

Kindle 3 Review

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[This review was published in November 2010. There are now several Kindle models, with varying facilities for lighting display. New ones do not have a keyboard or text to speech options, though the Kindle Keyboard 3G with TTS is still available.]

The Kindle 3 is a light weight, easy to use e-book reader. Amazon provided a [video about the device](#). The Kindle can hold thousands of books and electronic versions tend to be cheaper and there are many that are free to download. The battery life of a Kindle is good – weeks of reading with Whispernet/wireless turned off.

Instructions.

A folded card is supplied with some instructions, but the main information has to be gleaned from the onscreen manual. This may not be the best way of working as you need to upload a book to try something like text to speech. You can increase the text size immediately through the AA key but you need to select the menu key and then settings using the 5-way navigation key to scroll down and across to reach voice output for navigational commands. The buttons around the sides of the device control page turning, volume and power, whereas the keyboard and navigation buttons on the front provide access to the menu and settings. The keyboard has extremely small keys and [was] hard to type on, plus numbers are difficult.



It may be easier to watch [one of the many YouTube videos](#) whilst you play with the controls. The e-ink is good for reading in sunlight, better than back lit screens but not so good at dusk!

Books and Files

You cannot manage the file system for book titles, or other information on the Kindle. Items appear as a list on the home page with the latest book that has been downloaded at the top. The device does not come with a sample book but you can read the instructions whilst practising the various navigational features.

You can upload MP3 files to the music folder (but there is no way to shuffle the files) and listen whilst you read. Amazon will convert your non-Kindle documents to Kindle-ready documents through their e-mail-based service. You are given an e-mail address automatically. Items can be sent directly to the Kindle through via the Wi-Fi/3G access to Whispernet or items can be sent to the email account. Files can be saved and uploaded directly to the Kindle via USB. Amazon will convert: .doc, .html, .rtf, .jpg, .gif, .png, and .bmp files formats. You cannot automatically synchronise files but if you have the 3G version, books will download load once purchased with a simple 1-click payment.

Accessibility

There is no glare from the screen, and screen rotation is possible, which allows for a landscape view. This can help with larger sized fonts as more words can be seen on a single line. Fonts and line spacing can be changed as can the number of words on a page. [Text to speech](#) is available in American male and female voices for those books where publishers have agreed to allow access. The text to speech starts at the top of the page automatically, and it is worth noting the short cut keys to pause, stop and start the voice and the speed of reading can be adjusted. There is no text highlighting as is

seen in some computer based text to speech programs such as those from TextHelp, Claro and Dolphin.

It is possible to read PDFs on the Kindle but not with text to speech. There are no colour options but you could put a thin colour tinted acetate over the screen.

Using the search feature may not be easy for those who find it hard to use small keys but the text is clear and the same applies when using the dictionary. The American one is default so this needs to be changed to the Oxford dictionary via the menu button.

Final comments

There are no touch screen actions and this e-reader should not be compared with the iPad or any of the new tablets. The 3G version offers access to the web, email and has automatic links to Amazon shopping for books, magazines and newspapers. The price of the 3G version includes access to the shop without further monthly payment and may be worthy of consideration for those who do not have wifi access at home or want to download books when on the move.

The [PC, Mac and mobile device downloads](#) for the software that reads Kindle books are free, and you can convert other documents so they can be read on a Kindle. The American e-book reader blog has a [Kindle format conversion guide](#) along with [more Kindle information](#).

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