



Modem vs. Router: Answers to Common Questions

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Modem vs. Router: What’s the Difference?

Both a [modem](#) and a [router](#) are important if you want to use Wi-Fi to connect to the internet and do things like look at pictures of cute puppies to your heart’s content, but their functions are different. The modem is kind of a home base port for your internet connection, in that it connects your local network to the wider internet (whether that is by using a [fiber](#), DSL, cable, or satellite internet service).

Your router acts as the communication port between your modem and all the other connected devices on your home network. It’s also what allows devices to communicate with one another across your home network, which is especially helpful if you have [smart devices](#). For your router to provide internet access to these connected devices, your modem needs to be connected to it, usually via a port in the back of the device.

Do I need a modem if I have a router?

That depends on what you want to do. If you just want to pass files back and forth between your own devices, you can do that with a router and no modem. But, if you want to connect to the internet, you’ll need a modem.

Do I need a router if I have a modem?

Not necessarily, though it does help if you have Wi-Fi and want to use your devices to access the internet from anywhere in your home. If you only want to have one device connected to the internet and you don’t care about being able to access the internet from anywhere inside your house, you can just connect your computer directly to your modem. But remember: if you forego a router and you want to connect another device to the internet, you’ll have to disconnect one device to connect the other—and that can be a handful if you have a lot of internet-friendly gadgets.

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IS WI-FI THE SAME AS A MODEM OR router?

No. Wi-Fi—or Wireless Fidelity—is the radio signal your devices use to connect to the internet. Your router sends that signal to your devices, while the modem connects your local network to your ISP.

What is a Wi-Fi Gateway?

A [Wi-Fi Gateway](#) is the best of both worlds, combining a modem and a router into one convenient device that connects you and your devices to the internet. A Wi-Fi Gateway tends to be easier to set up, takes up less room, and doesn’t need as many cables, wires, and outlets to keep it running.

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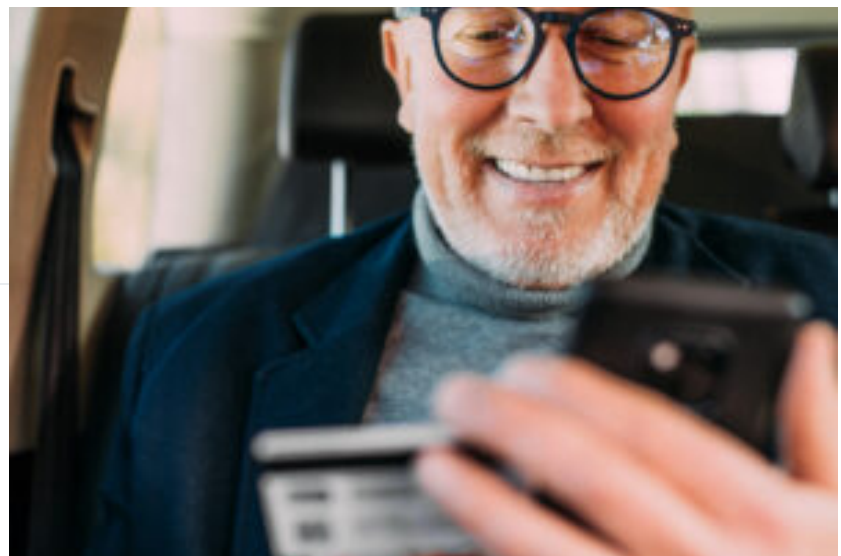


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