

# Choosing an eBook Reader

eBooks (also known as “e-books” or “electronic books”) have been around for many years now, but, thanks, in part, to recent advances in portable computer technologies, more people are beginning to ponder the potential benefits of eBooks. eBooks can be read in many different ways these days: on desktop computers, portable laptop or “netbook” computers, even some cell phones and portable media players, as well as specialized “eReaders” (also known as “eBook readers”).

There are *many* options! Which eReader is best for *you*? Various factors must be considered. Here are some to think about:

- **Cost:**
  - How much are you willing to spend on an eReader?
  - Are you willing and able to purchase eReader accessories if necessary?
- **Features and Storage Capacity:**
  - What would you want the eBook to do (other than simply to display compatible eBooks)?
  - Do you need to display print eBooks or listen to audio eBooks – or both?
  - Would you like to be able to listen to music on the eReader?
  - Would you like to be able to view videos on the eReader?
  - Would you like the eReader to be able to wirelessly download eBooks?
  - How much storage space (memory, usually measured in “gigabytes”) do you need? Enough for a few books or more? If you intend to *listen* to eAudiobooks, you should opt for the most storage space you can afford since electronic audio computer files are often *much* larger than eBook text files.
- **Compatibility:**
  - Which eBook service would you prefer (e.g. Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, RCLS)?
  - Would you be concerned if you could *not* transfer eBooks purchased for one eReader on another if that ever became necessary? Some eBooks will only work with some eBook readers and cannot be transferred.
  - Is the eReader you might be interested in compatible with your computer’s operating system?
  - If you wish to view or listen to eBooks on your computer, does the eBook service you want to use support your computer’s operating system?
  - Do you plan to use the library system’s free eBook service (the “Overdrive” system) along with an external eReader? If this is so, please see the **Library System eBooks** section below.
- **Portability:**
  - How light and physically portable should the eReader be?
  - Should it work just on battery power?
  - How long should the eReader last on battery power?
  - Will you have access to an electrical outlet or a computer USB port to charge an eReader if necessary?
- **Legibility:**
  - Do you prefer small or large screens, or small or large text?
  - Do you want to be able to make the text, as it appears on the eReader, larger if necessary?
  - Should the eReader’s screen be backlit? (i.e. lit from behind and providing its own light?)
  - Do you want to be able to use the eBook reader along with a regular book light?
  - Do you plan to use your eReader outdoors at any time?
  - Should the eBook reader screen be glossy or are you concerned about glare?
  - Should the screen be capable of displaying color?
  - Should the screen be “high resolution” and capable of displaying illustrations or photos?

## Library System eBooks Service

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