

Mobile device recommendations for FTHS students

Foothill students and staff enjoy high-speed wireless access throughout campus. Many Foothill teachers are using mobile technology in their instruction, and we encourage students to bring mobile computing devices from home. Parents have asked what type of mobile technology is best to bring to Foothill. Technology is changing all the time, but here are a few recommendations.

	Tablet	Chromebook	Laptop	Smart Phone	E-reader	mp3 player
Description	One-piece mobile computer with touch screen. Fastest growing computing device in U.S.	A web-based browser "netbook." Looks like a laptop. Useful for internet research, typing, creating with Google apps and extensions.	The workhorse of mobile devices. Can do everything a desktop PC can do.	"Computer in your pocket." Has operating system. Like a tablet, but smaller.	Read texts paperlessly. Main purpose is for consumption of text not for communication or creation.	Looks like a smart phone. Uses mobile apps. Primarily used for music and games.
Advantages	Thin, light, large screen. Thousands of cheap or free apps. Camera. Updates easily. Used in Foothill iPad Academy. Can add 3G.	Full-size keyboard, 8+ hour battery life, fast start up. Lightweight. Work saved to Google Cloud is secure, accessible from any device anywhere. Foothill teaches and uses the full suite of Google Tools. Powerful & inexpensive alternative to laptop.	All work done on one device due to full operating system (Windows or Mac OS).	Easily carried. Quality, inexpensive apps. Can do everything a tablet can do. Makes calls.	Can borrow some e-texts from public library and download from Amazon for free. Instantly access books you purchase. Carry 100s of books at a time.	Cheaper than a phone, no expensive plan needed. Connects at school only to filtered wireless. Can get many of the same apps as tablets and smart phones.
Disadvantages	Printing needs to be done on wireless printer. Some programs will not run on tablets.	Cannot save much work on device since there is little memory. No operating system to add programs. Cannot easily take photos or video. Online applications such as video editing can be slower.	Software can be expensive and must be updated. Can get viruses, malware. Heavier to transport. Battery runs out sooner. Start-up time is longer.	Small screen. Phones need wireless plan that can be expensive. Students with 3G plans may have access to unfiltered web on and off campus. May need to connect to home PC for maintenance.	Limited use at Foothill, where most mobile learning is for creating (i.e. making video, charts, illustrations, texts, etc...)	Small screen can be tough to use for long periods. Need to find wireless in order to text or access web.
Use at Foothill	Most useful	Most useful	Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Not Useful
Foothill recommends	iPad (mini) 16 GB wireless only	Acer Chromebook (2 GB RAM, 16GB solid state memory)	Apple MacBook Air, 11-inch or 13-inch, 128 GB	iPhone or Android phone,	Kindle Paperwhite	iPod Touch
Price (July 2014)	\$299	\$249	\$899 - \$999	Varies	\$119	\$169

*Note: Students are responsible for devices brought from home and must protect them from damage or theft. Every family needs to carefully weigh the decision to send a personal device with their student.