

Thinking of Buying an eReader?

While there is not one “perfect” device for everyone, this document might help you realize what is important to YOU.

Overview of Kinds of eReaders

This overview is intended as general guidance to help you orient yourself before selecting an eReader. The technology and prices are subject to rapid change. If possible, test the device before buying it. Be sure to read “Things to Consider When Choosing an eReader” on page 2.

- **Simple eReaders** – These are basic, single-function devices – they let you read eBooks. In order to use these devices with Overdrive, you must use a computer or laptop to check out and download each eBook from the library’s Overdrive site. (You cannot use library computers to do this.) You then transfer the eBook to your eReader via a USB cable. The cable comes with your eReader.
- **WiFi-Enabled eReaders with Overdrive Software or App** – These devices are primarily for reading eBooks, but some offer additional limited functions such as games, movies and TV shows. If you have WiFi access to the Internet (which you can get in the library), you can use the Overdrive software or app to check out and download the eBook from the library’s Overdrive site. You also can transfer a downloaded eBook from a computer using a USB cable.
- **Kindle eReaders (not the Kindle Fire)** – All current Kindles are WiFi enabled, but the process of checking out library eBooks for Kindles is different. You must first use a computer to check-out the eBook from the library. The last step in the check-out process is to connect to the Amazon site, log in, and then download the eBook. The next time your Kindle connects to the Internet, the ebook is moved to your Kindle.
- **Tablets (including the Kindle Fire)** – Tablets are mobile computers with a flat touch screen and an onscreen virtual keyboard. With WiFi Internet access and with the Overdrive Media Console software or app, you can use your tablet to check-out, download and read eBooks. Most tablets can be used for downloadable audiobooks also, if you are interested in both ebooks and audiobooks.
- **Smartphones** – Smartphones are cell phones integrated with small tablet computers. If you have or plan to get a smartphone and are comfortable reading on the small screen, you can use it to check-out, download and read eBooks. You will need the Overdrive Media console software or app. Costs vary by wireless provider and contract. Most smartphones can be used for downloadable audiobooks also, if you are interested in both ebooks and audiobooks.

Things to Consider When Choosing an eReader

- **Do you have convenient access to fast Internet?** If you have a cable modem or DSL connection at home with a PC, you can easily check out and download eBooks and transfer them to any of these eReaders. If you also have a wireless router and a WiFi-enabled eReader, the transfer process is even easier. If you use a dial-up Internet service, downloading an eBook will take a very long time.
- **Do you depend on the library for Internet access?** You cannot download Overdrive eBooks to library computers. You will need to have a WiFi-enabled device, either one with the Overdrive software or app or a Kindle. If you have a Kindle, you can first use a library computer to check out the eBook, log into Amazon, and authorize the download. The next time your Kindle connects to the Internet, the ebook is moved to your Kindle.
- **Do you like to read at the beach or in bright sunlight?** If so, you probably want an eReader with a matte finish on the screen so you won't struggle with glare and reflections. For some devices with a glossy screen, you can buy stick-on protection covers with a matte finish. A few devices have adaptable screens.
- **Do you read in bed while someone else is sleeping (or just in a dark setting)?** You may want to get a device that has backlighting or has a small light attached.
- **What kind of devices do your friends or family have?** Ask them what they like and dislike about their device and ask them to show you how it works. If you get the same kind of device, will this person help you if you have questions?
- **Do you have vision problems?** You may want a device with a larger screen that lets you select an easy-to-read font-size. A smartphone is probably not a good option unless it has a very large screen.
- **Does a quick display of all black or all white bother you?** Some eReaders flash an empty screen when turning pages. Test the device you are interested in to see what happens when you turn pages.
- **How strong are your wrists?** Try holding a device in the reading position for at least 15 minutes to see if it's too heavy for comfort. Tablets are usually heavier than dedicated eReaders.
- **Do you want to use the device for more than reading eBooks?** An eReader is designed for reading eBooks and provide limited or no internet access. If you want a device to check email or view online content as well as read eBooks, look at a tablet or a smartphone.
- **How long do you need to go between battery charges?** Dedicated eReaders will usually have a longer battery life than tablets or smartphones. E-ink devices have longer battery life than devices with backlighting. Read reviews and specifications on battery life for the devices you are considering.
- **How much money do you want to spend?** Some simple eReaders cost less than \$70, while advanced tablets can cost over \$800. The midrange devices are typically in the \$100 - \$300 range.