

Review: Samsung Galaxy Note 4 rewards good penmanship

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I'm an iPhone user, but I really admire some things about the Android phone operating system - mainly the number of handsets available.

Samsung has been keeping Android users happy with lots of new models for a while now. One of its latest handsets, the Galaxy Note 4, has been in and out of my pocket for the last few days.

Well, mostly in my pocket, but its large 5.7-inch screen does stick out of

my back pocket a bit.

The Note 4 is on the bigger end of the phone spectrum, and its specs put it near the top of the feature end as well. It's a very full-featured phone.

So what makes the Note 4 stand out from other Android handsets?

Easy - the S Pen.

The Note series of phones from Samsung is designed for writers and note takers.

Neatly stored inside the phone's bottom edge is a stylus, which is used as a pointing device (like a mouse) and to draw on the screen.

If you're a voracious writer, and you're more comfortable writing longhand than thumb-typing, the Note 4 is aimed squarely at you.

As you hover the pen over the screen, a small circle appears and moves with the pen tip, like a mouse pointer moving around the screen.

The stylus is a great way to interact with the phone, especially if you remember back to the days of Palm PDAs (I loved mine).

The S Pen also has a button that invokes a small pop-up menu to initiate writing-based functions.

In every instance where you would type in text, you have the option to write it out and have the Note 4 convert your handwriting to editable text. It worked well, but only when I printed the letters.

In fact, I'll just say right here that if you are not going to use the S-Pen on a regular basis, the Note 4 might not be the right phone for you.

SPECS

The Note 4 is a beautiful phone.

The screen is separated from the back by a metal band around the sides. The back is thin plastic, and it's removable so users can change the battery or add a microSD card (up to 128 gigabytes) for additional storage.

The screen is a 5.7-inch Quad HD display with a resolution of 2560 x 1440 pixels, for a pixel density of 515 pixels per inch. The iPhone 6 Plus has 401 ppi, and the LG G3 has 538 ppi.

The CPU is a Qualcomm Snapdragon 805 running at 2.7 GHz with three gigabytes of RAM and 32 gigabytes of built-in storage.

The phone is 6.04 inches by 3.09 inches by 0.33 inches and weighs 6.21 ounces. It is virtually the same size as the iPhone 6 Plus.

The Note 4 runs Android 4.4 (KitKat) with some Samsung software on top, mainly to provide the pen input and a few other things.

It runs the latest versions of 4G LTE and 802.11ac Wi-Fi as well as Bluetooth 4.0 and near field communication.

The cameras are very good. The main camera has a 16-megapixel sensor and [optical image stabilization](#) and can shoot 4K video. The front-facing camera has a 3.7-megapixel sensor with a wide-angle view for selfies.

The Note 4 also has a cool pulse meter that can also read your [blood oxygen level](#).

The 3,220 mAh battery uses fast charging technology. Samsung says you

can take the battery from empty to 50 percent in about 30 minutes.

The screen is big enough that Samsung's multiwindow feature, where you can have two apps up at the same time, is actually usable.

The Note 4 is not cheap. The two-year contract price is \$299 from AT&T (which provided the review unit) and other carriers. The cheapest cash price I found is \$699.99 from Verizon.

CONCLUSION

I really like Samsung phones, and the Note 4 is no exception. It feels solid. The metal frame is a big step up from the Note 3's all-plastic body.

I love that it still has a battery you can change and the storage is upgradable.

I said this about the iPhone 6 Plus, and it applies to the Note 4 - this is a HUGE phone, and I think it's too big for me to carry around in my pants pocket.

If you're in the market for a big phone AND you happen to love taking notes, the Note 4 is going to be the perfect [phone](#) for you.

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