











# Top 10 CD drives & DVD writers

			CD drives	Interface type	Average access time	Read/write/rewrite rate	Dimensions (wxdxh)	Internal/external	Weight	Packet writing and burning software
				Data buffer size						
PC ADVISOR BEST BUY	1	 <b>Teac CD-W552E</b> 0870 700 7350 www.teac.co.uk Last month 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £45 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Jun 03</li></ul>	EIDE 2MB	100ms	52x/52x/24x	149x198 x42mm	internal	1kg	InCD, Nero Express
	The Teac took one minute 46 seconds to burn a CD-R and less than three mins to burn a CD-RW, making it the fastest CD writer we've seen in the Test Centre to date. The Intelligent Speed Control determines the highest writing speed available without risking errors, so you won't end up with an unusable disc.									
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	2	 <b>Asus CRW-5224A</b> 0870 443 0880 www.asus.com Last month 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £31 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Feb 03</li></ul>	EIDE 2MB	100ms	52x/52x/24x	149x197 x42mm	internal	1kg	InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5
	The Asus offers competitive write and rewrite rates a few seconds behind those of the Teac. Burning errors are kept at bay with Partial-CAV technology that writes the outer and inner parts of the disc at different optimal speeds. Ahead's Nero 5.5 is bundled with a generous number of blank CD-R and CD-RWs.									
	3	 <b>MSI CR52-M</b> 0870 755 4747 www.msi.com.tw Last month 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £29 inc VAT</li><li>• 1-year warranty</li><li>• First review Feb 04</li></ul>	EIDE 2MB	90ms	52x/52x/32x	149x176 x42mm	internal	1kg	InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5
	The MSI CR52-M is easily the cheapest model in the chart but we were rather disappointed by the speed at which it burned CD-R discs – a far cry from its claimed capabilities. The 2MB data buffer and average access time of 90ms are good and Ahead Software's Nero 5.5 is a welcome inclusion.									
	4	 <b>Benq CRW 5232P</b> 0870 467 0753 www.benq.co.uk Last month 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £40 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Feb 04</li></ul>	EIDE 2MB	80ms	52x/52x/32x	146x198 x42mm	internal	1kg	InCD, Nero Express
	The Benq disappointed by failing to match its quoted speeds. Ahead Software's Nero Express has been bundled with the Benq drive and this makes burning CDs a doddle. Average access time is an impressive 80ms and you get a two-year warranty. A price tag of £40, however, makes it poor value for money.									
	5	 <b>Plextor Plexwriter Premium</b> 01932 828 828 www.plextor.com Last month 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £81 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Dec 03</li></ul>	EIDE 8MB	65ms	52x/52x/32x	149x198 x42mm	internal	1kg	InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5
	While the Premium is the most expensive drive in the chart, its hefty feature set puts other drives in the shade. The drive boasts the quickest rewrite rate we have seen and is bundled with some excellent software. If you're after full control over every manual configuration then this is a great buy.									

DVD writers			Drive type	Interface type	CD-RW read/write/rewrite speeds	DVD read/write/rewrite speeds	Average access time	Burning software includes	
PC ADVISOR BEST BUY	1	 <b>Teac DV-W50DK</b> 0870 700 7350 www.teac.co.uk Last month 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £113 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Feb 04</li></ul>	DVD-R/+R/-RW /+RW	EIDE	32x/16x/10x	12x/4x/2.4x (+RW), 2x(-RW)	160ms	Ahead Nero 5.5, Pinnacle Studio
	The combination of a low price, steady performance and great features means the Teac is a worthy Best Buy winner. It's a speedy drive: writing 3GB of data to both a DVD+R and DVD-R discs in very impressive times. There's a great software bundle and the warranty is equally generous, lasting two years.								
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	2	 <b>Asus DRW-0402 P/D</b> 0870 443 0880 www.asus.com Last month 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £113 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Feb 04</li></ul>	DVD-R/+R/-RW /+RW	EIDE	12x/4x/2.4x (+RW) 2x (-RW)	12x/4x/4x 2x(-RW)	140ms	Ahead Nero 5.5
	The Asus matches the price of the Teac, but it just lags behind in terms of burning speed. Still this is an excellent choice. A 2MB data buffer isn't the biggest in the chart but should prove adequate to prevent errors in the burning process. The Ahead Nero 5.5 software bundle is also a great addition.								
	3	 <b>Sony DRU-510A</b> 0870 243 0056 www.sony-cp.com Last month 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £165 inc VAT</li><li>• 1-year warranty</li><li>• First review Nov 03</li></ul>	DVD-R/+R/-RW /+RW	EIDE	12x/4x/4x (+RW) 2x (-RW)	12x/4x/2.4x	200ms	RecordNow DX, Sonic MyDVD
	The speedy DRU-510A is capable of writing 3GB test files to a DVD+RW in just 16 minutes 31 seconds, while the bundled Veritas titles offer a host of facilities from data backup to advanced video editing. The DRU-510A may be the most expensive in the chart, but considering its performance, it's excellent value.								
	4	 <b>Benq DW800A</b> 0870 467 0753 www.benq.co.uk Last month 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £160 inc VAT</li><li>• 1-year warranty</li><li>• First review Feb 04</li></ul>	DVD+R/+RW	EIDE	12x/8x/4x	12x/4x/2.4x	160ms	Nero Express, WinCinema
	The DW800A only writes to DVD+R/+RW, so if you buy this drive you won't be able to burn or read DVD-R/-RW discs. But in our tests DVD+R/+RW proved itself more than a match for DVD-R/-RW, consistently scoring the fastest burn times. What keeps this drive in fourth place is its costly price tag.								
	5	 <b>LG Super Multi DVD Writer Plus GSA-4040B</b> 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk Last month 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £130 inc VAT</li><li>• 2-year warranty</li><li>• First review Oct 03</li></ul>	DVD-R/+R/-RW /+RW/-RAM	EIDE	12x/4x/3x (-RAM) 2.4x (+RW) 2x (-RW)	12x/4x/2.4x (+RW) 2x(-RW)	145ms	B's Recorder Gold5, NeoDVD
	The LG isn't the fastest DVD writer on the market despite having quad-speed DVD+R/-R facilities – it copied our 3GB test files in 17 minutes 34 seconds. However, the ease-of-use afforded by DVD-RAM makes the LG a top choice for those who value flexibility and seamless recording above speed.								

## Buying advice

### DVD writers

If you wish to add recordable DVD to your PC then you'll need to consider which format is the most suitable.

- **DVD-R** This write-once standard has a capacity of 4.7GB and offers the best compatibility with DVD-ROMs and consumer DVD players. It is recognised by the DVD Forum, a

consortium of companies that designed the original DVD standard, and tends to be the cheapest format.

- **DVD-RW** This is also recognised by the DVD Forum. Its 4.7GB discs are reusable up to 1,000 times, although they aren't as compatible as DVD-Rs.
- **DVD+RW** Rewritable format not endorsed by the DVD Forum. Its 4.7GB discs offer 1,000 rewrites and good compatibility. DVD+R is a write-once version of DVD+RW. DVD+R/+RW looks to be faster than DVD-R/-RW.

- **DVD-RAM** The DVD-RAM format is rewritable, best suited to data use and recognised by the DVD Forum. The discs are rewritable 100,000 times. Single-sided discs store 4.7GB while double-sided ones store 9.4GB. This format has had a resurgence of late, with LG among the leading makes. However, performance is a little disappointing and, while its ease-of-use is an asset, it's doubtful whether DVD-RAM has the same staying power as the other formats.