

What's the difference?

Electric cars (EVs or electric vehicles) come in various types for different usage scenarios, like short local trips or a long daily commute. Once you understand what makes them different, it's easier to see which vehicle would fit your lifestyle best.

Hybrid	Plug-in hybrid	All-electric
No plug. Just impressive efficiency.	Go ahead and plug it in... if you want.	100% electric, 100% gas-free. Just charge it up and go!
RANGE	RANGE	RANGE

Power source

Hybrid	Plug-in hybrid	All-electric

Hybrid
Hybrid cars have two sources of power that work together – a gasoline engine and a battery-driven electric motor.

Automatic balance
Hybrids automatically switch between gas mode and electric mode or both to power the vehicle as needed.

Plug-in hybrid
Plug-in hybrids have a gas engine like normal hybrids. However, plug-in hybrids also have a higher-capacity battery and can be plugged in to drive short distances on all-electric power.

All-electric
All-electric cars are powered by an electric motor only.

Charging the battery

Hybrid	Plug-in hybrid	All-electric

Regenerative braking
All three electric vehicle types use regenerative braking. While braking, the motor is still spinning even though the car is trying to slow down. Regenerative braking captures this typically wasted energy and uses the motor as a generator to create electricity which recharges the battery.

Hybrid
Hybrids recharge the battery in two ways:
1. Regenerative braking
2. Gas engine
The gas engine acts as a generator taking mechanical energy and transforming it into electrical energy to recharge the battery.

Plug-in hybrid
Plug-in Hybrids add a third way to recharge the battery. They recharge the battery through regenerative braking and the gas engine like a normal hybrid, but also have the option of being plugged in.

All-electric
Apart from power produced by regenerative braking, all-electric cars must be plugged in to charge the battery.

Charging options

Standard 120V wall outlet 	Available 240V charging station
Plug-in hybrids charge overnight on a 120V outlet, so no need to install a 240V home charging station unless you want a shorter charge time.	

Best usage

SHORT RANGE LONG RANGE

Hybrid
Apart from regenerative braking, regular hybrids (not plug-in) require gas for the engine to charge the battery.

Plug-in hybrid
There's no need to ever plug in a plug-in hybrid if you don't want, it will operate as a normal hybrid.

All-electric
All-electric vehicles are ideal for predictable daily trips. They have zero CO₂ emissions, but also require time to charge.

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Go Further