Best power inverters for cars

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Electricity can come across as a complicated entity. It can be complex when you delve deep into the lightning-paced world of charged electrons, but even burgers can be tackled if you want them to be. Thus, inverters look like boxes of mystery plastered with labels mentioning DC, AC, Watts, Volts, and Current.

Pushing all that to one side, inverters have one fundamental task: to turn low-voltage direct current (DC) power from a battery into alternating current power (AC) for household appliances and electrical equipment. Hence why it"s called an inverter.

For all intents and purposes here, the reason the power coming from a battery is DC is this: it just does. If you really want to know the science behind this fact, there is an explanation at the bottom of this article.

A power inverter is used to deliver AC power to equipment that needs it (which makes up a lot of standard and everyday appliances and tech) when no appropriate power outlet is available. Generators are different because they don"t convert DC power in batteries to AC power, but instead, use petrol or diesel motors to generate power.

Inverters can be used for domestic and commercial use and thus range enormously in size, price and performance. Here, we are focusing on the smaller inverters for use in cars, vans and motorhomes.

Given many devices can be charged via USB, primarily smartphones, inverters are only really useful for items that need a three-pin plug (such as a laptop or digital camera battery charger) or higher Wattage (such as a fridge for camping).

Power output: You need to work out the total wattage drawn by the devices you"ll use. This is often pointed out on the label, but you can use this formula to work it out: Voltage (240V in the UK) x Current (Amps) = Power (Watts). The inverter needs to have a continuous power output greater than that coming from the plugged-in device or appliance.

Verdict: One of the various sizes available, the HPS-600 is reasonably compact and the simplest way to provide cordless power to a campsite, or wherever you need it. Providing several AC and DC outputs, the HPS-600 is able to power almost anything you need.

Direct current (DC) power comes from sources like electrochemical cells in batteries and flows in one direction, from the negative, through the circuit, to the positive terminal. Alternating current (AC) power changes direction from time to time.

Why the different types? Although DC provides smoother power with a more stable voltage, AC is supplied to

households because it can be transmitted over long distances, whereas DC cannot. AC is also easier to generate.

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