

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Get started with a smart speaker and Alexa

A smart speaker plays sound and responds to spoken requests. Echo is Amazon's device family; Alexa is the assistant on it. Other brands use different assistants. Many features need an internet connection, and music services may need separate subscriptions.

Smart speaker | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ Have home Wi-Fi, its password and the speaker's supplied power adapter.
- ☐ For Echo, have an Amazon account and the official Alexa app.

1. Choose a useful position

Place the speaker on a stable surface near power. Choose a room where you will use timers or radio, rather than buying several devices at once.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Follow its setup instructions

Plug it in and open the official companion app. Add the device when prompted, sign in and select your home Wi-Fi. The exact buttons depend on the speaker model.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Try a short request

For Echo, say 'Alexa, set a timer for one minute.' Wait for the response. Say 'Alexa, cancel the timer' to practise stopping it.

- ☐ Done this step

4. Review privacy and purchases

In the Alexa app, open More, then Alexa Privacy to review recording controls. Review voice purchasing separately and disable it if unwanted. Show everyone in the home the microphone-off button.

☐ Done this step

5. Add only what you need

Try weather, a shopping list or your preferred radio station. Check any subscription or account-linking request before accepting it; a speaker purchase does not include every service.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Set a short timer, cancel it and locate the microphone-off button.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Can Alexa hear requests when its microphone is switched off?

No. On supported Echo models the microphone-off button disconnects the microphones, and the red indicator shows that voice requests are unavailable.

Official help and the online guide

Amazon Alexa and device questions - <https://digprjsurvey.amazon.co.uk/csad/help/node/G201602230>

Amazon Alexa privacy controls - <https://digprjsurvey.amazon.co.uk/csad/help/node/GVP69FUJ48X9DK8V>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/try-a-smart-speaker-and-alexa/>