Memory Cards & USB Sticks

Flash media is storage with no moving parts. A memory card or USB stick holds your photos, videos, and files on tiny chips. There are only three shapes you need to know.

The three you will meet

microSD — the tiny one	Fingernail-size. Goes in phones, tablets, cameras, dash cams, and game consoles. Fits a full-size SD slot with a cheap adapter, so one card can do both jobs. Note: many newer phones no longer have a card slot — check yours before buying.
SD — the camera-size one	What most cameras take. Buying a microSD with an included adapter is often the smarter move.
USB stick — the thumb drive	Plugs straight into a computer to move or carry files. **USB-A** is the old flat rectangle; **USB-C** is the small oval that fits either way up. Check the end before you buy.

Reading the tiny letters on a memory card

- **U3 or V30** — fast enough for smooth 4K video. This is the mark to look for on a camera card.
- **A1 / A2** — good in phones; means apps run well from the card. Nice to have, not vital.
- **microSDXC** — the current kind (64GB to 2TB). Fits anything made in roughly the last 10 years.

What size should you buy?

- **128GB** is the sweet spot for most people — thousands of photos and hours of video.
- **256GB** if you shoot a lot of 4K video or fill cards fast.
- Don't bother with anything under **64GB** today — bigger cards cost barely more.

SanDisk: the brand to buy

- **SanDisk is the brand Sean recommends.** Reliable, fast, and widely available.
- **Buy from a real store.** Counterfeit cards are everywhere online — a fake lies about its size and can swallow your photos. Buy at Best Buy, Target, Costco, or SanDisk's own site. If the price looks too good to be true, it is.
- **Dash cam?** Get a card labeled **"High Endurance"** — it's built to be written over again and again.

Three rules so you never lose anything

- **Never pull a card or stick out while it's saving.** Wait until the blinking stops, then use "Eject" or "Safely remove" on a computer.
- **Format a new card in the device that will use it.** A camera formats a card for a camera.
- **Cards can die without warning.** Keep a second copy of the photos that matter.

> **Not sure which card your camera, phone, or dash cam takes — or a card says it's corrupted?** Call Sean instead of guessing.

Questions? Call Sean: (813) 770-6082