
Where Can I Learn More?

If you're confused or intimidated by the equipment presented, or the idea of firing a gun, you're not alone! Fortunately, you are also in good company. Your local SRA chapter may be able to teach you how to safely handle a rifle.

Some SRA chapters also offer licensing classes, to help you get your permit to carry a firearm

Choosing a rifle is a personal and involved process. When choosing your first rifle, try a variety of models and bring someone along who can help answer your questions

Once you've learned the basics of rifle shooting and chosen your first rifle, consider taking concealed carry and defensive shooting classes, or find resources to improve your marksmanship for recreational or competitive shooting. Your local SRA chapter can help get you in touch with all of those resources.

How Do I Join the SRA?

The Socialist Rifle Association's mission is to uphold the right of the working class to keep and bear arms and maintain the skills necessary for self and community defense.

You can learn more and join us at:

[Socialistra.org](https://socialistra.org)

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AK Rifle Components



This educational guide is produced by the Education and Instruction Committee of the Socialist Rifle Association.

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SOCIALIST RIFLE ASSOCIATION
Gun safety is everyone's duty. We keep us safe.

AK Basics

What's an AK Rifle?

AK stands for Avtomat Kalashnikova and is the name for a family of Russian/Soviet designed rifles and carbines, the most well known of which is the AK-47 or AKM, an assault rifle chambered in 7.62x39mm and popular throughout the world for the past 70 years. It is available in semi-automatic variants for civilian use.

The AK-47 is one of the most widely produced firearms of all time, famed for being reliable, rugged, and powerful. In the intervening decades since its inception, other AK platform rifles have been designed, such as the AK-74, firing the smaller 5.45x39mm round.

Why choose an AK rifle?

AK pattern rifles are famously reliable, and the 7.62x39mm round is a reliable load for hunting, with similar ballistics to the common 30-30 round out to around 300 yards. With proper training and practice, a rifle vastly increases your capacity to defend yourself or others in life-or-death situations and the AK rifle has a decades long track record as an effective weapon. Recreational shooters may enjoy using an AK rifle for its historical appeal, ease of operation, and wide availability of the ubiquitous 7.62x39mm round.



Closeup of AK47 receiver and magazine

AK Rifle Components

The exact arrangement of features listed may vary from model to model, and some AK rifles may have different sights or other attachments, but most follow the basic layout below.

- Receiver: Contains all the moving parts
- Selector Switch: Toggles the gun between safe and fire modes
- Bolt Carrier: Contains the bolt, firing pin, and extractor and moves to cycle the rifle
- Ejection Port: Empty cases are ejected here
- Front/Rear Sight: Used to acquire target and aim the rifle. Adjustable for elevation/range
- Handguard: Provides a grip for the support hand when firing
- Gas Piston: Redirects gas from the cartridge to cycle the rifle
- Barrel: The tube the bullet moves through
- Flash Hider: Reduces muzzle flash
- Buttstock: Used to shoulder the rifle when firing
- Grip: Rifle is held here with the strong hand
- Trigger: Fires the rifle
- Magazine Release: Used to release the magazine for reloading
- Magazine: Holds ammunition to be fired
- Charging Handle: Used to manually cycle the rifle
- Cleaning rod: Used for cleaning the barrel during maintenance
- WML: An optional weapon mounted light
- Front Trunnion: Controls the bolt lockup



Semi automatic AK47