

What do all the buttons do



Exposure compensation-aperture button — Most entry-level DSLRs make do with a single command dial which, by default, will control the shutter speed when in manual mode. If you want to control aperture, you need to hold down this button. If not in manual mode, this button allows you to adjust exposure compensation — that is, make the image brighter or darker while still letting the camera make its own decisions about which settings to use to achieve that.

Mode dial — This sets the camera to your desired shooting mode. The standard modes are Program, Shutter Priority, Aperture Priority, and Manual (denoted by the P, S, A, and M positions on the dial). Most cameras, especially entry-level models, will also have a “green box” automatic mode, which is basically fool-proof and will even raise the pop-up flash automatically when needed. A no-flash automatic mode — located directly below full automatic, at least in our example — keeps all settings in automatic, but will disable the pop-up flash when you don’t want to use it. Scene modes contain automated presets for capturing landscapes, portraits, and sports, while Effects modes usually offer different digital enhancements, like selective colour.

Live view switch — Some cameras have a switch, others a button, but this locks the mirror in a DSLR, blocking the optical viewfinder and allowing you to preview your image directly on the LCD screen. This has limited use for still photography, but you must be in live view to shoot video. Mirrorless cameras are always in live view, so they won’t have this

switch. However, if you have a mirrorless camera with an electronic viewfinder, you will have a button to change from the viewfinder to the rear screen.

Command dial — This lets you adjust shutter speed and, when the exposure compensation-aperture button is held, aperture. Most cameras also make use of the command dial for navigating menus or controlling other context-sensitive functions (like ISO or white balance). While the D5600 and other entry-level models have a single command dial, higher-end cameras often have two or even three, allowing for shutter speed, aperture, and sometimes ISO to be adjusted on dedicated dials.



Flash button — In any of the “advanced” exposure modes (P, S, A, or M), this button will trigger the pop-up flash. Its location may vary from camera to camera, but the “lightning bolt” symbol is universal, so you’ll always be able to find it. The icon next to it is the flash symbol, plus the exposure compensation symbol. Holding this button will let you adjust flash exposure compensation, allowing you to adjust how bright you want the flash to be.

Function button — Some cameras have a slew of these. Function buttons are useful because they can be programmed to do whatever you want. If there’s a feature of your camera that’s buried in the menu but you’d like to be more accessible, chances are you can assign it to a function button.

Zoom ring — Usually the larger of the lens rings, turning the zoom ring zooms the lens in or out.

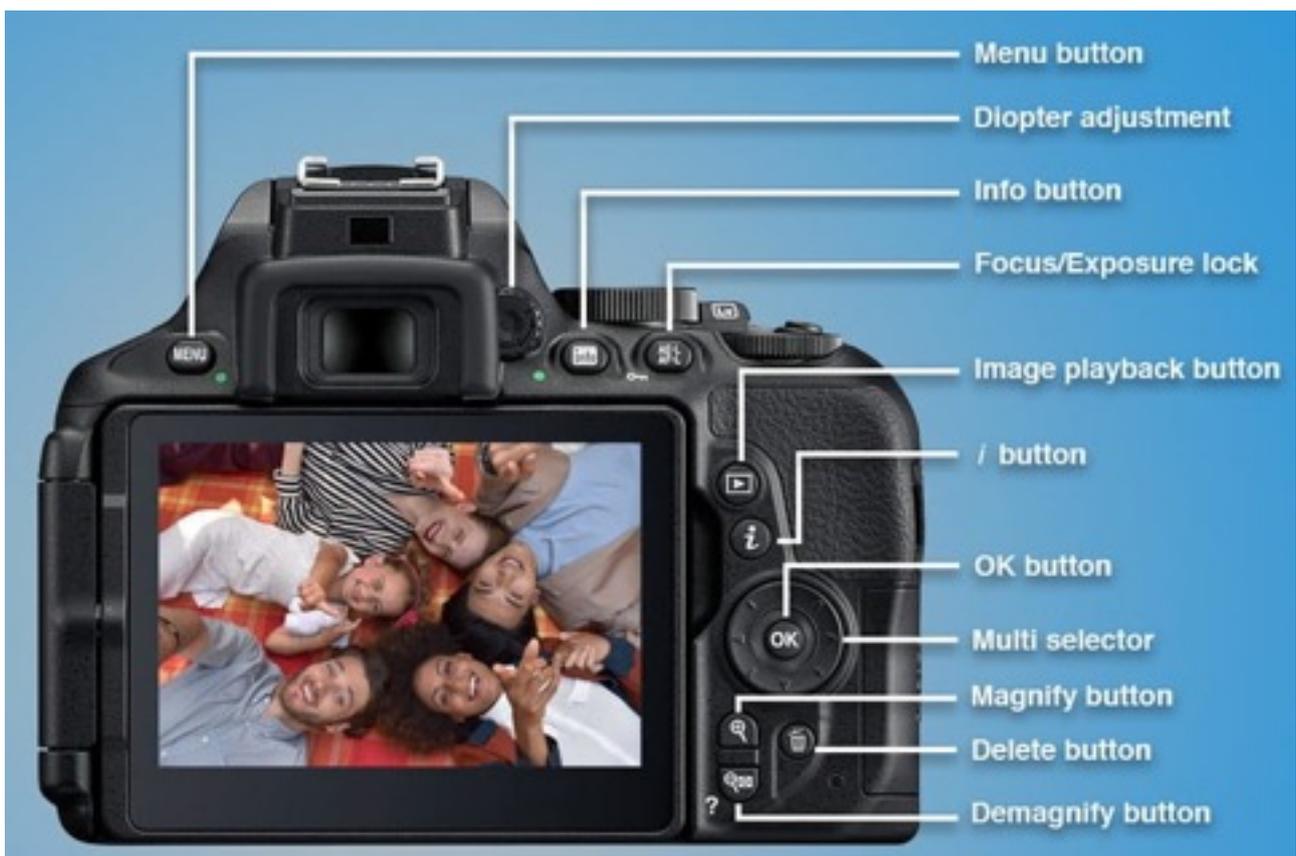
Focus ring — The smaller of the lens rings, rotating this ring allows you to adjust focus — but only when autofocus is turned off. On an entry-level lens like this one, you’ll notice the focus ring is particularly small. Lenses oriented toward professionals will often have larger focus rings owing to the fact that experienced users are more likely to use manual focus than beginners.

Lens retract button — Retractable lenses are becoming increasingly popular as they are more compact than non-retractable models. You must press this button to initially “zoom” the lens into its operational position, and again to retract it when you’re done shooting.

Lens release button — Press this button to unlock the lens mount and detach the lens by rotating it. You don’t need to press it when mounting a lens.

Drive mode button — This lets you control the camera’s drive mode, allowing you to take a single shot, shoot continuously, or use a countdown timer. This button is in a pretty unique position in our example, but most manufacturers will place it on the back or top of the camera. Nikon’s designers, however, likely needed to make use of that negative space, so they put it here. Like the flash symbol, the icons used for continuous drive and the timer are universal, so you’ll be able to easily identify these on other cameras. Keep in mind that many

cameras won’t have a dedicated button for these features, however, meaning they will live within the menu somewhere.



Diopter adjustment — On cameras with viewfinders, the diopter adjustment lets you focus the viewfinder. If everything looks out of focus when you hold the camera to your eye, even when autofocus is turned on, the problem may lie with the diopter. So before you return your lens for a refund, play around with this adjustment. Mis-focused diopters are a common source of frustration for first-time DSLR buyers, but, fortunately, the fix is often very simple.

Info button — While shooting, pressing this button will cycle through the camera's various information displays. During image playback, it can display metadata, a histogram, and other pertinent information about the photo at hand.

Autofocus-autoexposure lock — When using autofocus and autoexposure, holding this button down will lock those settings, even if you move the camera. This isn't often used by beginners, but it is beneficial for more advanced shooters who can use it to take several shots with different framings while ensuring all remain focused on the same point and exposed identically. (Back button focus)

i button — Pressing this button brings up a set of functions on the camera's LCD screen, which can be controlled directly. This can be useful for adjusting ISO, white balance, and drive mode settings on cameras that don't have dedicated buttons or dials for said features.

Multi selector — Although this may be known by a different name on other brands, most cameras incorporate some sort of four-way controller like this. Beyond using it for navigation, many manufacturers will map shooting functions to each direction. This can also be used to move the active focus point in single-point AF mode, although some cameras will have a separate, dedicated control for this.