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Full-Steam-Ahead DVD

TOP 100

TEST Center

Drives Get Faster, Pack More Features

ALL SEVEN NEW drives we tested made our chart. Pioneer's DVR-R100 and LG's external Super-Multi GSA-2166D earn Best Buys.

	INTERNAL DVD DRIVE	Features and specifications ¹	Performance	Bottom line	
1	Pioneer DVR-R100 Best Buy \$90 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49454	• 8X DVD+R DL, 8X DVD-R DL ² • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 40X CD-R	• Ulead DVD MovieFactory 4 SE and VideoStudio 9 SE, and NovaStor NovaBackup 7.2 software	• Double-layer +R: 18:36 • Single-layer +R: 6:31 • DVD+RW: 11:58	Drive's value is enhanced by its robust software bundle. Will need a firmware update to write at 8X DVD+R DL.
2	Sony DRU-810A \$100 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49456	• 8X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.6 (with NeroVision Express 3.1, BackItUp, and Recode 2) software	• Double-layer +R: 15:42 • Single-layer +R: 5:51 • DVD+RW: 12:06	Speediest writer, by a hair, at single-layer +R; but it needed a rest to cool down between DL writes.
3	Plextor PX-740A \$105 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49462	• 8X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.6 (with NeroVision Express 3.1 and Nero PhotoShow Express) software	• Double-layer +R: 15:22 • Single-layer +R: 5:53 • DVD+RW: 12:13	Just edged out the Sony for top honors on our DVD+R DL tests; otherwise, performance was practically identical.
4	Plextor PX-716AL \$155 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49460	• 6X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 4X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Roxio Easy Media Creator Basic 7.1 and PhotoSuite 7 SE software	• Double-layer +R: 18:52 • Single-layer +R: 6:10 • DVD+RW: 6:30	Unique slot-loading mechanism, flexible disc-writing options, and speedy packet writing are pluses, but you'll pay for the design.
5	Lite-On SHW-1635S \$75 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49452	• 8X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.6 (with NeroVision Express 2.1) software	• Double-layer +R: 27:05 • Single-layer +R: 6:17 • DVD+RW: 9:03	Manuals are mediocre, and the drive didn't burn to our 2.4X-rated +R DL media as fast as other models.
6	Asus DRW-1608P \$60 (★★★★★ Aug 05) find.pcworld.com/48178	• 6X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 40X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.3 (with NeroVision Express 2.1 SE) and Ulead DVD MovieFactory software	• Double-layer +R: 19:28 • Single-layer +R: 6:08 • DVD+RW: 12:04	Great overall performer with top specs at a terrific price. However, its older Nero bundle lacks some components.
7	Samsung TS-H552U \$50 (★★★★★ Aug 05) find.pcworld.com/48162	• 5X DVD+R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 4X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+RW, 40X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.3 (with NeroVision Express 2.1) software	• Double-layer +R: 23:54 • Single-layer +R: 6:09 • DVD+RW: 12:54	Bargain-priced drive proved a fast +R writer, but it lagged on double-layer burns and lacks the flexibility to write to DVD-R DL.
EXTERNAL DVD DRIVE					
1	LG Electronics Super-Multi GSA-2166D Best Buy \$180 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49448	• 8X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.6 (with NeroVision Express 3.1) and PowerProducer 2 Gold software	• Double-layer +R: 21:24 • Single-layer +R: 6:00 • DVD+RW: 8:29	In a class by itself, this high performer is packed with features including DVD-RAM and LightScribe labeling.
2	Plextor PX-716UF \$220 (★★★★★ Aug 05) find.pcworld.com/48180	• 6X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL ² • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 4X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Roxio Easy Media Creator Basic 7.1 and Toast Lite 6.1 software	• Double-layer +R: 18:56 • Single-layer +R: 6:12 • DVD+RW: 11:44	Drive is distinguished by its stylish curves, Mac and PC software, and strong performance. Comes in candy-bright colors.
3	Samsung WriteMaster SE-W164C \$200 (★★★★★ NEW) find.pcworld.com/49458	• 5X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL • 16X DVD-R, 16X DVD+R, 6X DVD-RW, 8X DVD+RW, 48X CD-R	• Nero Express 6.6 (with NeroVision Express 3.1, BackItUp, Showtime, and Recode 2) software	• Double-layer +R: 22:37 • Single-layer +R: 6:03 • DVD+RW: 9:01	Samsung touts this great writer as being made without lead, but it lacks the LightScribe labeling of the less pricey LG.

FOOTNOTES: ¹ DVD+R DL refers to double-layer +R; DVD-R DL refers to dual-layer -R. ² Firmware update required to achieve some write speeds. **HOW WE TEST:** We test drives using media supplied by the vendor or by Verbatim. Write speeds are (in listed order) the time (in minutes:seconds) required to write 7.9GB to double-layer DVD+R and 4.35GB to single-layer DVD+R using the drive's bundled mastering software, and then the combined time to format a blank rewritable DVD and copy 3.4GB of data to that disc. **CHART NOTES:** Prices given are street prices as of 8/24/05. Products in this chart are ordered by star rating. Price is taken into consideration for Best Buy honors only. See find.pcworld.com/47491 for more details on software bundles, and find.pcworld.com/10860 for details on PC World's Star Ratings. Visit find.pcworld.com/49464 for an expanded features and performance chart, plus our full methodology.

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