Note-taking tablet buying checklist

Tick each line before you buy. Specs and prices change: re-check the maker's official page on the day you order.
Companion to affine.pro/blog/note-taking-tablet | comparison data checked September 30, 2026

1. Name the main job

- [ ] Everything device (apps, video, typing, handwriting) -> LCD/OLED tablet
- [ ] Distraction-free handwriting and long battery life -> E-ink paper tablet
- [ ] Reading and marking up letter/A4 PDFs -> 10.3 in. or larger screen
- [ ] Tight budget -> compare the minimum cost to write, not the device price

2. Pen and writing feel

- [ ] Is a pen in the box? If not, add the cheapest compatible pen to the cost
- [ ] Does that pen support pressure? (Apple Pencil USB-C does not)
- [ ] Does the pen need charging or pairing, or is it battery-free (EMR)?
- [ ] Try the pen-and-screen feel in a store or use the return window

3. Screen

- [ ] Size: 7-8 in. = pocket notes; 10-11 in. = notebook; 13 in. or larger = full-page PDFs
- [ ] Color needed for highlights and diagrams, or is black and white enough?
- [ ] Front light or reading light if you write in dim rooms
- [ ] LCD/OLED: refresh rate listed? E-ink: resolution (ppi) listed?

4. Getting notes out

- [ ] Export formats you need: PDF / PNG / TXT / DOCX / Markdown
- [ ] Handwriting-to-text: built in, cloud-only, or subscription-only?
- [ ] Can the files you export be searched in your knowledge base?
- [ ] Test with one real page: export it, import it, then search for a word

5. Sync, subscriptions and lock-in

- [ ] What does the free tier sync, and for how long?
- [ ] Subscription price per year, and which features stop without it
- [ ] Google Drive / Dropbox / OneDrive / WebDAV support
- [ ] Works offline? Which features need Wi-Fi?

6. Real cost over the years you will own it

- [ ] Device + pen + case or folio + subscription x years
- [ ] Education pricing or bundles (compare at the same storage size)
- [ ] Return window and warranty length
- [ ] Software update policy for this model

My shortlist

Model	Device	Pen	Case	Sub/yr x yrs	Total

No device was tested hands-on for this checklist. Battery life and features are manufacturer claims. Not affiliated with any tablet maker.
The spreadsheet version (CSV/XLSX) with 24 current models and official source links is on the same page.