



TEST BENCH

Ebook readers

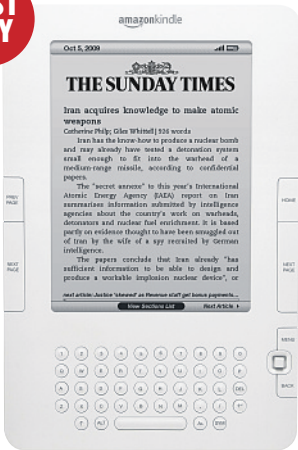
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BEST FOR ALL-ROUND READING
AMAZON KINDLE \$279 (£175)

Amazon is making its reader available for export to UK customers from October 19. Its 6in display is the best E Ink screen on test, capable of showing images that look like photographs. It's the easiest reader to use too, thanks to a mobile-phone connection that lets you download digital books, magazines and newspapers from Amazon without a computer. The UK's Kindle lacks the wider web access of the US version, but Amazon says it will soon be upgraded for browsing selected sites such as Wikipedia. **Verdict** Simple to use — but you can buy books only from the US, and must pay shipping and import costs on the Kindle, a total of about \$65 (£41). Amazon promises more UK-centric services "in the coming weeks and months". Hold off buying until this happens.

★★★★★
www.amazon.com/kindle

BEST BUY



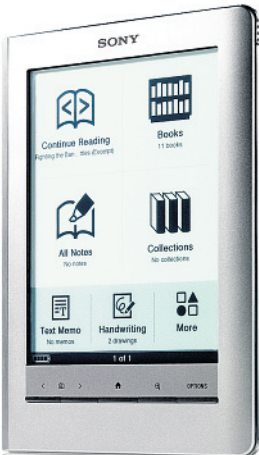
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Ereaders allow you to download thousands of books and newspapers. Mark Harris leafs through five of the best

BEST FOR EBOOK BEGINNERS
SONY READER TOUCH EDITION PRS-600 £250

The slim, all-metal Sony is the first E Ink reader with a touchscreen, letting you flip pages naturally and add handwritten notes to books with a small stylus. The screen is very easy to read, with attractive fonts and the ability to resize images. It works well with PDF files, and playback of MP3 tunes is slick. Like the Kindle, you can search books for specific words or look them up in a dictionary. Unlike the Kindle you can't download books direct to the device, but must connect it to a PC, which is fiddly. **Verdict** Superb value and easy to use but lacks the Kindle's online access.

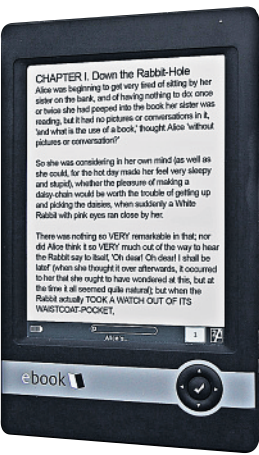
★★★★☆
www.sony.co.uk



BEST FOR AN INSTANT LIBRARY
ELONEX EREADER £170

This stylish matt-black reader, available from Borders bookshops, comes already loaded with 100 classic ebooks by Dickens, Austen, Shakespeare and more to start your library. It's light and slim enough for one-handed reading (great for commuters) and the screen is easily customised with different typefaces and font sizes. Controls are kept to a minimum but omitting large page-turn buttons was a mistake — the circular navigation pad is fiddly. The Elonex eReader struggles to show high-resolution images and complex PDF files. It also lacks MP3 playback and search functions, and has a slow start-up time. **Verdict** Not as tough or smart as the Sony.

★★★★☆
www.borders.co.uk



BEST FOR LOOKS
COOL-ER £190

The Cool-er looks like the sort of ebook reader that Apple might make if it had only a quarter of its usual budget. The plastic housing feels cheap, with controls that are too small and no full-size page-turn buttons. Choosing pages or searching for words is painfully sluggish without a keyboard, and the (very average) MP3 playback requires an easily lost adaptor for use with normal headphones. Otherwise, the Cool-er is similar to the Elonex reader, except that it is flimsier, pricier and slower to respond. The screen is less distinct and lacks contrast. **Verdict** A little too rough and ready.

★★★☆☆
www.firebox.com



BEST FOR VERSATILITY
APPLE IPOD TOUCH FROM £149

Unlike the dedicated ebook readers here, the iPod Touch is a miniature computer that can run thousands of applications, including the (free) Kindle and Stanza reader apps. It has a 3.5in colour touchscreen that lets you turn digital pages with the flick of a finger. You can browse and download ebooks, including free titles, using its wi-fi connection. Adept as it is at web browsing, playing MP3s, videos and audiobooks, the screen is too small for reading books, and the battery fades quickly. **Verdict** Flexible and powerful, but suited only to occasional reading.

★★★★☆
www.apple.com/uk



EBOOK READERS EXPLAINED

The screens All these readers (except the iPod Touch) have a 6in monochrome E Ink display that is much easier on the eyes than a normal LCD screen and uses far less energy. Text is sharp, doesn't flicker and ranges from tiny to large. However, there is a distracting flash when you "turn" each digital page.

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The Suzuki Alto from £7,495^a and Suzuki Splash from £8,995¹ For more information call 0845 850 8800 or visit www.suzuki.co.uk

^aModel shown is the Alto 1.0 SZ4 manual available at £8,750 on the road (metallic paint available at £9,250). ¹Model shown is the Splash 1.2 GLS* manual available at £9,995 on the road (metallic paint available at £10,495). Only Splash GLS* and DLS models are available on 0% offer advertised. *Price refers to Alto SZ2 OTR price (£7,495) after £2,000 Scrappage Scheme discount, with metallic paint available at £8,250. Government and Suzuki GB scrappage payment applies to cars first registered on or before 31st August 1999 only when traded-in against new cars. Scrappage vehicles must have been registered to the purchaser for at least 12 months. Terms and conditions apply. Calls cost £0.035 per minute from BT landlines. Calls from non-BT phone lines will vary. 0% APR typical finance over 2 years is subject to availability for Splash vehicles privately registered between 1st October 2009 and 31st December 2009 from participating Suzuki Dealers only. Minimum of 50% deposit required. Credit is available to persons aged 18 years or over, subject to status. Indemnities may be required. Terms may vary. For full details contact your local Suzuki Dealer. Suzuki Finance reserve the right to withdraw or amend this offer without notice or prior warning. The offer is available to customers within the UK (excludes Channel Islands and Isle of Man). Suzuki Financial Services Limited, part of Black Horse Ltd, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. All prices and specifications are correct at time of going to press.

Alto and Splash range official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km): urban from 36.2 (7.8) to 51.4 (5.5), extra urban from 57.6 (4.9) to 74.3 (3.8), combined from 47.9 (5.9) to 64.2 (4.4). Official CO₂ emissions from 103g/km to 142g/km.

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