Cable Connector Types

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You will use many different types of cables with various connectors on Apple Devices. This paper will review the most common connector types you will use.

USB - Universal Serial Bus

USB (Universal Serial Bus) cables have been in use on computers, phones and tables for many years. There are many different types:
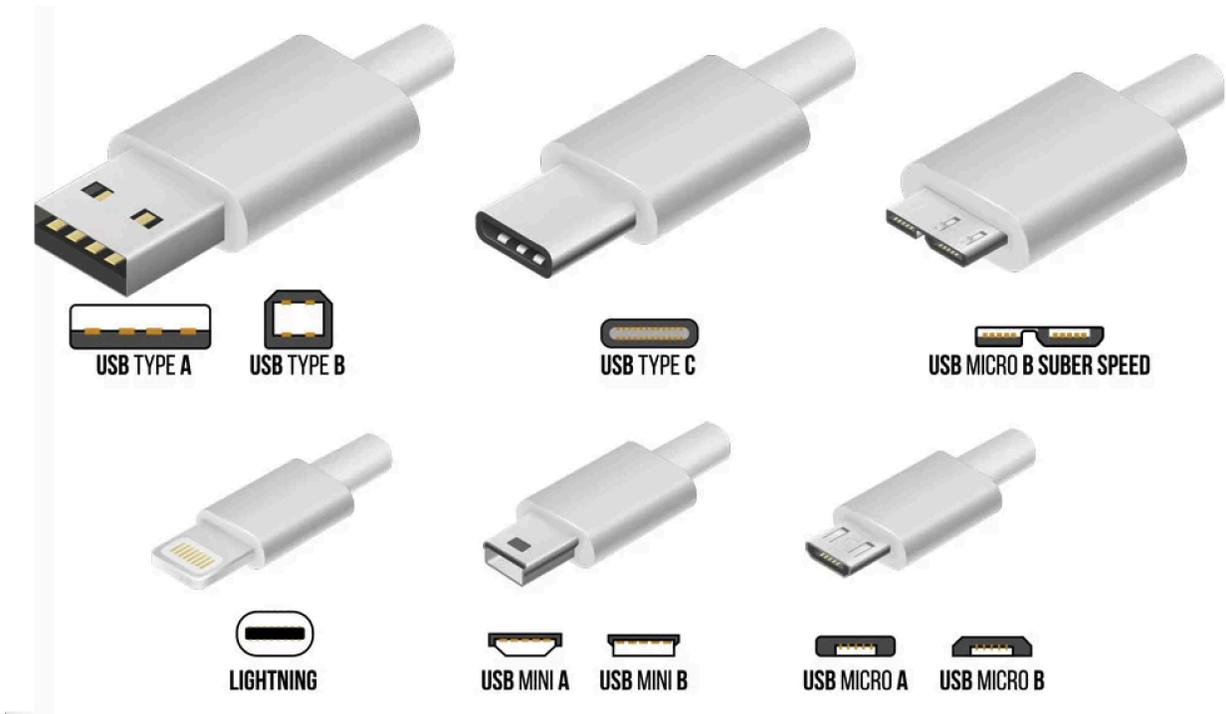
USB-A

The original USB connector is called USB-A. It is a rectangle that is about a half inch wide:

You often see this as used in power adapters that plus into a wall socket:

USB-C / Thunderbolt

The latest version of the USB connector is called USB-C and is much smaller. Apple has a version called Thunderbolt that has some extra functionality. It is similar in size to the Lightning cable but has the pins on the inside instead of the outside of the connector:

USB-C is used in newer power adapter plugs:

USB-C

There also also some power adapter plugs with both USB-A and USB-C options:

All new Apple devices (iPhones, iPads and Macs) will start using USB-C instead of the traditional Lightning connectors.

Lightning

The Lightning connector has been used on iPhones since 2012 and the iPhone 5. It is used for charging the iPhone and also for attaching other devices, such as earphones or external disk drives.

USB-A

Lightning

It is usually seen on a cable with a USB-A or USB-C connector on the other end

USB-C

Lightning

HDMI Video

Another common cable connector you will use with Apple Devices is the HDMI video cable. This is used to connect devices like Macs to TVs or external screens.

DisplayPort Video

DisplayPort cables are used to connect Mac computers to displays. They are sometimes better than using an HDMI cable, particularly if the computer does not have an HDMI socket and an adapter must be used. A DisplayPort cable normally has a USB-C connector on the other end and is plugged into a Thunderbolt port on the Mac. The connection is rectangular with one corner missing. It looks similar to the HDMI connector:

DisplayPort   **HDMI**