

AARP BULLETIN TV BASICS

FLAT PANEL: With screens only 4 inches thick, this is today's TV of choice. Screens vary in size, from 5 to 60-plus inches (measured diagonally as shown below) and in two different types of technology—LCD or plasma.

WIDESCREEN: The preferred shape for viewing high-definition TV. It is wider with a 16:9 aspect ratio—or 16 inches of width for every nine inches of height.

FULLSCREEN: Has a 4:3 ratio—or four inches of width for every three inches of height.

LCD: TV that uses a liquid crystal display screen instead of CRT; used in laptop computer screens and digital cameras.

PLASMA: TVs with flat-screen technology where a layer of gas is sandwiched between panes of glass to produce light and images. Mostly available in 42 inches and above, and offer deep black and rich color, wider viewing angles and better fast-moving images than LCDs.

- **LCDs** are better for brighter rooms; plasmas are best where lighting can be controlled.
- **Plasmas** are better for wider viewing angles; with LCDs, some brightness can be lost by sitting too far to one side.
- **Plasmas** are preferred by many for sports and action shows.
- **LCDs** are usually a better option if you are looking to use as a computer monitor or gaming console.

CRT: Traditional tube TV that is not based on projection.

REAR PROJECTION: Wider and heavier than flat panels, but considered an affordable option for very large screen sizes, over 50-inches. Ideal for home theaters where lighting can be controlled.

PIXELS: The number of picture elements in a screen are called pixels. Typical numbers are 1080, 720, 480. The more pixels, the finer the detail and better the picture.

P or I: "P" is for progressive where scanning technology is all at once; the "I" stands for interlaced where scanning takes two passes. Progressive is considered smoother and more film-like.

HD: High Definition means a TV with 720 or 1080 pixels.

ED: Enhanced Definition is typically a set with 480 pixels and progressive scanning—a step below HD but better than standard.

SD: Standard Definition sets are usually 480 pixels with interlaced technology.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE:

Most popular television technology today is plasma or LCD. The size you choose may help determine what technology you choose. Most plasma TVs are 42 inches or larger while LCD models rarely go above 52 inches.

26" – 30" TV -	3 feet minimum to a 7.5 feet maximum viewing distance.
32" – 42" TV -	4 feet minimum to a 10.5 feet maximum viewing distance.
46" – 56" TV -	5.6 feet minimum to a 13 feet maximum viewing distance.
60" – 72" TV -	7.5 feet minimum to a 17 feet maximum viewing distance.

