When writing takes over

While Remarkable 2 succeeds at romanticising a feeling of writing on paper, can it do more than the bare minimum while also proving more use than a fully featured Android tablet or an iPad?

₹43,999 / amazon.in

Our desk is a battlefield of scratched smartphones, dusty keyboards and uncharged tablets but none can replicate the authenticity of writing on paper as good as the Remarkable 2. There's a lot of interesting tech inside Remarkable 2 to accomplish the 'feeling' of writing on paper. It successfully boots the paper and pen out of your hand and digitises it while keeping the tactile and grainy feel of jotting down on paper.

Surprisingly, the Remarkable 2 doesn't do anything fancy to achieve the feeling of writing on paper. It's all thanks to the nature of e-ink displays. They usually tend to have a rougher surface but there seems to be a protective film on the tablet that has a more coarse texture than the Amazon Kindle. Even the bundled Marker Plus has a textured finish which replicates the scratching of a pen. So both, the tablet and the marker together are responsible for the 'feeling' of writing on paper.



AI like it
Traditional e-ink displays have slow refresh and this overcomes the snail-paced input lag between the Marker and the display by using clever AI and ML for predictive behaviour. The result is a flowing writing experience that is almost indistinguishable from the LED screens.

Not app-ortunistic
It runs on a custom Linux OS, so any possibilities of adding Android or iOS apps are squashed. Even the Wi-Fi connection is only for syncing files with your PC or mobile app. No apps means no more notifications, you can keep your head down and focus on your writing. Get to work!

Light no other
Since there's no backlight on the Remarkable 2, your eyes are naturally comfortable staring at its 10.3-inch display. But you can't read or write in the dark. Meanwhile, the lack of apps and internet-connected features are fundamental to the appeal of the Remarkable 2.

GOOD
MEH
EVIL

- Great writing experience with the pen
- Long battery life and standby
- Hella lightweight and portable
- No backlight, so difficult to use in the dark
- Not having a book store is a criminal
- Plenty of features for writing



Get a sub
You need Remarkable Connect subscription to get unlimited cloud storage and app sync to edit your documents on phone.

Tech specs

Thickness 4.7 mm **Screen** 10.3in **Storage** 8GB **RAM** 1GB **Processor** 1.2 GHz dual-core ARM **File formats** PDF and ePUB **Backlight** No backlight **Memory card** External memory cards are not supported **Charging** USB-C **Weight** 403.5g

Pen, paper, AI

Pen and paper can only do one thing but the Remarkable 2 can bring the convenience of digital...



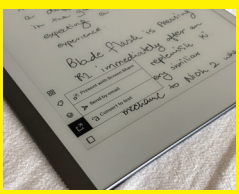
Size zero
The thicker borders are also intentionally kept so that you can hold it comfortably with one hand too. It's also razor-thin at just 4.7 mm. For context, that thickness is the exact size of the USB Type-C port for charging.



Artsy
The Marker can mimic a pencil, calligraphy pen, marker, ballpoint pen, paintbrush, fine liner, mechanical pencil and a highlighter. It's also pressure-sensitive and has tilt functions for shading and sketching.



Writer's thoc
The Type Folio doesn't need any charging whatsoever. It connects using POGO pins and works like a fully functional keyboard. It even has keyboard shortcuts similar to Windows and MacOS.



Can't talk, please text
You can't hand over handwritten notes in this day and age. Everything is either typed or danced on Reels. Thankfully, Remarkable 2 is skilled at converting handwritten notes to text. Recording a dance? Not so much.

Let's see a doc
You can also add plugins to Google Drive, OneDrive and Dropbox that let you import a copy of your documents and PDFs from these drives directly onto the tablet. You can also send documents directly from the Remarkable 2 tablet to any email address.

A wrong booking
The battery will last you a good one week of heavy use and two weeks if you use it judicially. Our only gripe with the tablet is that it doesn't have a store to purchase ebooks. You have to manually add your ebooks and that is after you manage to get an unlocked version of it legally.



At the end of the digital day, the Remarkable 2 is a solution to our modern writing woes. It doesn't aspire to be a laptop killer or tablet replacement – just a dedicated distraction-free canvas for your thoughts to frolic. The e-ink magic replicates that scribbling satisfaction like your high school notebook, minus the papercuts. *@khumailthakur*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆
This e-ink miracle is the paper purist's digital grail - a distraction-free zone where thoughts can roam freely but not for free.

GAMING

Plunging into a virtual world is even easier with these headsets, which will help you immerse yourself in your favourite alternative to miserable old reality

NOW ADD THESE...



LOGITECH G YETI ORB

It looks a little quirky, but this condenser mic is brilliant for streaming – or when you simply need to be heard more clearly while playing. Your voice will be clear and warm, with good pickup range. Use the Logitech G Hub software for tweakage, but it's fine out of the box.

₹5103 / amazon.in



STEELSERIES GAMEDAC GEN 2

Already got a wired headset? Improve it with the GameDAC Gen 2. It enhances audio, reducing noise and distortion, and allows you to adjust things via an equaliser. Plus you can plug in two devices at once – useful for avid gamers with multiple systems.

$106 / amazon.com

SONY INZONE H5

The Sony Inzone H5 hits a sweet spot between features and affordability, but is it a champion in the crowded gaming headset arena? Forget about fancy designs, Sony focuses on what matters – the audio. The H5 delivers crisp, well-articulated sound that avoids bloat or harshness.

It might not have the super-refined detail of the pricier H9, but it punches above its weight across the audio spectrum. Whether you're battling it out in *Tekken 8* or exploring the world of *Final Fantasy 7 Rebirth*, the H5 impresses with clarity and clean delivery.

The mic quality is decent for the price, offering clear audio with good background noise suppression. The mic mute button is conveniently integrated and works seamlessly with the PS5. There's also a volume wheel and a dedicated Game/Chat button for quick audio adjustments.

Sony really shines with their Inzone Hub app, offering a user-friendly way to tweak audio settings on PC. Plus, the H5 boasts a fantastic 28-hour battery life, keeping you powered up for marathon gaming sessions.

While the overall design might seem familiar across the Inzone line, the H5 wins in comfort. The lightweight plastic build and breathable earcup cushions ensure fatigue-free gaming even during long sessions. Unlike some competitors, the earcups are spacious enough to avoid ear fatigue, and the clamping force is spot on.

The Sony Inzone H5 offers a compelling package – excellent audio quality, long battery life, and superb comfort. While the soundstage isn't the most expansive, and there's no Bluetooth connectivity, the overall experience makes the H5 a serious contender in the sub-16,000 gaming headset market. Albiet, keep an eye out for a price drop in the future.

Price ₹15,999 / sony.co.in

Key specs
- 40mm
- 2.4GHz dongle only
- No ANC
- 260g

STUFF SAYS These run longer, sit comfortably and sound clean ★★★★★

ALTERNATIVELY...



HYPERX CLOUD III

₹8331 / amazon.in

HyperX knows how to make great headsets that don't break the bank. The Cloud III is available in both wired and wireless forms, but the former version is £60 cheaper and removes the need for recharging. Windows users can enjoy an equaliser and spatial audio... but everyone benefits from a good balance of bass, mids and lows, so nothing is overpowering.

Stuff says ★★★★☆



CORSAIR HS80 RGB WIRELESS

$150 / corsair.com

A truly premium experience for a fraction of the price, the Corsair HS80 RGB Wireless is not directly available but if you can get your hands on it, it's a great gaming headset. There's Dolby Atmos sound – hard to step away from once you try it, as it really draws you into spooky games like *Alan Wake 2* – and the mic is the best you'll get on any gaming headset.

Stuff says ★★★★☆



SONY INZONE BUDS

₹17,990 / sony.co.in

Most gaming headsets stick with an over-ear design, but these are delightful buds. Great for avoiding that bulky feeling, they're snug yet comfy. And they sound ace, with support for 3D audio making them a particular boon for PS5 owners – but everyone will enjoy the all-encompassing sensation. The 11hr battery life is pretty good too.

Stuff says ★★★★☆



JBL QUANTUM 910

₹19,760 / amazon.in

JBL's head-tracking tech sounds gimmicky but it works well with the Quantum 910, ensuring it stands out. You'll hear every footstep in *Fortnite*, and will be drawn in by atmospheric moments. The 'X' version means it's for Xbox; there's also a 910P version for PlayStation owners, which is (tragically) colour-matched to your bright white console.

Stuff says ★★★★☆



Touching me softly
The soft cloth on the earcups is breathable and the headband gets a leatherette finish similar to Sony's WH-1000X series headphones.

Take charge
The 28-hour battery life is no joke! It's lightweight and has a big battery life to keep cables away. There's no Bluetooth though, only a dongle.

Flip the bird
Flip-up to mute has always been our preference in any gaming headset and the Sony Inzone H5 works it on the PS5 system as well.



PS5, PC / store.steampowered.com

Helldivers 2

If you're looking for the next live service game to drop in with your buddies, Helldivers 2 is full of fun, frantic and funny moments

It goes without saying that video games are fun with friends, and no game makes that grind more entertaining than *Helldivers 2*. It's action-packed, fast-paced and wastes no time in letting you shred enemies in the name of managed democracy.

Super Earth needs your heart, soul and limbs to carry out its missions across various sectors of the galaxy. At the time of writing, there are two enemy factions called the Automatons and Terminids. Automatons are meatless Arnold Schwarzenegger-esque robots from Terminator with an affinity for shooting at sight. Think *Terminator* movies and you're close. Terminids are car-sized bugs that don't like you.

You can call down aid from the spaceships. These depend on what you select in your loadout and are picked before the spaceship plummets you to the mission area at the start. You can call in orbital strikes and carpet bomb a massive area or call for machine guns and turrets to deliver democracy with your hands.

Enemies keep coming at you in hordes and most of the time you will be shooting while completing mission objectives on a tiny section of a planet. The mission variety will not change the essence of the game, which is to shoot everything that is not human.

However, the higher-difficulty missions breathe new life into the mundanity of chopping down hordes. Enemies get bigger and more vicious, while the mission objectives increase. It's truly in the late-stage difficulty that *Helldivers 2* pushes you frantically across the map scampering for resources, ammo and sweaty stratagem management.

This is something that you can pick up and play with your buddies in a matter of minutes. The enjoyment comes from the stress of keeping the hordes at bay while carpet-bombing enemies and frantically reviving teammates.

Khumail Thakur



"Jeez, whose idea was it to wear fully body armour AND black cloaks in the desert?"



"Have a nice country walk, they said. You'll feel much more relaxed, they said."

STUFF SAYS Easy to pick up and play that's fun, chaotic and best played with buddies ★★★★☆



PS5 / playstation.com

Rise of the Ronin

Similar to how FromSoftware studio opened up its map to modern standards of open-world exploration with Elden Ring, Team Ninja is on a similar quest with Rise of the Ronin. Albeit, the destination is marked brightly on the map like a Ubisoft game.

If you're expecting a full-fledged souls-like experience then be warned that the game is steered to welcome newer folks into the genre. You can select a difficulty setting in the game before you start, the health bar refills after you leave combat in the open world and you only lose exploration Karma points if you die. Upset? Don't be, we played the game on Medium difficulty and it was still very challenging. So you will still be sent back to the loading screen for trying to bite more than you can chew, or in this case, dice before you can slice.

The game hits the nail on the head with the period it has picked for the setting. Mid-19th century Japan was the most crucial period because the country was facing the rapid introduction of Western ideologies and inventions. Meanwhile, the Shogunate era was at risk of dwindling in strength. This is one of the first Team Ninja games that has a digestible story. It's not obscure like the *Nioh* games.

The political aspects of its story are also tied to the gameplay. Choices in the game will boil down to which side of the war you'll support. You will often find yourself selecting between dialogue options for pro-shogunate and anti-shogunate outcomes that give branching storylines. You can also choose to be neutral but that will rarely be the case.

Most campaign missions allow story characters to join in for team effort. You can do co-op or control an NPC, and swap between them and your character seamlessly during a fight. Since you can party upto two other characters, boss fights tend to feel much easier but having characters in your party before the mission is completely optional. Who is the game for? Well, if you want something a bit more challenging than *Ghost of Tsushima* and *Assassin's Creed*, *Rise of the Ronin* is frankly a lot of fun overall.

Khumail Thakur

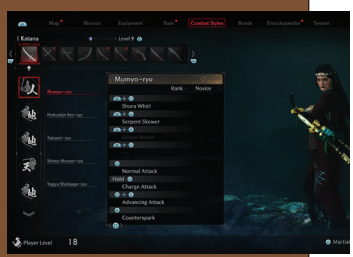
STUFF SAYS A concoction of tough gameplay and interesting main story ★★★★☆

You can't be friends with mid-19th century Matthew Perry.

Is this a ghost of the Ghost of Tsushima, or is this the real deal?







Style is in the way you move...

Aesthetically, the open world looks a lot like Ghost of Tsushima but with 2015 graphics. Rise of the Ronin takes a lot of inspiration from Elden Ring, Ghost of Tsushima and the Assassin's Creed games. The fighting is still brutal like in previous Team Ninja games but you can also jump over rooftops and use a grappling hook to reach higher places, and use stealth to cull the herd.

There are plenty of weapons and items to understand and use. Each weapon has two or more Combat Styles to use, and mastering the Combat Style system, where weapons have advantages and disadvantages against each other, adds a layer of strategic depth. If you have an advantage, blocking and Counter Spark (parrying) become easier and deplete the enemy's Ki (stamina) faster. If you have a disadvantage, it will deplete your Ki faster but if you are on a much higher level then it won't matter as much. It'll be like an ant bite.

Only the katana has eight different Combat Styles, while the rest of the weapons have three or four at best. So it's better to carry a katana at all times. It's Rise of the Ronin after all.



PS5 / playstation.com

Final Fantasy VII Rebirth

Fans of *Final Fantasy 7*, rejoice! Rebirth is finally here, whisking you away from the familiar (and slightly depressing) confines of Midgar and into a stunning open world.

This isn't just a graphical upgrade, though. Rebirth boasts a significantly improved combat system that adds a layer of strategic depth. Mastering these new mechanics will have you chaining combos that clear entire battlefields while messing up might land you back at the loading screen. It's a thrilling dance that captures the essence of FF7 Remake's combat and elevates it to new heights.

Just like its predecessor, Rebirth throws you headfirst into a whirlwind adventure. One moment you're chilling in a town playing a new card game called Queen's Blood, and the next you're facing off against a formidable boss. The narrative takes some sharp turns, keeping you guessing and occasionally scratching your head with its zany characters and over-the-top moments. Think Like A Dragon levels of absurdity, but with the signature Final Fantasy flair. Don't worry, though, there's a serious plot simmering beneath the surface, and the pacing is much tighter this time around.

Apart from the lovely action-based combat that slows down time for picking strategic combat actions for your party members and leader, it now also allows you to immediately react to enemy attacks with synergy combos in defence and offence. These synergy attacks improve depending on your relationship with party members and also are locked behind the skill tree.

This second game in the reimagined trilogy holds its own as a proper extension of the story compared to the first. However, it keeps you guessing its plot and makes you scratch your head with overly indulgent character developments. It's not as impactful as the first in that sense but you'll never actually get bored here. Even though the story is drip-fed to you while you scraper across the map on a carrot chase, we don't mind it because of how breathtaking it looks, sounds and feels.

Khumail Thakur

STUFF SAYS Come for the story but stay for the reimagined combat and sprawling open ★★★★☆

Tsk, this BBC *Gladiators* reboot has taken a few liberties with the format.

"What? I only asked if you wanted to see my enormous weapon."







Get the party smarted

Red XIII and Yufie are now playable as well and offer an interesting dynamic away from the tried and tested swordsman, brawler, range and healer. While the combat might seem simple, things can get chaotic very quickly and it can often overload your senses.

There's a smorgasbord of mini-games and quick-time events. These activities keep the game from becoming repetitive even after hours of playing. Military drills, dolphin shows, Chocobo races, a 3D fighting game, a shooting gallery and Queen's Blood are among the few you can expect in the first 15 hours of the game and they're all fun.

The soundtrack is equally impressive, seamlessly transitioning from heart-pounding orchestral battle themes to calming symphonies and even some electronic dance music. It perfectly complements the game's diverse environments and moods. Beachside moments feel intimate and personal, dungeon battles feel haunting and exhilarating, while the wide grasslands make you want to seek whatever is around the hilltop. This game is the pinnacle of synergising music with its heartfelt moments and toe-tapping boss fights.