

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Choose between a Chromebook and a Windows computer

Laptop describes a portable computer. Chromebooks run ChromeOS; Windows PCs can be laptops or desktops. Choose around supported tasks and software, rather than the name.

Before buying a computer | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ A short list of your regular tasks
- ☐ Names of any essential apps, printer and accessories

1. List your real tasks

Write down what you do: email, video calls, documents, photographs or a particular work application. Include tasks away from Wi-Fi. A list of actual uses is more helpful than a long specification sheet.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Check essential software

Confirm each application supports the operating system you are considering. Chromebooks commonly use web apps and supported Android apps; a Windows installer will not run as a normal ChromeOS app. Browser editions can have different capabilities.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Check offline needs

Find out which files and apps work without internet and what must be prepared beforehand. Chromebook offline access depends on the app and downloaded files. Do not assume a document visible online will remain usable on a train.

☐ Done this step

4. Try the hardware fit

Compare screen readability, keyboard comfort, weight and ports. Check the exact printer model's compatibility. A desktop also needs a suitable monitor and peripherals, while a laptop needs a charger and a practical battery life.

☐ Done this step

5. Compare the whole cost

Include required software, storage subscriptions, accessories, warranty and return terms. Check the device's supported-update period with its manufacturer. Ask for a demonstration of one essential task before deciding.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Write your five main tasks and mark whether each works on the proposed device.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Does Chromebook mean cheap or limited?

It describes the operating system. Price and capability depend on the exact model and whether its supported apps suit your needs.

Official help and the online guide

Chromebook features - <https://support.google.com/chromebook/answer/3265094?hl=en-GB>

Microsoft 365 files on a Chromebook - <https://support.google.com/chromebook/answer/2481498?hl=en>

Prepare Chromebook files offline - <https://support.google.com/chromebook/answer/2809731?hl=en-GB>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/choose-computer-type/>