



Back to School Buying Guide Quick Reference Handout

Back-to-school is both an exciting and overwhelming time in a student and parent's life, but we're here to help with this handy buying guide to guide you towards making the right choices in every tech and related category.

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When is the best time to shop back-to-school?

The summer months leading up to the school year is the best time for deals but the back-to school season typical extends through October.

Finding the right laptop

Before choosing a laptop solely based on price or even operating system, there are certain things you need to consider. This is both the case for grade school and high school students, as well as post-secondary.

What to look for when choosing a laptop

Size, weight – it should be lightweight and easy to carry while still offering ample screen space.

Screen resolution, touchscreen – a touchscreen is nice to have but it might not be necessary depending on how a student will use it. Most important is a high-resolution, bright screen.

Battery life – long battery life is crucial for students, especially if they'll be using the laptop all day, from one class to another.

Operating system and compatibility with school programs – Inquire with the school or teacher to ensure the laptop you choose will work with programs, software, and even apps they might need.

Storage – cloud storage is always an option, but it's best to have a computer with plenty of on board storage to accommodate software, apps, and local files, like photos, videos, and documents.

RAM – don't consider anything under 4GB RAM and if it fits within budget, opt for at least 8GB RAM to ensure the computer will run smoothly and can handle multitasking and intensive apps.

Ease of use – consider if the student has used the operating system before, as this will ensure it's easy for them to familiarize themselves with features and functions. How to choose a monitor Useful for homework, a monitor provides a much bigger screen with kids need to expand the view.



What to look for when choosing a monitor Size – make sure it fits nicely on a desk in the home and go widescreen to get the most out of it.

Resolution – a bigger screen means the need for high resolution, ideally at least 1,080p but you can find affordable 4K monitors nowadays.

Eye care – everything from blue light filters to eye care certification is worthwhile for students who will be staring at the screen for hours while doing assignments.

Does it connect to laptop, peripherals easily? – It should be compatible with whatever computer you buy as well as peripherals like a printer.

Set up the right furniture – Having a comfortable space in which to work at home will help a student focus better. What to look for when choosing furniture

Plan out the space – figure out where it will go and size the items accordingly. Comfort – ergonomic chairs, desks at the proper height, and more will also allow for a better experience.

Organization – filing cabinets, drawers, and shelves all help keep the workplace neat and tidy.

Ambiance – consider a smart speaker, lighting, and more to spruce up the space and make it feel more relaxing.

A solid backpack is key

No matter the age, every student needs a good backpack to help them get their computer, notebooks, and other gear from class to class and back home.

What to look for in a backpack Durability – it should be able to withstand the rigors of daily use, including being overstuffed and even getting wet.

Laptop compartment – most kids from grades 4 or 5 and up will bring a laptop to school so having a dedicated, padded compartment for it is important.

Spacious interior – inside should be large enough to hold a lunch bag, notebook, charger, gym clothes, and more.

Comfort – padded straps, a waist strap for proper distribution of weight, mesh back panels, and more can all contribute to comfort when they are carrying a heavy load around.

Pockets – these will help keep smaller items organized, like pens and pencil, styluses, flash drives, a phone, mathematics accessories, and more.

Tech accessories to consider

Plenty of other accessories might come in handy depending on the student's age and focus of study.

Wireless mice and keyboard – this will allow for a more comfortable experience when working on a desk at home.

Portable power banks – keeps their tech devices charged up all day.



Headphones – they can do homework or even finish studies at school without distracting ambient noise.

Stylus – for sketching and jotting down notes on a tablet or 2-in-1 laptop.

Smart items – ideal for post-secondary students to outfit a door, these can range from Wi-Fi security cameras and door locks to a smart speaker.

A phone for communication and emergencies – Depending on the age of the child and the choice of the parent, you might want a phone for your student. There are some important things to take into consideration.

What to look for when choosing a phone

Affordability – don't break the bank, especially if it's a first phone and one they're to use sparingly or even only for emergencies.

Favourable plan – inquire about family or student plans, or emergency plans with limited data.

Battery life – the phone doesn't have to be the latest and greatest, but it should boast good battery life.

Parental control features – for younger kids, you'll want to be able to monitor usage, block access to inappropriate content and websites, and even set usage restrictions.

Durability – the phone should be waterproof and ruggedly built. You should also invest in a protective case and screen protector.

Tablets: does your student need one?

Not every student will need a tablet, but there are some who will find it useful, such as those studying in creative fields. When choosing one, use the same considerations as with a laptop.

Printer: does your student need one?

While a lot has gone digital, there's still value in a printer. Especially consider models like all-in-ones that can scan and copy as well, ones with wireless printing, and refillable ink printer that provide more bang for the buck.