

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home | Easy | 2 min read

Choosing between Alexa, Google Home and Apple HomeKit for beginners

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

All three of the big voice assistants can play music, answer questions and control lights and heating. None is the best for everybody. The right choice mostly depends on the phone you already own and what you want to control. This is an honest, neutral comparison. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Amazon Alexa

- Works with the widest range of smart plugs, bulbs and gadgets.
- Speakers are usually the cheapest.
- Works well with iPhone or Android.
- It is a good first choice if you want lots of different devices.

Google Home

- Good at answering general questions and works well with Android phones.
- Works with Chromecast and many TVs.
- Google is changing its assistant at the moment, introducing Gemini for Home, and some features and subscriptions are changing, so check what is offered at the time of buying.
- Works fine on iPhone, but needs the Google Home app.

Apple Home (HomePod)

- Works best if you already have iPhones, iPads or Macs.
- Siri can control your devices, and the Home app is simple.
- HomePod speakers sound very good but cost more.
- Fewer third-party gadgets are supported, though this has improved.

How to decide

1. Which phone do you have? Choosing the same maker often feels smoother.
2. What do you want to control? Check the box of a plug or bulb for the words "Works with Alexa", "Works with Google Home" or "Works with Apple Home".
3. Do you care about privacy? All three collect some voice data. Look at the privacy settings in each app and decide what you are comfortable with.
4. What is your budget? Include any subscription costs.

A tip

Sticking to one system at home is simpler than mixing them. Some newer devices work with a standard called Matter, which is meant to let devices work across systems, but it does not remove all differences.

When to get more help

Get help if you are not sure whether a gadget will work with your chosen system, or you already have a mixture and want it tidied. We can help you decide before you buy.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.