

In This Chapter

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your Android tablet adventure begins by opening the device's box. Sure, you've probably already done that. I don't blame you; I already opened the box that my Android tablet came in before I read this chapter. No problem. So to help you remember the experience, or get yourself oriented if you found the experience daunting, or just prepare you for that out-of-the-box experience yet to come, this chapter provides you with a gentle introduction to your new Android tablet.

Setting up an Android tablet isn't that complex. Then again, people with an IQ of 240 don't find brain surgery that complex. As Einstein said, "It's all relative."

The most important thing about setting up an Android tablet is that there's no time limit. Further, there's no secret ingredient. And you don't need to don an apron or wear a funny hat. That's all good news.

For your tablet, setup is merely an initial process through which you must labor. The process, which you need to do only once, involves liberating the tablet from its box, perhaps some assembly, charging the battery, and then setting up a Google account. This section gets you started by pointing you in the right direction.



- ✓ Software setup is required to get your Android tablet up and running. That setup involves linking your tablet with your Google account on the Internet. I avoid writing about those details until Chapter 2.
- ✓ Android tablets that use the digital cellular network require extra setup: You need to identify the tablet with the cellular provider's network, assigning the device a network ID so that you can get all those nifty monthly bills. This process is also avoided until Chapter 2.
- ✓ Noncellular tablets — those that use only a Wi-Fi network to connect to the Internet, and thereby avoid the monthly bills — don't require a cell phone subscription.

Liberating the tablet from the box

Thanks to an excess of funds, your federal government has conducted numerous studies on how people use electronic devices. Men and women wearing white lab coats and safety goggles, and wielding clipboards, drew solid conclusions by thoroughly examining hundreds of Android tablets. The results were unanimous: An Android tablet works better when you first remove it from its box. Thank you, federal grant!

I assume that you're pretty good at the box-opening thing, so I probably don't need to detail that procedure. I can affirm, however, that it's perfectly okay to remove and throw away those plastic sheets stuck to the front, back, and sides of the tablet.

Along with the tablet, you'll find the following items in the box:

- ✓ **A USB cable:** You can use it to connect the tablet to a computer or a wall charger.
- ✓ **A wall charger:** Use this thing (and the USB cable) to charge the tablet.
- ✓ **Useless pamphlets:** Cheerfully avoid reading the booklets, sheets, and guides rattling around inside the box. Don't throw them away, but don't bother studying them, either.

Go ahead and free the USB cable and wall charger from their clear plastic cocoons.



I recommend keeping the box for as long as you own your Android tablet. If you ever need to return the thing, or ship it anywhere, the original box is the ideal container. You can shove all those useless pamphlets and papers back into the box as well.

Charging the battery

The very first thing that I recommend you do with your Android tablet is give it a full charge. Obey these steps:

1. **Connect the wall charger and USB cable.**

They snap together only one way.

2. **Attach the USB cable to the Android tablet.**

Look for the tiny connector on one of the tablet's sides. It may or may not be labeled. There may also be an HDMI video connector, which is about the same size, but it's considered vulgar to plug the USB cable into that hole.

3. **Plug the plug-thing into the wall.**

Upon success, a large “battery charging” type of icon might appear on the Android tablet's touchscreen. That icon lets you know that the tablet is functioning properly, but don't be alarmed if the battery icon fails to appear.

- ✓ If the tablet turns on, don't panic! Chapter 2 discusses how to proceed next, or how to turn off the tablet if you're not yet ready to play with it.
- ✓ Even if your Android tablet came fully-charged from the factory, I still recommend giving it an initial charge, to at least familiarize yourself with the process.
- ✓ The USB cable is used for both charging the Android tablet and connecting it to a computer for sharing information, exchanging files, or using the tablet as a computer modem. The latter process is called *tethering* and is covered in Chapter 16.
- ✓ You can also charge the tablet by connecting it to a computer's USB port. As long as the computer is on, the tablet charges.
- ✓ The battery charges more efficiently if you plug it into a wall, as opposed to charging it from a computer's USB port.
- ✓ Most Android tablets I've seen don't feature a removable battery, so the battery cannot be replaced should it be defective. If the battery doesn't charge or keep a charge, you need to return the tablet for a refund or replacement.



Tablet Exploration

Second star to the right and straight on 'till morning may get Peter Pan to Neverland, but for navigating your way around the Android tablet you're going to need more specific directions.

Finding things on the tablet

Take heed of Figure 1-1, which is my attempt at illustrating a generic Android tablet's hardware features. Use that figure as a guide as you follow along on your own tablet to locate some key features, described in this section.

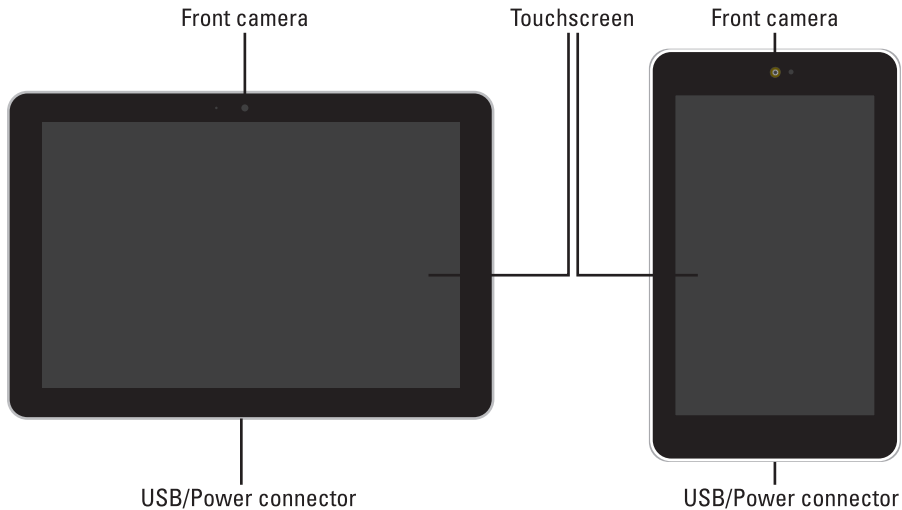


Figure 1-1: Things to find on your Android tablet.

On the front of the Android tablet, find the following goodies:

Touchscreen display: The biggest part of the tablet is the touchscreen display, which occupies almost all the territory on the front of the device. The touchscreen display is a look-touch gizmo. You look at it, but also touch it with your fingers to control the tablet.

Front camera: The Android tablet's front-facing camera is found above the touchscreen on the device's center line. For larger tablets, the camera is on top when the tablet is oriented horizontally (Figure 1-1, left). For small format tablets, the camera is on top when the tablet is oriented vertically (Figure 1-1, right).

Light sensor: It's difficult to see, but a teensy light sensor is just to the left of the front camera. It is used to help adjust the brightness level for the touchscreen and probably serves other functions as well, none of which has to do with mind-reading.

Dock/USB power connector: A slot on the bottom of the tablet is where you connect the USB cable, which is used to both charge the battery and connect your Android tablet to a computer. The slot is also where the tablet connects

to the dock, should you have one of those. See the section, “Getting optional accessories.”

Around the Android tablet you’ll find a variety of buttons, holes, connectors, and other doodads. Try to find all these items on your tablet, making a note of their location:



Power/Lock: The Power/Lock button is labeled with the universal power icon, shown in the margin. Press this button to turn on the tablet, to lock it (put it to sleep), to wake it up, and to turn off the tablet. Directions for performing those activities are found in Chapter 2.

Volume up/volume down: The tablet’s volume control adjusts the noise the thing makes. One of the buttons turns the volume up, the other one turns the volume down. (Well, actually, it’s a rocker switch, so volume up and volume down are the same button.)

Memory slot: The memory slot is where you’ll find the Android tablet’s microSD card, a media card on which information is stored. Details about the microSD card are covered in the next section, but be aware that not every tablet sports a microSD card slot.

Headphone jack: This hole is where you can connect standard headphones.

Speaker(s): Stereo speakers are found left and right on the tablet, sometimes on the front, mostly on the sides, occasionally on the back.

Microphone: A miniscule circular opening found on the tablet’s edge is used as the device’s microphone. Some tablets may feature two microphone holes. Don’t worry if you can’t find them; they’re there.

The typical Android also has a back side. It’s not shown in Figure 1-1 because the censors won’t let me do an illustration and also because the back is boring: On it you may find the tablet’s main camera and LED flash. That’s it.

- ✓ Some tablets lack a rear-facing camera. I can recommend to those tablet owners getting a painting program for your tablet and using it to paint the images you would otherwise photograph.
- ✓ Not every rear-facing camera features a flash.
- ✓ Some tablets use NFC, or Near Field Communications, so that you can send and receive information by touching your tablet with another NFC device. The NFC technology is internal, which means you don’t really see it on your tablet, although it’s typically found on the back of the device.
- ✓ Don’t stick anything into the microphone hole. Yes, it’s tempting, but don’t. Only stick things into your tablet that you’re supposed to, such as the USB cable, headphones, and microSD memory card.



Inserting and removing the microSD card

Some Android tablets use a removable media card on which they can store your stuff — photos, videos, music, evil plans. The card uses the microSD format, so it's referred to as a microSD card or often (incorrectly) as an SD card.

The microSD card is teensy, which is a scientific description. The card fits into a slot on the edge of your tablet but can also be inserted into your computer and read like any removable media card.

To insert a microSD card into your Android tablet, follow these steps:



1. Ensure that the Android tablet is turned off.

Specific directions are offered in Chapter 2, but for now, press and hold the Power/Lock button (see the margin), and choose the Power Off command from the menu.

2. If the microSD card slot is covered by a tiny tab or hatch, open the tiny tab or hatch.

Use your thumbnail to pry open the cover. Some covers come off completely; others just flop over to the side, like an annoying leaf caught under your car's windshield wiper.

3. Orient the microSD card so that the printed side is facing you and the teensy triangle on the card is pointing in toward the Android tablet.

4. Use your fingernail or a paperclip to gently shove the card all the way into the slot.

The card makes a faint clicking sound when it's fully inserted.

5. Close the hatch covering the microSD card slot.

After the microSD card is installed, turn on your Android tablet. See Chapter 2 for details, though basically you just press and hold the Power/Lock button until the touchscreen comes to life.

Most of the time, you'll leave the microSD card inside your Android tablet. When the urge hits to remove it, heed these steps:



1. Turn off your Android tablet.

You can damage the media card if you just yank it out of the tablet, which is why I recommend first turning off the tablet.

2. Open the itty-bitty hatch covering the microSD card slot.

3. Use your fingernail to press the microSD card inward a tad.

The microSD card is spring-loaded, so pressing it in eventually pops it outward.

4. Pinch the microSD card between your fingers and remove it completely.

The microSD card is too tiny to leave laying around. Put it into a microSD card adapter for use in your PC or another electronic device. Or store it inside a miniature box that you can label with a miniature pen in miniature letters, “MicroSD Card Inside.” Don’t lose it!

- ✓ Some Android tablets come with a microSD card, but most often you have to purchase one.
- ✓ microSD cards come in a smattering of capacities, measured in gigabytes (billions of bytes), abbreviated GB or just G. Common capacities include 8GB, 16GB, and 32GB. The higher the capacity, the more stuff you can store but also the more expensive the card.
- ✓ To use a microSD card with your computer, you’ll need an SD card adapter. Insert the microSD card into the adapter, and then plug the SD card adapter into your computer. The adapters are an extra purchase, though some microSD cards come with an adapter.
- ✓ SD stands for *Secure Digital*. It is but one of about a zillion media card standards.
- ✓ In addition to the microSD card, your Android tablet also features internal storage. That storage is used for the programs you install on the tablet, as well as for the tablet’s operating system and other control programs.



Getting optional accessories

Your credit card company will be thrilled when you discover that an assortment of handy Android tablet accessories are available for purchase. You can find them at the place where you purchased your tablet, online or in the real world. Here are just a few of the items that you can consider getting to complete your tablet experience:

Earphones: You can use any standard cell phone or portable media player earphones with an Android tablet. Simply plug the earphones into the headphone jack at the top of the tablet, and you’re ready to go.

HDMI cable: For tablets with an HDMI (video output) port, you can get an HDMI cable. The cable connects the tablet to an HD monitor, where you can view videos or pictures on the Big Screen. Not every Android tablet features an HDMI port.

Pouches and sleeves: Answering the question “Where do I put this thing?” is the handy Android tablet pouch or sleeve accessory. Try to get one designed for your tablet. If not, check the size before you buy. Not every 10-inch tablet fits into the same 10-inch pouch.

Screen protectors: These plastic, clingy things are affixed to the front of the tablet, right over the touchscreen. They help protect the touchscreen glass from finger smudges and sneeze globs, while still allowing you to use the touchscreen.

Vehicle charger: You can charge the Android tablet in your car if you buy a vehicle charger. It’s an adapter that plugs into your car’s 12-volt power supply, in the receptacle that was once known as a cigarette lighter. The vehicle charger is a must if you plan on using the Android tablet’s navigation features in your auto or when you need a charge on-the-road.

Docks, various and sundry: Most people manhandle their tablets. Tsk, tsk. You can be more refined and get your Android tablet a dock. There are several kinds, from the simple prop-dock that holds up the tablet at a pleasant viewing angle to docks that contain keyboards to multimedia docks that feature HDMI and USB ports.

Other exciting and nifty accessories might be available for your tablet. Check the location where you bought your tablet frequently for new garnishes and frills.



- ✓ None of this extra stuff is essential to using the tablet.
- ✓ The only way to get HDMI output with some tablets is to obtain a multimedia docking station.
- ✓ You can use Bluetooth earphones or a cell phone Bluetooth headset with any Android tablet.
- ✓ If the earphones feature a microphone, you can use that microphone for dictation, recording, and even chatting with friends.
- ✓ If the earphones feature a button, you can use the button to pause and play music. Press the button once to pause, again to play.
- ✓ Android tablets generally don’t recognize more than one earphone button. So, for example, if you use earphones that feature a volume or mute button, pressing that extra button does nothing.
- ✓ A useful accessory to get is a microfiber cloth to help clean the tablet’s screen, plus a special cleaning solution wipe. See Chapter 20 for more information about cleaning an Android tablet’s screen.

Where to Keep Your Tablet

Like your car keys, glasses, wallet, and light saber, your Android tablet should be kept in a safe, easy to find, always handy place, whether you're at home, at work, on the road, or in a galaxy far, far away.

Making a home for the tablet

I recommend keeping your Android tablet in the same spot when you've finished using it. If you have a computer, my first suggestion is to make a spot right by the computer. Keep the charging cord handy, or just plug the cord into the computer's USB port so that you can synchronize information with your computer on a regular basis, not to mention keep the tablet charged.

If you have a docking stand, plug your tablet into that when you're not toting it about.

Above all, avoid keeping the tablet in a place where someone could sit on it, step on it, or otherwise damage it. For example, don't leave the tablet on a table or counter under a stack of newspapers, where it might get accidentally tossed out or put in the recycle bin.

Never leave the tablet on a chair!



As long as you remember to return the tablet to the same spot when you're done with it, you'll always know where it is. I don't know why I have to write this suggestion, although it may have something to do with the presence of teenagers in the house.

Taking the Android tablet with you

If you're like me, you probably carry the Android tablet around with you when you leave the office, at the airport, in the air, or in your car. I hope you're not using the tablet while you're driving. Regardless, it's best to have a portable place to store your tablet while you're on the road.

The ideal place for the tab is a specially designed pouch or sleeve. That pouch keeps the tablet from being dinged, scratched, or even unexpectedly turned on while it's in your backpack, purse, carry-on luggage, or wherever you put the tablet when you're not using it.

Also see Chapter 18 for information on using an Android tablet on the road.

