**Where to (Legally) Read Books Online for Free(-ish)**

Let’s say you have been assigned a specific book or textbook for a course. You might be able to borrow it for free online or download a free pdf. (If it’s a book from which you are doing exercises/problem sets or if you need page numbers that match everyone else’s copy, pay attention to the exact edition or try to search by ISBN.)

* Internet Archive ([archive.org](http://www.archive.org/)). Can check books out for an hour at a time, usually renewable for additional hours. Wide selection of academic books and older books. You can also dig around their Open Library page ([openlibrary.org](https://openlibrary.org/)).
* Project Gutenberg ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org/)). Good for classics and literary fiction.
* The Online Books Page ([digital.library.upenn.edu/books](https://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/)). Links to a lot of older books.
* World Public Library ([worldlibrary.org](http://worldlibrary.org/)). You can create a virtual library card (for a small annual fee) and get a very broad of books, usually best for fiction but also has textbooks.
* Free e-Books ([free-ebooks.net](https://www.free-ebooks.net/)). Can get five free books per month, including some textbooks.
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* OpenStax ([openstax.org](https://openstax.org/)). OpenStax is part of Rice University; the books cover a lot of common intro college course topics.
* Open Education ([open.bccampus.ca](https://open.bccampus.ca/)). This is a resource funded by the Canadian government. The resources cover a lot of common college course topics at the beginner and intermediate levels.
* Open Textbook Library ([open.umn.edu/opentextbooks](https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks)). Broad selection of open-access textbooks, maintained by the University of Minnesota.
* LibreTexts ([libretexts.org](https://libretexts.org/)). Nonprofit for providing/linking free textbooks, connected to a lot of California universities.
* Lyryx ([lyryx.com](https://lyryx.com/)). Offers a few textbooks for math, stats, and econ.

**University Resources**

Many universities have some additional resources that might be helpful. Talk to your librarians! They are experts.

But as a starting point, here are two possible resources. The websites listed below usually show up if you do a search on the main library catalog, but you can also search these Web sites directly:

* Overdrive/Libby ([overdrive.com](https://overdrive.com/)). This is a resource/app that many libraries license.
* Hathitrust ([hathitrust.org](https://www.hathitrust.org/)). This is good for public-domain books. If you have accessibility needs, you can often specially register to get online access to in-copyright books at Hathitrust.

**Other Sources and Tips**

Not all these options will be available or convenient for everyone – but some might be available to you!

* Teaching assistants, instructors, and professors who are currently teaching a class or considering teaching a class in the future can often request a free “exam copy” or “desk copy” of a book published by an academic press. Usually, this is an option available even to undergraduate/graduate TAs or graders who are not the professors or instructors of record for courses. Usually, the link can be found on the publisher’s webpage dedicated to a given book. Often, you can choose to choose to request either an online or a print copy of a book.
* Sometimes authors make available (for private use) working/draft versions of a book that has been subsequently published by an academic press. For example, Bruce Hansen’s *Econometrics* is now published by Princeton University Press but previously was a free pdf draft online and can still be found as a pdf draft online. It can be worth checking authors’ websites or searching on Google, ResearchGate, SSRN, and Academia.edu.
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