

This is an overview of my brief, but pleasurable learning experience spent with the Kindle e-book reader.

The Kindle is a simple electronic e-book reader that doesn't have all the embellishments that you associate with electronics today, but what it does have is very functional and easy to use. It's clear that it was designed to mimic the printed page as closely as possible.

The Kindle screen reflects light like ordinary paper, eliminating the glare created by backlit LCD screens; it claims this is easier on the eyes for adjustment reducing eye strain. With E-Ink, the page is the same brightness as the ambient light around it and can be read as easily in bright sunlight as in your own living room. This means that you cannot read without light or the Kindle won't light. Amazon has several Kindle accessories that will address this issue. The screen has matte finish to again, mimic the printed page and reduce or eliminate glare. I found the Kindle's e-Ink clarity made reading easy and after some exploring, found the features easy to operate also.

According to the Amazon website, the Kindle 3 can hold up to 3,500 books, a single battery charge can last up to two months with the wireless off and a book can be downloaded 60 seconds.

Kindle comes with a charger and can either be charged by the computer's USB port or through an electrical outlet.

The weight of the Kindle (only 8.7 ounces) being less than or close to that of a paperback and the ability to adjust the font size makes an e-book reader ideal for people with vision problems and limitations. Kindle also has spoken word, although it sounds mechanical and not very appealing.

Several of the features I'll be discussing include dictionary, highlighting and linking to a search in Wikipedia or Google and a few others as well.

Basic Overview of Device and Navigation

At the base of the Kindle you will find a volume up/down button, a headphone jack, microphone, USB/power port, on/off power switch and charge indicator.

On both sides of your Kindle you will find the previous page and next page buttons that allow you to scroll through your selection page by page.

The very front of your Kindle has the screen, with a wireless connection and battery life indicator on the top right hand side, your qwerty keypad and the 5-way controller down towards the base. When the Kindle is off, it has a wallpaper screen that doesn't drain the battery.

Home The home button shows content stored on your Kindle.

5-way controller	Moves the cursor up, down, over and around. This allows you to select what you want to read, or if you're in a story, it allows you to highlight a word or phrase, or select a word for the dictionary.
Menu	This turns wireless on and off, accesses the Kindle store, settings and a few other actions. To display the Time and Free Memory, press this button.
AA Text Key	Allows you to adjust font size, screen orientation and turn on or off the text-to-speech feature. When text-to-speech is activated, you can press the spacebar to pause/resume text-to-speech.
↩ more	What I call the "more" button. If the dictionary is activated, it will prompt you to select "more" to see, well... more. It will also activate the search bar.
Sym	The symbol key allows you to make numbers and symbols such as @. Push it to toggle symbols on and off.
Del	The delete button is like the backspace button on your computer keyboard. It erases characters.
↑ Shift key	Allows you to make the next keystroke uppercase.
Back	If you find yourself at a screen or menu you don't want to be at, you can hit the back button and it will take you to the most recent previous page or action.

There are further definitions of buttons in the quick starter guide provided with your device.

Basic Operation

All your settings are in the menu screen and the Kindle device makes operating and navigating easy. To access the settings, make sure that you're at the home screen before selecting the MENU button.

From the menu screen you can turn your wireless off/on, shop the Kindle store, etc.

To shop at the Kindle store, simply move your cursor down using the 5-way button and select the Shop in Kindle option. As for shopping at the Amazon Kindle store, they've made it quite simple to do.

However, when using the wi-fi and web browser on the Kindle device, it needs to be noted that you cannot have more than one web page open at a time. It doesn't handle popup screens. What this means for use in Overdrive is that while you'll be able to browse titles, etc., you won't be able to download them to your device through your Kindle. The following error message will appear:

Web Browser could not open this link because opening multiple windows is not supported.

You will be able to browse and add to cart on your Kindle, but adding the title to your Amazon account will need to occur on your PC. At that point you'll be able to plug in your device or simply use your wi-fi to upload it to your device.

When using your PC to access Overdrive, you will select a title for Kindle and add it to your cart. When you're ready to check out, you will then select the Proceed to Checkout button, then select Confirm Checkout button and finally select the Get For Kindle button. This will open up you're Amazon Kindle Manager and will ask you to select your device from a drop down menu of registered devices and then you click on the Get Library Book button.

You will be able to transfer via USB cable or through your wi-fi connection at this point.

Let it be noted that the internet browser is basic and can handle searching certain sights, such as Wikipedia, Google and some other mobile sights, but it's not really intended for intense use. It's very simple and again, it can't open more than one page at a time.

Downloading and Side-loading Content

With wi-fi, you can turn on your Kindle and at the home screen, click the MENU button and scroll down to and select the Sync & Check for Items option. This will prompt you to log into your wireless account if a login is required, such as at a library. You would then sync your Kindle for viewing.

With the USB, you simply plug it into your computer and follow most of the downloading steps mentioned above. When you get to your Amazon screen, it will prompt you to select your device and get your book, there is a Download Now button that you will then select. You will save this to your computer in the drive labeled Kindle (it will be the port drive your Kindle's USB is plugged into). On your PC, locate the title of the book you've just downloaded then click on it and drag it into the documents folder. It will then appear on your kindle home screen.

While using the USB connection, the Kindle device will have a message stating in so many words, that if you want to read or shop on your Kindle while charging your device over USB, please keep the USB attached, but eject your Kindle form your computer. Though many of you may know what this means, I didn't so I'm going to tell you. When you plug in your USB cable a little icon with a green arrow shows up in the right hand side of your task bar. If you hover over that, you'll see that it says Safley Roveve Hardwar. Click on that and then click on the next bar that pops up and it will electronically disconnect the device from your computer even though it's still plugged in so that you can now wither read your Kindle or let it sit to charge through your USB connection. Try it. Since computers with various versions of Windows may differ the procedure may change just a bit.

It is possible to manage your Kindle account at your library if you have wireless internet capabilities on both your device and at the library. You would simply browse Washington Anytime on the internet computer, download your books to Amazon and with your wi-fi you can log onto your internet account and upload the content, all within the library. If you have the ebooks uploaded into your collection, you should be able to click on the ebook and have it direct you to the Washington Anytime site.

Using Content/Using Special Features.

To access an ebook on your device, simply turn your Kindle on, and if you aren't already at the home page, depress the HOME button. It will take you to your device's downloaded content.

At that point you can use your 5-way controller to scroll down and select the book, magazine or whatever else that you would like to view.

Kindle will take you to the page you were last viewing by either opening the item up and it being where you left off, or you can depress the MENU button while in the book and it will bring up a menu that has the option go to the last page read.

In this same menu, you have other options under the "Go to..." heading. To list them all, there is:

- Sync to Furthest Page Read
 - Just explained above.
- Book Description
 - This will take you to the Amazon sight and bring up the summary and purchase information for that title. To get out of that, just hit the back button.
- Search This Book
 - This allows you to type in a word or phrase in the search box that appears at the bottom of the screen. When you hit the return arrow, it will search the entire book, article, etc. for that word or phrase and index them for you in numbered locations so that you can read a bit of the text and select the area that you wanted to locate. Try it and you'll see what it is I'm trying to say. ALT+DEL clears all words from the search field.
- Add a Bookmark
 - This feature is self explanatory. After you bookmark a page, you can go back and find those bookmarks for either reference points or to simply hold your place. You can add and delete bookmarks as you wish.
- Add a Note or Highlight
 - If selected, a screen will appear at the top of the document, guiding you on the steps to take. If you want to make a note, simply move the cursor into the document where you want the note and begin typing. When finished, you'll have a number appear that references that note.
 - To highlight, you simply move the cursor to where you want to begin, click to begin the highlight, move cursor to end of highlight and click again.
- View Notes & Marks
 - This allows you to look at and go to all the areas in the book that you have "marked up". You can go to a note and will have the option of deleting, editing, etc. You can also go to a bookmarked page, and if you want to remove the bookmark, you can select the MENU button again and it will give you the option to delete the bookmark, which will prevent it from showing up the next time you select "View...".
- View Popular Highlights
 - This will show you where your highlighted pages are at so you can access them. I haven't figured out a way, if any, on how to remove a highlight.

Another GREAT feature that you can use while reading, is the dictionary. Your Kindle comes with an installed American English dictionary. (There is a way you can add, and select as default, another dictionary from another language.)

While reading your text, if you are unsure of the meaning of a word, you can move the cursor to the word you want defined. A brief definition will appear and you can hit the return button for a broader definition.

At the Amazon Manage Your Kindle site, you can click on the drop down menu located to the right of your borrowed book title and return that title early. You can also choose to purchase the title or delete the title from your list of books and the options for downloading are listed there as well.

On your device, at the HOME screen, using the 5-way controller, you can scroll down to a title and pressing the right (>) arrow it will take you to another menu that will allow you to go to various location in the book or simple remove it from your device.

To create a Collection, press the MENU button, select Create New Collection, enter a name for the collection and then click Save. To add a book, use the 5-way controller to select the book you would like to add to a collection, press the 5-way controller right (>) and select Add to Collection.

In closing, some of the directions for Kindle/PC use and syncing may vary slightly. I encourage you to move forward in exploring how your device works with your PC and vice versa. I haven't experienced anything that would ruin either of your devices. Remember you always have your "Back" button.

Some helpful links:

Kindle support:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html/ref=hp_left_ac?ie=UTF8&nodeId=200127470

Metropolitan Library System:

<http://www.metrolibrary.org/kindle/>

<http://www.collegedegrees.com/blog/2008/06/17/hack-your-kindle-100-tips-resources-and-tutorials-to-get-more-out-of-the-amazon-kindle/>