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# College Laptop Review: HP Envy 4

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We've always said when it comes to choosing a laptop for college, what you want is something powerful, lightweight and portable with a long-lasting battery.

Using those guidelines, here we'll put the HP Envy 4 up to the test and look at a few other things to see if it's a good choice for a college laptop. Also, we'll be giving one away to one lucky reader.

## Design

Style goes a long way on a college campus. We want a device that is lightweight and portable, but looks good too.

This sharp looking model sports a brushed aluminum finish in midnight black with a soft-touch red base. The brushed aluminum gives it a sleek modern look and its thin profile (0.78 inches) will easily fit into your backpack, leaving you plenty of room for your books.

Weighing less than 4 lbs., the device is easily portable, and the soft to the touch red velvety underside made carrying by hand easy and enjoyable.

The HP Envy 4 is thin enough to easily fit into your satchel.

As sharp as this laptop looks, there are a few things we don't like. While the brushed aluminum looks great, it's also a fingerprint magnet. No one likes to see fingerprints all over their shiny new device. We almost had to make a habit of washing our hands before each use with the laptop.

## Fingerprints!

Also, the touchpad takes some time to get used too. Between the awkward glossy texture of the touchpad and no definitive line between right click and left click buttons, navigating using the laptop was a little slower than normal. If you are considering this model, consider picking up a wireless mouse as well.

## Battery Life

We recommend your college laptop should provide at least 6 hours of battery life. HP claims up to 7 hours and 30 minutes on this model. We were able to get a full 5 hours playing YouTube videos at full screen, so getting a full 6 hours

doing things like taking notes and surfing the web is certainly possible.

## Power and Performance

The 1.70GHz 3rd generation Intel Core i5 processor and 4GB of memory provide plenty of power and performance for all your multitasking needs.

## Display

The screen is bright thanks to a 14" HD BrightView LED-backlit display, and bigger than you would expect on such a portable notebook. The viewing angle of the display is impressive, but sometimes almost appears too glossy, as it easily shows reflections.

What if I want to use the laptop while studying outside?

Even though the screen is glossy, we were still able to use the laptop while working outside. There is a somewhat mirror-like effect, but the screen is bright enough to where we were easily able to see what we were working on.

## Sound

Portable laptops aren't known for producing quality sound, but being equipped with a 2.1 Beats Audio system does help. While we weren't blown away by the quality of the sound, Beats audio still provides a slightly better sound experience.

## Keyboard

Having a comfortable keyboard can be particularly important to college students who will be taking notes and writing papers on the device. The island-style keyboard felt good to type on and did not have much flex, especially when compared to a Sony S Series notebook with a similar island-style keyboard. The backlit keyboard (can be toggled on and off) would be useful in dim or dark study environments.

## Quiet and Cool

When working in a quiet study environment you want as little excess noise as possible. The unit stays quiet and cool, even after watching videos in full screen. There is very little fan noise: we had to put our ear to it in a quiet study room.

The laptop is equipped with HP CoolSense technology, which automatically adjusts the notebook's temperature based on usage and the conditions around you. Even if you do start hearing noise from the fan, you can put the laptop into quiet mode with HP CoolSense. With the device staying cool, it can comfortably rest on your lap for long periods of time without getting too hot.

#### Other Notes and Observations on Use:

- The HP Envy 4 seems to hold its charge well, making it useful for all day use in your classes. Not needing to bring a power cord with you means less weight in your bag.
- Fast start up and wake times. You can put the laptop on standby by simply closing the lid. It can be used immediately upon opening it back up: the system resumes in less than a second.
- The power button feels weird to the touch. When pressing it we expected to hear a satisfying click, but instead it felt like we were pressing on a button that was jammed.
- The 500GB hard drive will be large enough for all your college work and media files.
- The HP TrueVision HD Webcam will be useful for Skype sessions to family and friends back home.

#### Pros

- Looks Sharp
- Quiet and cool; no annoying fan noise
- Backlit keyboard
- Enough battery life to get you through your classes
- Fast start up and wake times
- Thin and light: weighs only 3.8 lbs.

#### Cons

- Aluminum finish is a fingerprint magnet
- Touchpad is unpleasant and takes time getting used to
- Storage drive isn't SSD
- Wish battery lasted a bit longer
- Sound is good, but not as great as advertised

#### Final Thoughts

HP does a nice job of providing cost effective laptops with solid power and performance. With a splendid mix of portability, speed, and beauty the Envy 4 has a nice balance of everything we want in a college laptop. The Envy 4 proves to be a very cost effective and affordable Ultrabook that definitely puts it in consideration as a top choice college laptop for those who don't want to spend \$1000 or more.

#### Cost

The price of the laptop is \$829.99 over at HP.com, however, at time of publishing Amazon has it for \$749.99 with free shipping.

#### HP Envy 4 Specs:

CPU: 1.70GHz 3rd generation Intel Core i5

Memory: 4GB

Hard Drive: 500GB

Screen Size: 14-inch 1366 x 768 display

Dimensions: 13.38" x 9.28" x 0.78"

Weight: 3.86 lbs.

Battery Life: 7.5 hours

For more see additional details or read more reviews. [Enter to win one here.](#)

#### Disclosure:

This post is a sponsored review in which we were provided with a HP Envy 4 laptop to test and review in exchange for an honest review of its use as a college laptop.