for everyday computing, if you plan on more intense use then a laptop is still the best choice.

LEARN MORE ABOUT TABLETS ON [p10](#)





# Inside a laptop

Get to grips with the parts and features so you know what to look for when choosing a machine

### Graphics card

Most laptops have integrated video chips that are fine for everyday use, such as watching films. For high-end 3D games, get a video card with its own memory.

### Wi-Fi

Laptops have built-in Wi-Fi chips, so you go online through a wireless network.

### Webcam

A built-in digital camera that lets you make video calls and take photos.

### Memory

The more Random Access Memory (RAM) you have, the quicker a laptop can finish a task or handle several at once. Look for 4GB or more.

### Processor

This runs the laptop's operating system and any programs. Most laptops use Intel processors – Intel Core i5 is a good all-rounder.

### Storage

The number of files, photos and videos you can keep on a laptop is limited by its storage. A hard drive of 1TB or more is good, though more expensive but lighter laptops may have only around 256GB.

### Screen

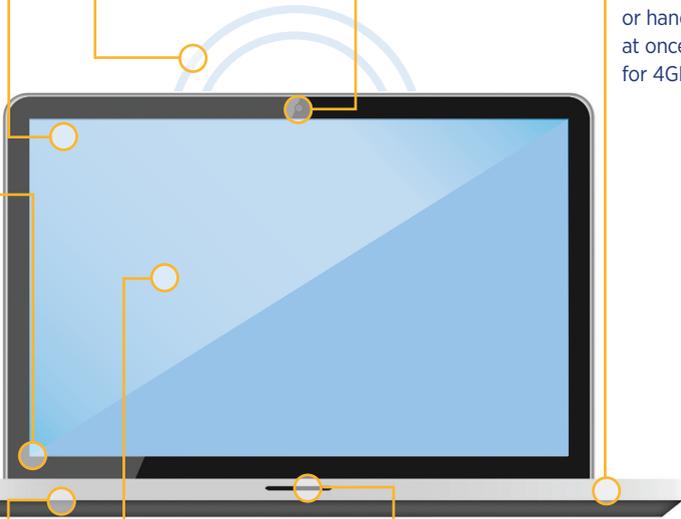
Most laptop screens range from 11 to 17 inches – 15 inches is plenty for watching high-definition films and playing sudoku. Larger screens make for heavier machines with shorter battery life.

### Trackpad

This touch-sensitive panel in front of the keyboard, with clickable buttons, allows you to use your finger to navigate around the screen. Some laptops have touchscreens.

### Battery life

Laptops have a rechargeable battery so can be used unplugged and away from the mains. Battery life ranges from four to 12 hours, depending on the model.



# Choosing a laptop for business

Planning on using your machine for work? Look for a light, powerful model that can crunch data, and a battery that lasts

A business laptop is all about trade-offs between weight, power and battery – ideally resulting in a light, long-battery-life laptop that still has good performance.

A super-lightweight laptop – sometimes called an ultrabook or ultraportable – is ideal for using away from home. Ultrabooks have the latest powerful processors that are super energy efficient, helping to extend battery life and keep them wafer thin. With screen sizes between ten and 13 inches, they weigh around 2lb. But they don't have as many ports as a bulkier laptop – or a DVD drive.

If you're replacing an older business PC that sits on your desk, consider a large, powerful laptop that doesn't make sacrifices for portability. A 17-inch laptop with an Intel Core i5 processor or higher, 1TB of storage and 6GB RAM fits the bill. Opt for a well-laid-out keyboard and plenty of USB ports for connecting devices.

Check out brands such as Apple, HP and Toshiba.



## Get the lowdown

- ◆ **Price** Expensive – expect to pay between £650 to £1,200.
- ◆ **Memory** 4GB should be plenty but 8GB is better for heavy-duty graphics processing, presentations and spreadsheet number crunching without the wait.
- ◆ **Solid-state drives** Most ultraportable laptops use these instead of traditional hard drives to keep the weight down. The downside is less capacity, with most offering just 256GB. If this is an issue, look for a hybrid drive with SSD and hard-disk storage. These offer more space – upwards of 1TB – but with faster loading times.
- ◆ **Battery life** The latest models have a non-removable battery to keep weight and size low. You should expect eight to ten hours' use between charges.
- ◆ **Build quality** Look for a robust laptop if you travel regularly – the best use materials like aluminium, magnesium and carbon fibre to be light but strong.
- ◆ **Integrated graphics** Ultraportables usually have low-power graphics chips – sufficient for most tasks.

**Jargon Buster:** *Gigabyte (GB)* A measure of computer memory or data storage capacity that's roughly equivalent to one billion bytes. *Terabyte (TB)* Roughly equivalent to one trillion bytes.



## Choosing a laptop for home

These all-rounders need the power to handle most computing tasks, without breaking the bank



When choosing a model for the home, you need to be able to tick several boxes. It needs to be light enough to travel from study to kitchen to living room, and powerful enough to play games, watch films and surf the web. You'll need lots of storage for the family photo and music libraries, games and files but, with plenty of sockets around the house, you don't need to worry as much about long battery life.

Pop into any high-street PC store, and these are the models you are most likely to encounter. The majority of home laptops will be slightly bulkier than other models as they're less likely to be taken outside, and have lots of ports for connecting printers, cameras and gadgets.

Look for brands such as Dell, Asus, HP and Acer.

## Choosing an entertainment laptop

For HD films and 3D games, choose a portable, multimedia powerhouse



Laptops aren't all work and no play – and you can squeeze a fully fledged entertainment centre into some.

To enjoy playing the latest video games and watching films, you'll need a powerful multimedia laptop that handles graphically demanding tasks with aplomb.

With 17-inch high-resolution screens, entertainment laptops are bulkier than most. But while most aren't suitable for chucking into a bag for carting around away from home, they can be moved room-to-room easily enough.

At the heart of these models is a dedicated graphics chip that powers on-screen images.

These devices are usually integrated, so have to share the laptop's main memory. A separate graphics chip comes with its own dedicated memory, powering the faster, smoother delivery of high-quality video and 3D graphics.

If you opt for a multimedia laptop, then HDMI connectivity is a must for wiring your machine to a TV, and with larger laptops you can get a full-size keyboard to make typing a pleasure. Some include branded speakers – such as Bang & Olufsen – that expand the sound stage over a standard laptop.

Good brands to consider include Lenovo, Asus and Alienware.



### Get the lowdown

- ◆ **Price** Expect to pay around £350 to £700 for a decent model that caters for everyone's needs.
- ◆ **Processor** Look for a mid-range processor, such as Intel's Core i5. Avoid Core i3 or lower processors – they may be cheaper but they're under-powered.
- ◆ **Screen size** A standard 15-inch screen is an ideal compromise, though you can scale up to a 17-inch model for that front-row multimedia experience. Be aware that this will make for a hefty laptop.
- ◆ **Storage** Choose a model with at least 1TB of storage. With ballooning music, photo and high-definition

video collections, the extra storage space will come in handy.

- ◆ **Connectivity** Look for a laptop with plenty of USB ports so you can connect all your gadgets, such as smartphones, and external drives, or a mouse, as well as an HDMI port if you want to plug your machine into your TV to show videos or photos.
- ◆ **Build quality** While you might not be trekking through the country with your laptop, how it's put together is still important. Look for a well-made model from a reputable manufacturer. Check the screen closes snugly and doesn't flex when you open the laptop.

**TOP TIP**  
**Ditch the cables** and send files wirelessly between your tablet and laptop. Android Beam lets you share apps, music, videos and photos just by touching one Near Field Communication enabled device to another, then tapping to send.

### TOP TIP

**There's no reason to miss your favourite TV shows** while away from home. Websites such as *filmon.com* and *wherever.tv* let you watch live UK programmes on your laptop, and access thousands of other channels around the world.

### Get the lowdown

- ◆ **Price** Very costly – expect to pay upwards of £800.
- ◆ **Processor** Plump for an Intel Core i5 processor as a minimum or a Core i7 for a power boost.
- ◆ **Dedicated graphics** This will deliver a stellar performance – and bump up the price. Choose a Nvidia or ATI graphics card with at least 1GB of dedicated memory.
- ◆ **Memory** Opt for 8GB of memory, which should help speed things along.
- ◆ **Speakers** Don't overlook the importance of immersive audio. Squeaky, low-quality speakers can

ruin a film or game just as much as poor graphics. Check before you buy and consider buying separate speakers if necessary.

- ◆ **Screen** Crank up your enjoyment with a large, high-resolution screen. Look for a full HD 1920 x 1080 pixel screen to make detail stand out.



**Jargon Buster:** *Near Field Communication (NFC)* A short-range wireless communication, such as Bluetooth, that allows data sharing when devices are touching or in close proximity.



# Choosing a budget laptop

The best more-affordable options deliver all the power you need for less than £300

If you're on a tight budget, look for a laptop that delivers just the features you truly need. Forget about super-fast processors, dedicated graphics cards and high-resolution screens. You can buy a decent laptop with a 15-inch screen for less than £300 that's perfect for going online, keeping in touch and completing everyday computing tasks.

The compromise with budget laptops is design and portability. Slower processors are less efficient so call for bigger batteries, which – coupled with old-style hard disks – means budget models are generally bulkier than other small laptops. But if you don't plan on taking the laptop out and about, and have modest computing needs, there really is no need to spend more.



## Top Five Bargain Tips

- 1 Once you've tried and decided on a laptop in a high-street shop, go online for the best prices.
- 2 If you do buy from a high-street store, see if they'll throw in some free extras, such as a laptop cover, speakers or anti-virus software.
- 3 Most laptops come with at least a one- or two-year warranty, so you may not need an additional warranty from a retailer. Check your home-insurance policy as it may cover laptop repairs or offer a replacement if stolen.
- 4 Consider a refurbished model. You'll typically get a laptop with better specifications than a new machine for the same money. Manufacturers often sell used laptops through their online stores, or try retailer sites such as [Tesco Outlet \(stores.ebay.co.uk/ Tesco-Outlet\)](http://Tesco-Outlet.stores.ebay.co.uk/), [pcworld.co.uk](http://pcworld.co.uk) and [laptopsdirect.co.uk](http://laptopsdirect.co.uk).
- 5 Laptop manufacturers often slash the price of their current laptops when releasing new models, so it's a great time to get a bargain.

## Get the lowdown

- ◆ **Price** Expect to pay between £200 and £400 for a cheap-but-useful laptop.
- ◆ **Processor** If possible, get an Intel Core i3 processor. Otherwise, Intel's low-end Celeron and processors from AMD are typical and will be fine for everyday needs.
- ◆ **Memory** Most will feature around 2GB of memory, but there are bargains with 8GB of memory included – don't skimp, and aim for as much as possible.
- ◆ **Storage** 1TB of storage is becoming the norm, even on budget laptops.
- ◆ **Screen** Cheap laptops have lower-quality screens, with limited viewing angles. The best advice is to look in a shop before buying to judge colours and clarity from various watching positions. Look for a 15-inch screen, though a 13-inch screen is a decent compromise.
- ◆ **Battery** Expect around seven hours of battery life, and a heftier machine too.

**Jargon Buster:** *Resolution* The number of pixels in a PC screen. The more pixels, the sharper, more detailed text and images appear.

# Mac or Windows?

The two main laptop types have different ways of working. Which is best for you?

Laptops are often described as being Mac or Windows, which refers to the computer's operating system. This controls your computer, runs programs, and is the 'interface' through which you interact with the laptop. Microsoft Windows and Apple Mac OS X are the two main operating systems and run much the same range of software, such as Microsoft Office – although you'll need to buy the specific versions for each. So, what's the difference?

## SHOULD I CHOOSE A PC?



Windows is the operating system that you'll find on most laptops, giving a wider choice of brand, specifications, size and price. Windows 10 works across all Microsoft's desktop PCs, tablets and phones as well, and is a big improvement on older versions. A raft of new tools include Cortana – a virtual assistant that responds to voice commands.

Other built-in aids, such as Maps, Photos and Groove Music, allow you to use your laptop straight away for email, web surfing and playing music. There's also lots of software available for Windows, but when things go wrong many users can find using the system very technical and problems hard to fix.

New biometric password controls, tools designed to prevent malware attacks and anti-virus software are included, but you may want to investigate additional free or paid-for security software to strengthen protection.

**Jargon Buster:** *USB* Stands for Universal Serial Bus, a common connection standard that's used to connect devices to a laptop.



## SHOULD I CHOOSE A MAC?



Mac OS X is a powerful operating system and users praise its ease of use. It excels at making computing simple, with useful features such as Launchpad, Spotlight and Handoff, and navigation that makes working with files a joy. Mac laptops usually have longer battery life and are lighter and thinner than the competition.

The system includes plenty of built-in software for web browsing, email and enjoying your photo and music collections.

With strong security features, OS X is less likely to suffer the virus and malware attacks that threaten Windows laptops.

On the downside, in laptops Mac OS X is used only by Apple's MacBooks, which are more expensive than Windows models.

**TOP TIP**  
**Can't decide between Windows or Mac?**  
Get the best of both worlds by running Windows and OS X on your Apple MacBook with Apple's Boot Camp software.



## Inside a tablet

A mini marvel of computing, a tablet bundles together a raft of technology to create a highly portable, long-lasting and durable laptop alternative

### Internet access

Tablets use Wi-Fi to connect to the internet. Some offer 4G mobile so you can access it on the go. 3G/4G models cost more, and you'll need a mobile-broadband SIM card, at around £10 per month.

### Touchscreen

You control a tablet using your fingers on the screen – tapping, dragging and swiping onscreen tools and objects. You enter text through an on-screen keyboard.

### Operating system

This is the software that controls the tablet and determines which apps you can use. Most look similar, with apps and tools displayed as icons or tiles on screen.

### Ports

Tablets have few ports, as they use Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to connect to other devices. Expect a USB slot and, on some models, a memory-card slot for photos.

### Screen resolution

HD screens of 1024 x 600 pixels and a 16:9 aspect ratio are perfect for videos – 2048 x 1536 pixels in a 4:3 aspect ratio are better for viewing web pages.

### Storage

Tablets typically offer between 16GB and 128GB of storage. Get as much as possible, especially if you plan to store lots of photos, videos, music and apps.

### Battery life

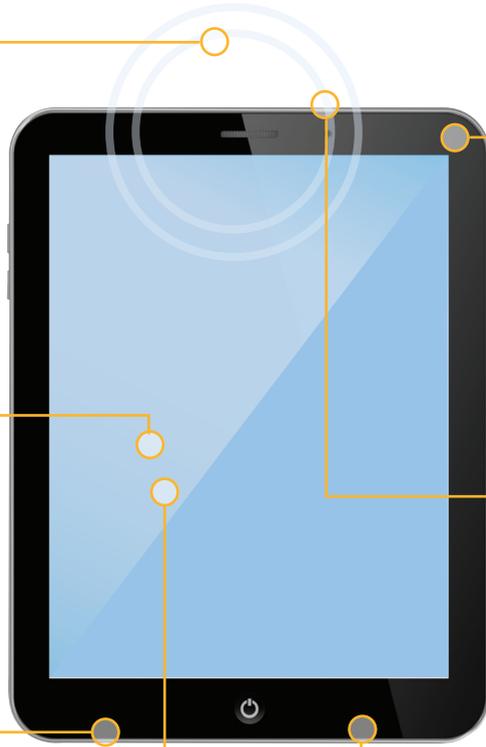
Tablets offer up to 13-hours of battery life, and are recharged by plugging into the mains, or into the USB port of a computer.

### Screen size

Screen sizes range between seven and ten inches. Larger screens are better for films. Smaller screens are more suited to ebook reading.

### Camera

Most tablets feature a rear camera for taking videos and photos, and a front-facing camera for video calls and selfies.



## Buying an Apple tablet

Apple set the standard for tablet design and use – and its iPad range is still the tablet of choice for many

Apple's iPad is the most popular tablet and includes a range of groundbreaking features, such as an ultra-high-definition screen and Siri, a helpful virtual assistant.

Available in a choice of storage sizes and with optional mobile broadband, there are three screen sizes to choose from. The full-size iPad Air range has a 9.7-inch display, the iPad mini range has a more demure 7.9-inch screen, while the iPad Pro has a 12.7-inch design ideal for professional working.

Simplicity reigns with Apple's iOS interface, and tablet novices will quickly be at home. An uncluttered screen displays apps as icons that you tap to open, move, delete and organise as you wish. You can use a range of gestures and voice-activated controls to interact with the iPad.

There's a library of free and cheap apps available from the Apple App store directly on the tablet, with more than one million apps available in categories including travel, personal organiser, health and entertainment.

**Jargon Buster:** *App* Short for application, a small software program that runs on your tablet or laptop.

### TOP TIP

**Turn your tablet into a doctor's assistant** with a range of apps that monitor your health. Vital Signs Camera, for example, uses your tablet's camera and other features to measure heart rate, pulse and blood pressure.

### GOOD FOR....

- ◆ **Battery life** A real standout feature is how long an iPad battery lasts – you'll easily get through the entire day without recharging.
- ◆ **Apps** An easy-to-navigate app store has a wide range of apps, from leisure and games to hobbies and interests.
- ◆ **Innovative** Interesting features such as fingerprint ID, front and rear cameras, and HD screen, first marketed by Apple, have made the iPad a groundbreaker.
- ◆ **Ready to go** It includes everything you need – including photo, video and organiser apps.

### BAD FOR....

- ◆ **Your wallet** With prices ranging from £239 to £899, iPads are expensive tablets, but you get what you pay for.
- ◆ **Add-ons** Pricy extras are needed to use memory cards or connect to a TV.
- ◆ **Look and feel** You can change the background and add a different virtual keyboard, but customisation options are limited.
- ◆ **Business** With full Microsoft Office support, Apples are fine for work, but ideally you need the pricier, big-screen iPad Pro.



## Buying an Android tablet

If you want choice, a range of prices and access to plenty of apps, Android tablets are a bargain



Android tablets are powered by software created by Google, but are sold by brands such as Sony, Tesco, Google and Amazon. There's a huge amount of choice, with screen sizes ranging from six to 13 inches, prices starting at under £100, and a wide selection of shapes, designs and features.

Like Apple's iOS, Android has a home screen showing your collection of apps, but Android uses an app 'drawer' to store everything you download, which you click on to access. Firms often tweak Android to suit their brand,

so different tablets may look and work differently.

One of the benefits of an Android tablet is the freedom to personalise the look of your tablet's screen. You can change everything from the on-screen keyboard to the web browser.

As with an iPad, you can download games, films, TV, music and ebooks, as well as surf the web and read emails. There are tons of great free and paid-for apps to choose from – the Android has the biggest range available for any operating system.

**Jargon Buster:** *Wi-Fi* A wireless way of transferring data at high speeds across different devices and computers.

### GOOD FOR...

- ◆ **Price** Android tablets can be cheap. Brands such as Asus and Acer have models costing less than £100.
- ◆ **Unique features** Some brands, such as Sony, offer options such as waterproof tablets.
- ◆ **Connectivity** Many Android tablets include a USB and memory card slot, so you can attach a printer or digital camera.
- ◆ **Apps** Android has the biggest range of apps available for tablets – so there's something for everyone.
- ◆ **Free tools** Excellent integration with Google's tools, such as Gmail and Google Maps.

### BAD FOR...

- ◆ **Inconsistency** Different brands use different versions of Android, meaning an app that works on one Android tablet may not work on another.
- ◆ **Malware** Android apps are viewed as less secure than Apple iOS apps, with a higher risk of malware.
- ◆ **App reliability** While there are lots of apps available, equally there are too many bug-ridden, poor-quality and broken apps.



## Buying a Windows tablet

Choose a Windows tablet if you want something that looks like your desktop or laptop PC

Like Apple, Microsoft makes its own Windows tablets. The 10.8-inch Surface comes with Windows 10 Home Edition – ideal for everyday use. The 12-inch Surface Pro features a work-orientated version of Windows 10.

If your home PC has Windows 10, then Microsoft tablets are a good option. They will be immediately familiar, with Microsoft's tile-based Start screen and full-screen app view translating well to the tablet. Windows 10 comes ready with apps for email, photos, music and films.

A Surface tablet includes a subscription to Microsoft Office 365 Personal for one year. An innovative kickstand props the tablet up at an angle, and an optional attachable keyboard doubles as a cover. In addition, the Surface Pen digital stylus means you can take notes, sketch and paint.

Windows runs on other tablet brands including Acer, Lenovo, Samsung and Dell.

### TOP TIP

**View the world on your laptop or tablet.**

Websites such as [earthcam.com](http://earthcam.com) and [camvista.com](http://camvista.com) list webcams that show live video footage of everything from amazing geological structures to busy urban scenes.

**Jargon Buster:** *Ports* Sockets found on the side of your laptop or tablet, used for connecting other devices.

### GOOD FOR...

- ◆ **Familiarity** The same look across your PC, tablet and even smartphone.
- ◆ **Free services** Includes free access to Microsoft Office, online storage and email services for one year.
- ◆ **Seamless computing** Some software and documents can be used across PC and Surface tablet with ease.
- ◆ **Working** Add a keyboard and use the kickstand to turn the Surface into a laptop.
- ◆ **Smart features** The ability to run two apps side-by-side.

### BAD FOR...

- ◆ **Choice** There are fewer options when choosing a Windows tablet.
- ◆ **Price** They're relatively pricey compared with Android tablets, going from £150 upwards.
- ◆ **Range** There are fewer apps for Microsoft than for other tablet ranges.
- ◆ **Confusion** The two modes – desktop and tablet – can be disconcerting to switch between.



## Hybrid laptops

Part laptop, part tablet – hybrid computers appear to offer the best of both worlds. We help you pick the perfect hybrid for your needs

Choosing a laptop or a tablet can be an expensive decision – especially if you're still uncertain if you'd get the best from one or the other.

Luckily, there's a new hybrid solution that offers a middle way, effectively combining both a tablet and a laptop into one device.

Sold as 2-in-1 or tablet-laptop convertibles, hybrids work as conventional laptops, but have detachable screens that turn into tablets. This lets you use the laptop for task-based computing such as typing or using spreadsheets, then you can simply pop off the screen and relax reading an ebook or watching a film. The screens are touchscreen too, so you can tap, swipe and gesture your way around the tablet. (Some hybrid laptops work by simply folding the keyboard behind the screen, rather than detaching it.)



Hybrids are effectively laptops running Intel processors, so you get all the benefits of running Windows and a laptop computer. However, as they're not designed primarily as tablets, they're far heavier than a normal tablet and don't turn on instantly. There's plenty of choice, with brands including Lenovo, Dell, HP and Toshiba – and prices are pretty reasonable, starting from less than £400.

**Jargon Buster:** *Processor* Also known as the CPU, it controls your laptop's hardware and runs the operating system and apps.

### GOOD FOR...

- ◆ **Windows 10** If you use Windows, this offers the best of both worlds.
- ◆ **Working** Get real work done on the laptop, then relax with the tablet.
- ◆ **Power** As they're laptops with Intel chips, they can handle most everyday computing tasks.

### BAD FOR...

- ◆ **Price** If you shop around, you can buy a cheap laptop and separate cheap tablet for less than the cost of a hybrid.
- ◆ **Bulky** Hybrids are chubby and they can weigh more than 4lb.
- ◆ **Battery life** As it's running a laptop processor, a hybrid's battery life can be shorter than that of a dedicated tablet.



## Accessibility

Failing eyesight? Arthritis? Find lifting things hard? Here are our tips for getting the most accessible tablet or laptop

### What to look for in a laptop

**SCREEN** A smaller screen means a lighter, smaller laptop. But a larger screen will be easier to read. Check the screen can be viewed comfortably from different angles, too.

**KEYBOARD** Try before you buy. Make sure you're comfortable with the size and spacing of the keys. Check you can rest your palms comfortably on the laptop and press the keys without discomfort.

**TRACKPAD** Go for the largest trackpad possible. Check that there's enough space to make smooth motions with your fingers rather than a series of short, jerky strokes because of the lack of space.

**ACCESSIBILITY SOFTWARE** Look for features such as large type, spoken commands, and more forgiving keyboard commands, such as Sticky Keys, which let you press one key instead of a combination of two or three to complete a task.

### What to look for in a tablet

**SCREEN** Tablet screens are small, so check you can comfortably read a web page. Most tablets have a 'reader view' for web pages that hides all the images and displays only the text.

**CONTROLS** Tapping, swiping and using gestures to control the tablet takes practice. Try in the shop, and look for responsive screens that are light enough to hold with one hand.

**AUDIO** Tablets aren't famed for their audio prowess. If audio sounds tinny or distant, invest in a set of comfy headphones to plug into the tablet's headphone jack.

**ACCESSIBILITY CONTROLS** Accessibility options in a tablet's settings should allow you to change text colour to make it easier to read (such as white on blue background), and some, such as Apple models, work with Bluetooth hearing aids.

# Shopping checklist

## When buying a laptop...

- CHECK THE SCREEN**  
Cheaper laptops have poorer-quality screens. Look at the screen from different angles, and with different content, such as a web page or film. Watch for colour fading or image dimming as you move your head.
- CHECK THE PROCESSOR**  
If you're buying a general laptop, try to aim for an Intel Core i5 processor. Lower processors can be much less powerful, leaving you waiting for programs to work.
- CHECK ACCESSIBILITY**  
Can you press the keys without discomfort? Can you use the trackpad to control the cursor in as few strokes as possible? Is the model heavy for you to lift?
- CHECK THE MEMORY** Get at least 4GB of RAM and a 1TB hard drive for plenty of storage.

Ready to take the plunge? Use our handy checklist when looking for the perfect laptop or tablet for you



## When buying a tablet...

- CHECK THE SCREEN SIZE**  
Look for a high-resolution, large screen for watching films and playing games, or opt for a smaller one if portability is more important.
- CHECK THE STORAGE**  
Choose a model with 32GB for light use or up to 128GB if you need to store lots of videos, photos and applications.
- CHECK CONNECTIVITY**  
Select a Wi-Fi-only tablet if you plan to use it mainly at home. If you need a tablet to use on the go, pay extra for a model that offers 3G/4G mobile broadband.
- CHECK WEIGHT AND COMFORT**  
Try holding it in one hand to check if it's too heavy. Test how comfortable it is to hold, and how easy it is to access the volume, power buttons and other controls.



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