

THE EXPERT'S VOICE® IN ANDROID

Using Galaxy Tab

An Android Tablet

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Introduction

Have you just purchased a Samsung Galaxy Tab S? If yes, let me tell you it was a fantastic choice. You'll love how light and responsive your tablet is, and you'll delight in all of the hidden features and bonus content. This book will have you up and running in no time.

If you're still on the fence and haven't purchased a tablet, this book can help with your decision.

Feel free to skim and skip around to find the sections that answer your biggest questions. There's no correct reading order. That said, if you haven't decided on a purchase, be sure to start with Chapter 1 for some juicy tips.

Getting Started

This chapter will guide you through all the typical steps you'll need to complete when you open up your shiny new Galaxy Tab. We'll also do a bit more than that. First we'll go over a few things to consider before you open that box. Is your tablet the right size? Will it work with your old apps? How well does it fit with other Samsung products? As always, if any of these sections don't quite apply to you (you already have a tablet, for example), then feel free to skip to the relevant parts.

Which Tablet Should You Buy?

There's obviously no single correct answer to this question, or else Samsung would only sell one tablet. The first and most obvious consideration is screen size. Screen size is measured diagonally, as shown in Figure 1-1.

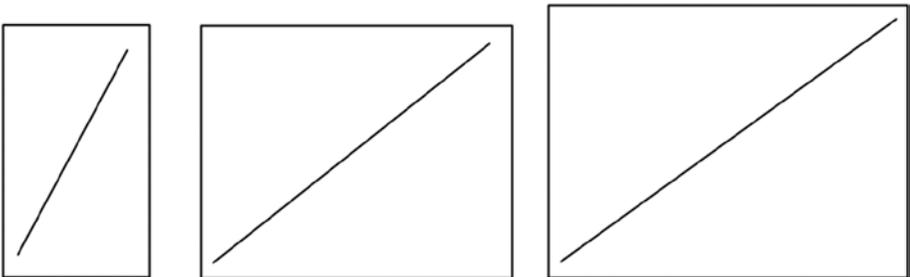


Figure 1-1. Screen sizes are measured diagonally in inches (left to right: 8.4, 10.5, and 12.2)

Currently the Samsung Tab S lineup consists of three basic sizes, 8.4, 10.5, and 12.2. The smaller the tablet, the smaller the price, with the smallest tablets in the S line currently retailing for around \$380 and the largest weighing in at \$550. Shop around, and there may be some bargains.

8.4 Tab S: This is a great size for someone who wants something light and easy to read while holding vertically in a single hand. The size is close to that of a paperback book. Samsung's small tablets are typically in this range between 7 and 8.5 inches. It weighs less than a pound, which makes it very easy to carry with you or hold in one unpropped hand. The smaller size makes for slightly less battery life, and it may not be a good choice if you like to watch movies or view books in larger print sizes.

10.5 Tab S: This is what many people would think of as "iPad sized," even though the iPad also comes in more than one size now. This is a great size for someone who wants to watch movies or read websites or maybe even occasionally use a Bluetooth keyboard. The weight is close to a pound and a half, which is still manageable for carrying around or holding with one hand, although not quite as comfortable.

12.2 Tab Pro: The much larger 12.2-inch "pro" tablet comes with twice the storage as a starter option (32 GB instead of 16 GB) and it is ideal for watching movies or surfing the web. Combined with a Bluetooth keyboard, this tablet can actually be used as a portable word processor or laptop alternative, although keep in mind that it does not run Windows software. It's also a bit bigger and heavier than the other tablets in the S series.

Note Microsoft makes a competing line of Surface tables that run a lightweight version of Windows 8 and can run Microsoft Office software. The operating system and battery life tend to suffer a little for trying to straddle the worlds of laptop users and tablet users, but it may be worth a look if you are a Windows user seeking a laptop replacement device.

Screen Resolution versus Screen Size

One important distinction here is screen resolution versus the screen size. The screens on these three tablets are obviously three very different sizes, but they all actually display the same amount of pixels: 2560x1600. Does that mean that the 12.2-inch Galaxy Pro looks worse than the 8.4-inch Galaxy Tab S? Actually, no. 2560 x 1600 is more resolution than an HDTV, which can be comfortably displayed on even a 100-inch screen. Effectively, a bigger screen means a bigger screen with a more pleasant viewing experience, and a smaller screen is just fine as long as you have good eyesight or hold it closer to your face.

Memory and Batteries

Memory and battery life are important considerations. Smaller tablets generally have a little less battery life because there's less tablet body in which to tuck away a larger battery, and less built-in hard drive space means less room to store apps, music, and movies. Both the 8.4- and 10.5-inch Galaxy Tab S models start at 16 GB of memory, while the Galaxy Tab Pro starts at 32 GB. You can purchase a Galaxy Tab S with 32 GB of memory for around \$50 more. It may be a wise investment. Space runs out pretty quickly. All three Galaxy S Tab models have the same processor speed.

Used and Refurbished

Samsung occasionally sells refurbished Galaxy Tabs at a discount. They've been offered on Woot.com, Amazon Warehouse, Overstock.com, Cowboom.com, and other websites. It may be worth a look. Although "refurbished" can mean that the item was broken, often it just means someone purchased it and then returned it, so it can no longer be sold as a "new" item.

What Is Android?

Back in 2005, two years before Apple would revolutionize the phone world with the iPhone, Google bought a small, two-year-old company founded by Andy Rubin. Rubin was best known at the time for starting Danger, Inc., which created the T-Mobile–branded Sidekick phones. Rubin's new company, Android, also included Richard Minor from Orange (a U.K. phone company), Chris White from WebTV, and Andy McFadden from WebTV and Moxi. Originally, Rubin approached Google for possible startup money, but Google ended up acquiring Android and the talented team behind it.

What was so different about Android? Previous phone operating systems were either made by the device manufacturer or licensed to them for a fee. Rubin's idea was to give away the operating system and find some other way to make money. Because Google gives away most of their Web products for free and makes money from advertising, the idea resonated with Google.

On November 5, 2007, Google announced the Android OS and the Open Handset Alliance, a group of companies that would help develop it. Open Handset Alliance members include phone carriers, software developers, device manufacturers, and component makers.

Android had a very different philosophy when compared to Apple and the iPhone. Anyone could use Android in devices for free, anyone could modify Android, and anyone could develop apps for it without seeking permission to put their apps in the Android Market.

Google also seeded the Android app market by holding developer contests with cash prizes, so by the time the first Android phone arrived in stores, there was a selection of apps available for download.

Today, Android has moved beyond the phone. It's powering eBook readers, tablets, photo frames, Google TV, netbooks, and even car stereos.

Samsung's Ecosystem

Samsung really does have its own galaxy. Although Google makes Android, most manufacturers put their own little spin on the operating system. What Samsung offers is mostly the same as other Android devices, but there are interface changes Samsung makes to its product line to add features.

The Android version shipping with the Galaxy Tab is "Kit Kat," and the specific interface changes Samsung makes are called "Touchwiz."

Samsung makes a lot of different Android-powered devices, including the Galaxy S phone line, the Galaxy Note phone line, Android watches, and the Galaxy Tab and Tab S series. All of these devices are compatible with each other and may offer NFC beaming between devices or easy Bluetooth syncing. However, in most cases, you don't need to have an all-Samsung device lineup in order to use your phone and your tablet together. You do have to have a Samsung tablet or phone to use it with some of the Samsung watches, and you need a Samsung TV to use your tablet as a remote control.

Setting Up Your Galaxy Tab

Once you decide a Galaxy Tab is the tablet for you, you can open the box, plug in the charging cable, and then get started with the initial setup, as shown in Figure 1-2.



Figure 1-2. Choose a language

Accessibility Options

If you choose the “Accessibility” option as shown in Figure 1-2, you’ll have the opportunity to change settings immediately before setup. You’re not locked out of the Accessibility menu forever if you want to change the settings later. You can also create an accessibility shortcut toggle in order to rapidly change settings if you share a device. We’ll cover sharing devices and parental settings in Chapter 5.

Accessibility options for Galaxy Tab include three basic areas, Vision, Hearing, and Dexterity.

Vision options include:

- **Dark Screen**—make the screen dark all the time. Why would you want to do this? If you are vision-impaired to the point that you cannot see the screen, keeping it dark keeps people from looking over your shoulder. It also saves battery life.
- **Rapid Key Input**—you can either double tap (the default) or click once and release in order to make a selection.
- **Speak passwords**—rather than typing them, you can use voice recognition to enter your password.

- Text to speech—This feature uses a computer voice to read back any text and selections.
- Large fonts—you can change the system fonts to make them larger and easier to see or change the contrast. You can also set specific magnification gestures to increase the size of the screen and zoom in on particular areas, even when you are not using an app with a zoom feature.

Hearing accessibility options include the option to turn sound off completely (so as not to annoy anyone when the tablet makes noise you can't hear) and turn on flash notifications (rather than sound). You can also turn subtitles on in Google and Samsung videos by default (when subtitles are offered).

Dexterity options include the ability to make an “Assistant menu” with quick functions, adding a press and hold delay for selections, and the ability to block or unblock areas of the screen from interacting to touch.

Date and Time

Once you start your device, you need to set up the date and time. Figure 1-3 shows the very first screen. This is fairly straightforward. Don't rush this and skip through without setting the date, however. Sometimes an incorrect date and time setting can cause syncing errors with Android tablets.

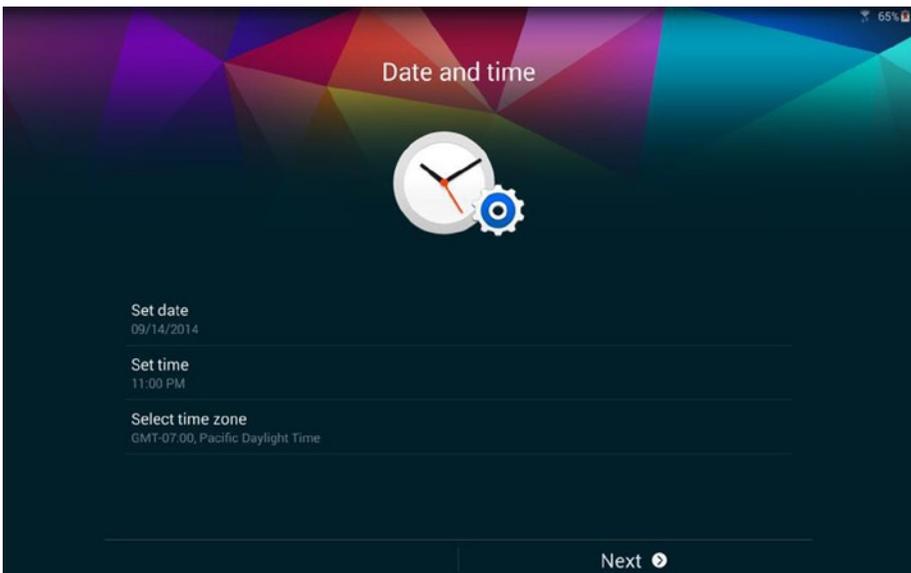


Figure 1-3. Setting up the date and time