



MAKECOLLEGEREALITY.COM

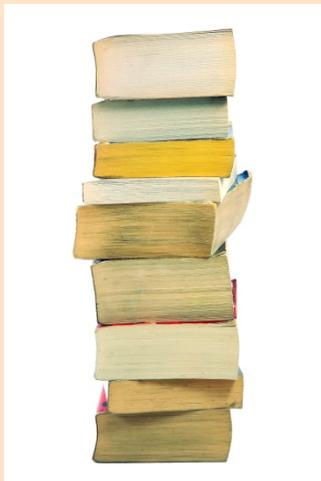
DON'T LET  
COLLEGE COST  
YOU ONE  
MORE DIME

YOUR GUIDE TO FREE BOOKS



College books are a necessary expense, but you don't need to shell out thousands of dollars each year. For the 2009-10 school year, the average student at a 4-year college spent \$1,122 on textbooks alone. And many spent much more! At [MakeCollegeReality.com](http://MakeCollegeReality.com), we've created a list of 17 tips and 15 places to get your books for free.

## TIP #1: NOT ALL BOOKS ARE USED EQUALLY



Before you go on a wild search for your required books, be aware that your professor may not use all the books, even if they are required. If the books are recommended, there's a 95% chance that you won't need it, so don't even spend time looking for it. Focus on getting the books you'll need at the beginning of the semester first so you can see if the professor relies heavily on the required materials or not.

Sometimes the professor will require a book that is only for reference. In this case, you need to decide which books will actually be useful for you. For example, a language professor might require a certain dictionary, but may never use it in class. If this is the case, you can get any dictionary you want, or just use the internet.

## TIP #2: CHECK THE LIBRARY



Some professors will put the required books on reserve at the library. This means that you are only allowed to check the book out for a certain number of hours instead of several weeks.

Check the library's website for availability, or visit in person. Make sure you have the title and author of the book, as well as the professor's name and class number. You'll usually have to ask at the front desk in order to check out a book on reserve.

If there are multiple libraries at your school, you may find the book at one library and not the other. So if you're taking an art history course and you don't find your book at the main library, check the art library.

- Don't forget about overdue fees! If you're checking out a book on reserve, you may be charged by the hour.

## TIP #3: CHECK OTHER LIBRARIES

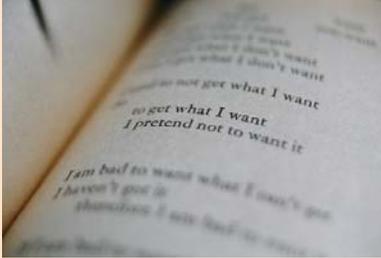
If you can't find the book you're looking for at your own library, check the town library or other local colleges. If your book is on reserve at your college, it may not be at another. This will allow you to check out the book for weeks (instead of hours), or even the entire semester.

## TIP #4: CHECK LOUNGES, SCIENCE LABS, AND STUDY ROOMS



Lounges, science labs, and study rooms may have what you're looking for, however you probably won't be able to take the book back to your dorm. This may be where professors or tutors keep an extra copy, or other students might have left a copy from the previous semester.

## TIP #5: SEARCH FOR POEMS AND STORIES ONLINE



If you're taking a course that requires an anthology or book of poems or short stories, you may be able to find everything you need online for free. Just go through the syllabus and search online for the title and author of the poem or short story you'll be reading.

## TIP #6: ASK FAMILY AND FRIENDS



If the required book is a novel, your family, friends, or housemates may have the book in their own personal library that you could borrow. It doesn't hurt to send around an email to find out.

## TIP #7: ASK PEOPLE IN YOUR MAJOR

Sometimes people who are a year or two ahead of you in your major will let you borrow the book you need. Ask your advisor or the administrative assistant for your department if you can send around an email to everyone in the major. If you're lucky, someone won't be using it next semester and will let you borrow it. Be sure to return it in perfect condition at the end of the semester with a thank you note.

## TIP #8: MAKE COPIES

Sometimes you'll only be using a chapter or two from a book. In that case, it's not worth it to buy the book for a few pages. Check out the book at the library, borrow it from a friend, or buy it from the campus bookstore and then return it after you've made copies.

## TIP #9: SCAN THE BOOK

Even copies cost money, so if you're really short on change, you can scan the parts you need. To do this, you'll either need to have your own scanner (many printers come with built-in scanners), borrow a friend's, or see if there's one available at your library.

## TIP #10: USE CRAIGSLIST OR FREecycle



This will be a long shot, but Craigslist has a free section where you can ask for items or let people know you have something to give away for free.



Freecycle is a site devoted entirely to people asking for and giving things away for free. You'll need a Yahoo! account to become part of a group, and it takes a few days to be accepted.

Don't get your hopes up that someone will have the exact textbook you need and will be willing to give up a textbook for free, but it's worth a try.

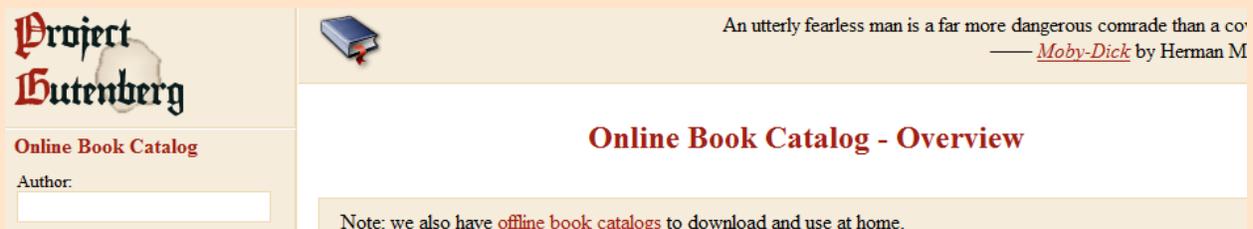
## TIP #11: SEARCH FOR YOUR BOOKS ONLINE

If you aren't able to find a hard copy of the book you're looking for, you may be able to find it for free online. We've compiled a list of websites where you may be able to find your required books, but before you sift through all the links, do a quick search. Type in the name, author, and edition, or the ISBN number into any search engine. You may want to also include "e-book" or "free" with your search.

## TIP #12: SEARCH FOR FREE E-BOOKS

If you didn't find your book in your initial search, we've compiled a list of 15 websites where you still may be able to find it online for free. If the copyright for the books you're looking for have expired, it will be a lot easier to find. However, there are some newer books available as well.

### Project Gutenberg



The screenshot shows the Project Gutenberg website interface. On the left, there is a logo for Project Gutenberg and a search box labeled "Author:". The main content area features the title "Online Book Catalog - Overview" in a large, bold, red font. Above this title, there is a quote: "An utterly fearless man is a far more dangerous comrade than a co" followed by "— *Moby-Dick* by Herman M". Below the title, there is a note: "Note: we also have [offline book catalogs](#) to download and use at home."

[Project Gutenberg](#) has over 33,000 free e-books for download to your computer, iPad, Kindle, iPhone, and other portable devices. You can also find a good number of books in languages other than English. The copyrights have expired for books on this site, so you won't find any new releases here.

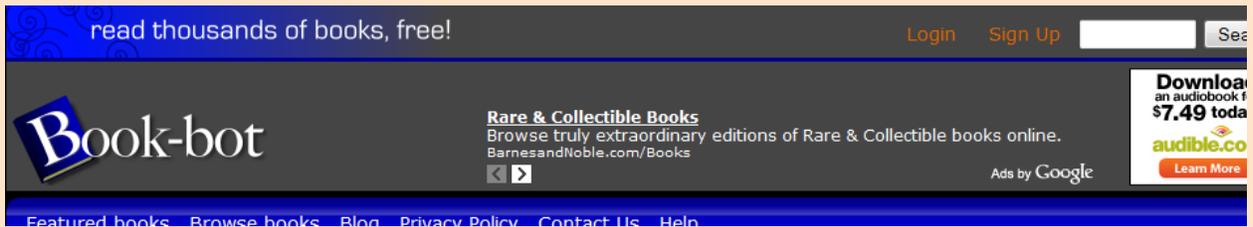
### PublicLiterature.org



The screenshot shows the header and navigation menu of the PublicLiterature.org website. The header is dark red with the text "PublicLiterature.Org" in white, followed by the tagline "A collection of only the finest literature!". To the right of the header is a search box with a "Go" button and an RSS feed icon. Below the header is a navigation menu with the following items: HOME, ARTICLE, BOOK REVIEW, CHILDREN'S, CLASSICS, COMEDY, FICTION, NEWS, NON-FICTION, PLAY, and POETRY.

This site has a nice collection of classic literature available to read online for free.

## Book-bot



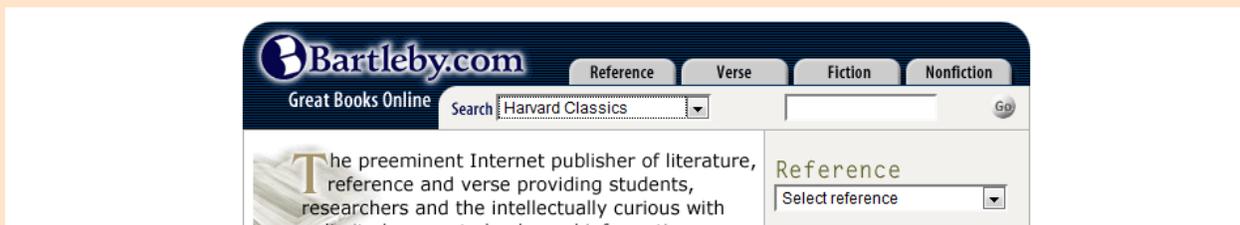
Book-bot has almost 15,000 books available to read online for free. This is a great resource if you're taking a class that requires novels.

## Planet eBook



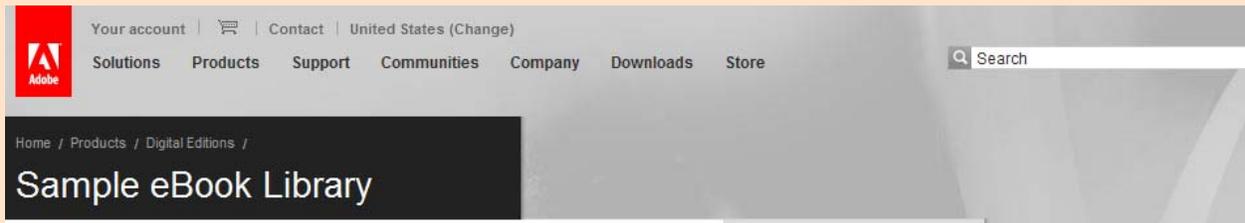
Planet eBook is another place where you'll find classic literature available to download for free.

## Project Bartleby



Project Bartleby is another site where you can find classic books and poems available for free.

## Adobe eBook Library



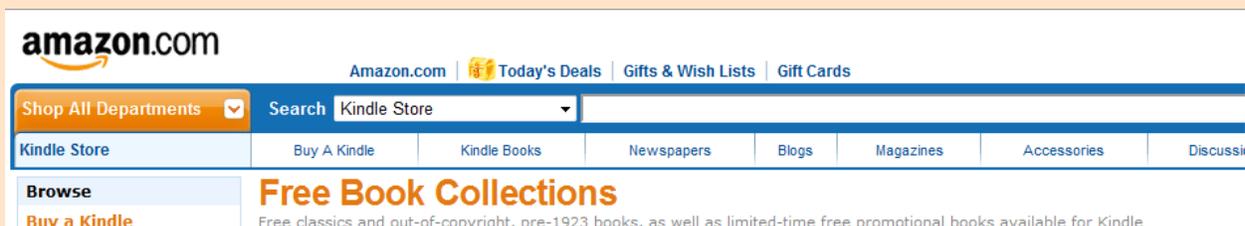
Adobe has a limited number of free e-books available. You may only be able to view the first couple chapters for some books, but you may be able to download the entire version for others. Just search for “Sample eBook Library” on the top right-hand corner of the page.

## Barnes & Noble



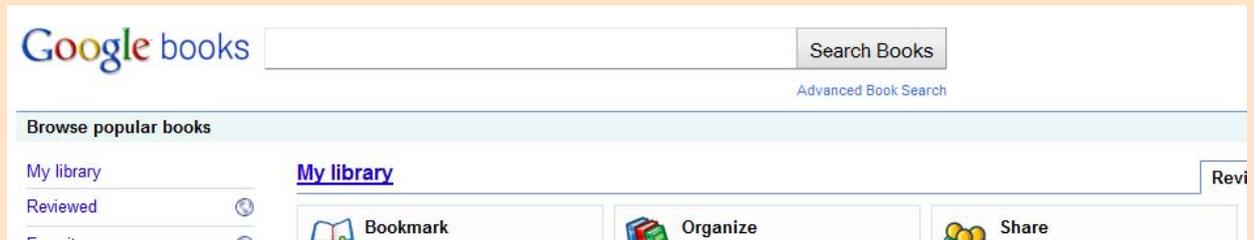
Barnes & Noble has a limited number of free e-books available on their website and you might be lucky enough to find yours there.

## Amazon Free Book Collections



If you own a Kindle, you will have access to Amazon's collection of free books that you can download directly to your Kindle. The books available are out-of-copyright, pre-1923, as well as selected promoted books.

## Google Books



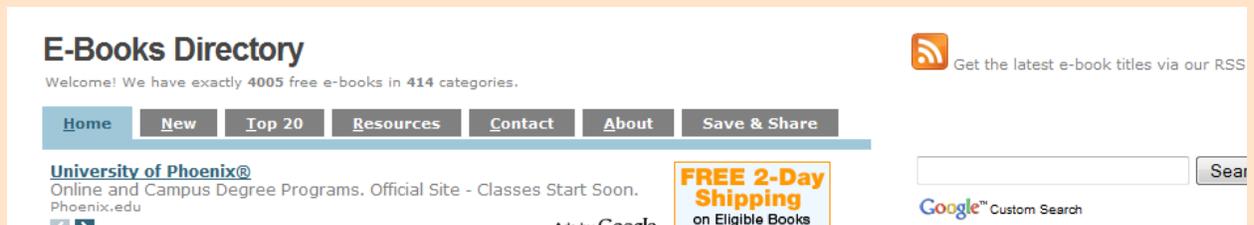
As of October of 2009, Google had scanned over 10 million books – not all of them are free, though. If the book is out of copyright or if the owner has given permission for the book to be distributed, you will be able to view the entire book online and download it for free.

## Textbook Revolution



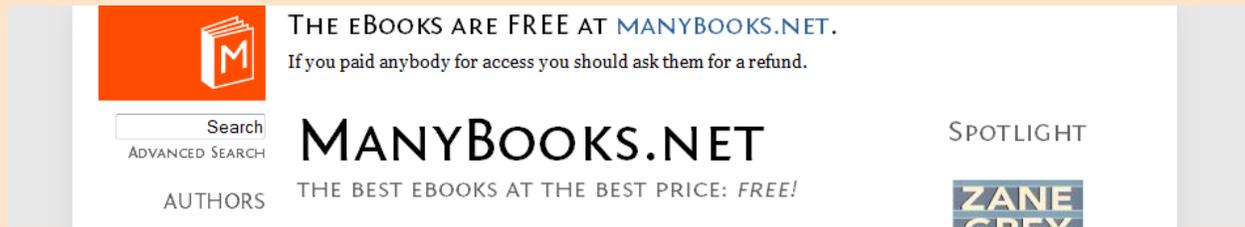
This is a student-run site dedicated to increasing the use of free educational materials. They have books in a range of subjects including business, chemistry, economics, math, sociology, and more.

## E-Books Directory



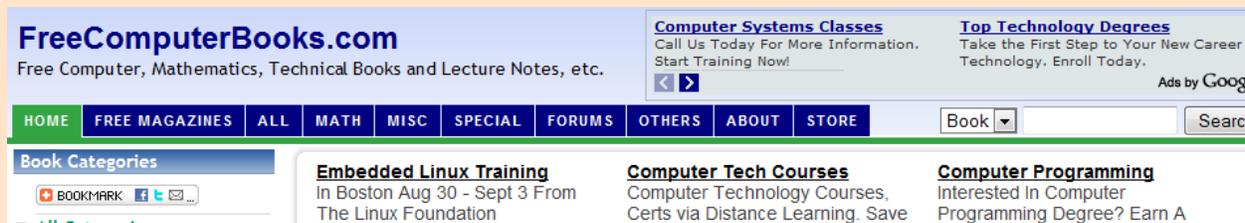
The E-Books Directory has over 4,000 downloadable books in a variety of subjects ranging from art, business, engineering, history, law, medicine, religion, and literature.

## ManyBooks.net



[ManyBooks.net](http://ManyBooks.net) has over 28,000 eBooks available, all for free. This site is a great resource if you're taking for English, philosophy, women's studies, history, religion, and foreign language classes, but they also have books in other subjects as well.

## FreeComputerBooks.com



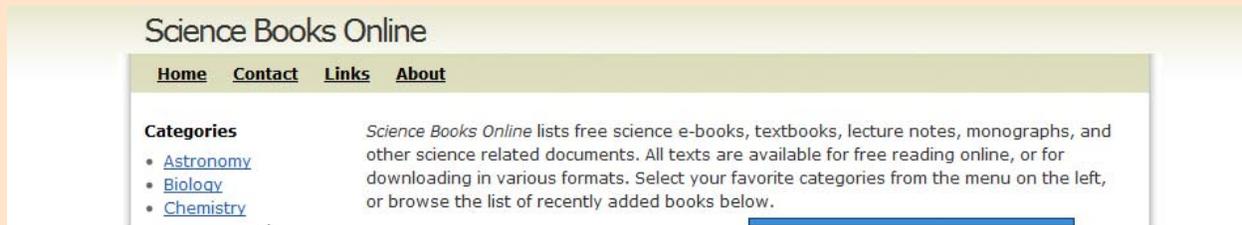
[FreeComputerBooks.com](http://FreeComputerBooks.com) has a range of books in math, computer science, electrical and software engineering, and web design and programming.

## FreeTechBooks.com



At [FreeTechBooks.com](http://FreeTechBooks.com) you'll find free e-books on computer science, engineering, and programming.

## Science Books Online



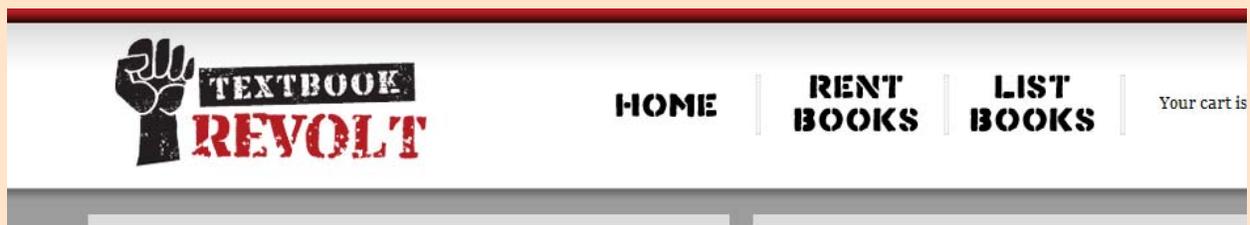
[Science Books Online](#) is a great resource if you're looking for free science or math textbooks.

### More resources for finding free e-books:

- Ipl2 (merger of the Internet Public Library and the Librarians' Internet Index)
- An Australian directory of free e-books
- The University of Pennsylvania online books page
- Freebyte's Guide to Free eBooks
- Columbia University Libraries Electronic Text Service
- Aussie Educator

## TIP #13: RENT OUT YOUR BOOKS

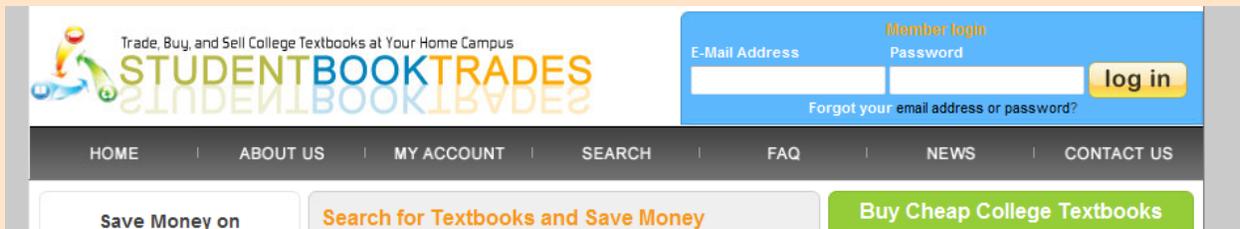
Coming soon at [Textbook Revolt](#), you can rent out your own books. This site would only be useful if you already have college textbooks on hand. From the money you make renting your books out to other students you can either keep the cash (and put the money towards buying your books), or use the money as credit for renting books from others on the site.



## TIP #14: TRADE YOUR BOOKS

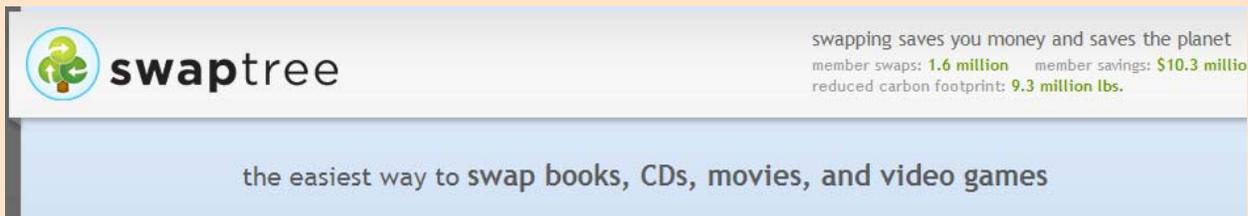
If you have some books or textbooks you won't be using, try swapping them for the books you need. There are several sites out there that could help you out. Note that you may have to pay for shipping.

### Student Book Trades



You can trade, buy, and sell college textbooks on campus through this website.

### Swaptree



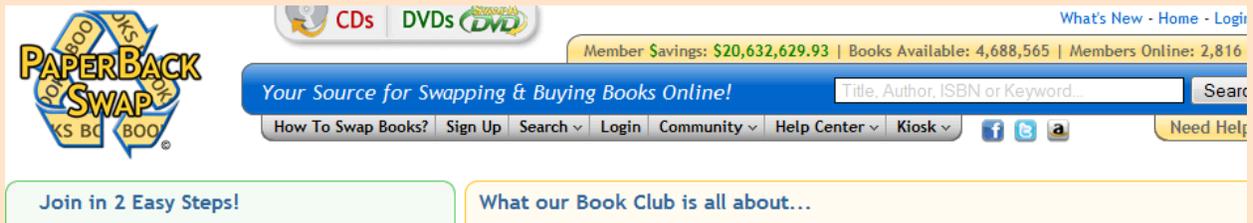
Swaptree is a place where you can trade books, CDs, movies, and video games. You will be able to find some textbooks on this site. They will tell you which items you are eligible to receive based on the popularity of the items you put up for trade.

### Bookins



This is another site for swapping paperbacks. If you use this site, you'll only pay when you receive a book.

## PaperBack Swap



This site is only for paperbacks, so you won't be able to trade other kinds of textbooks. List the books you'd like to swap, and then choose the ones you'd like to receive. You will have to pay for shipping when people request your books.

## TIP #15: SELL YOUR BOOKS ONLINE

Ok, so this isn't exactly a way to get books for free, but it's a way to come up with the cash to buy the books you couldn't find for free. Selling your books online will almost always be a better deal than selling them back to the bookstore. You probably already know that you can sell your books back on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [half.com](http://half.com), but you can avoid the frustration and hassle of selling them individually to different buyers by using the sites we've listed below.

All these sites offer free shipping if you're selling your books to them. You'll have to include any CDs or supplemental materials that came with your book. Payments are issued within 2-5 business days after they receive your books.

### BetterWorldBooks



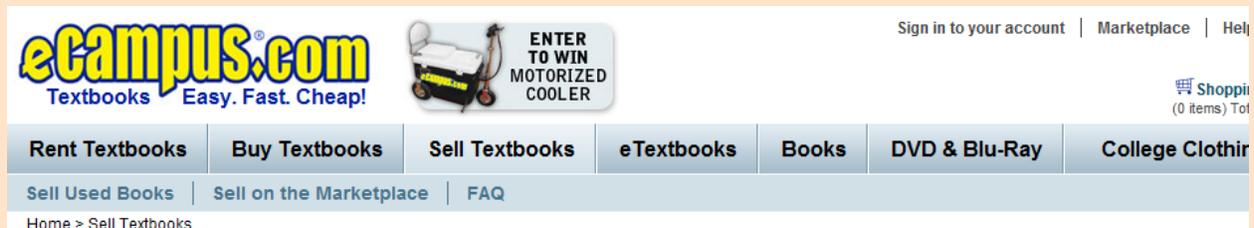
[BetterWorldBooks](http://BetterWorldBooks) will make a donation to a literacy program every time you sell your books back to them. You can request a check for payment, though you'll get a little bit more money if you choose to get paid with a gift certificate or through PayPal.

## BookByte



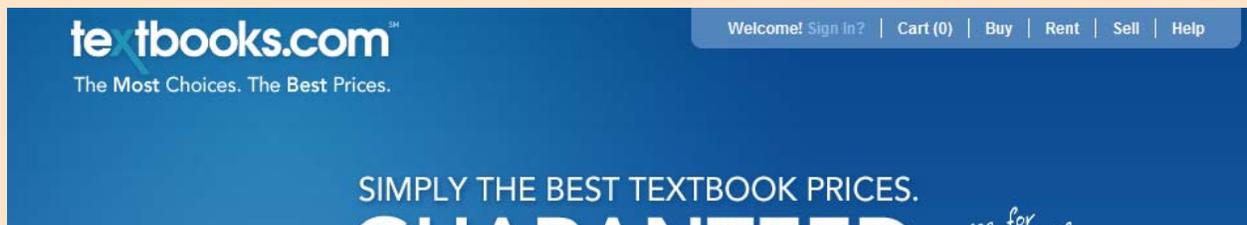
At [BookByte](#), you have the option of checking sell-back prices online or from your phone. You'll also get a \$1 Amazon gift card for every book you sell over \$10. They'll pay you by check.

## eCampus



This website is always running sweepstakes for things such as an iPad for people who sell books back to them. They will pay you by check, direct deposit, or with store credit.

## Textbooks.com



You'll receive an extra 10% back for every book you originally purchased from [Textbooks.com](#).

## TIP #16: CHECK FOR BOOK VOUCHERS

Some colleges and universities have book vouchers available for students who truly can't afford their textbooks. If your school has this service available, you may only be able to get assistance for one semester, so use it wisely. Check with your Financial Aid Office to see if they offer book vouchers or other assistance to help you get the materials you need. You may also be able to get funding for art supplies and other required materials.

## TIP #17: ASK YOUR PROFESSOR

It would be a little obnoxious if every student asked the professor for an extra copy of the book, so use this option only as a last resort. Make sure you explain your situation and that you've already exhausted all other options. If your professor does have a book you could borrow, make sure to send them a handwritten thank-you note at the end of the semester.

Chances are you won't be able to find all your books for free every semester. Just make sure that when the time comes to spend some money on textbooks that you steer clear of the campus bookstore. You have a few options when it comes to paying for your books:

## BUY BOOKS ONLINE

We've already mentioned [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [half.com](http://half.com) as popular sites for selling books, and you probably already know you can buy books there as well. Besides those two sites, check out these places where you could buy your them used or new online:

### BetterWorldBooks



If you're concerned about the environment or just want to do a little good in the world, you should definitely choose [BetterWorldBooks](http://BetterWorldBooks.com). With every purchase they'll donate money for book drives and literacy projects around the world. Each order is shipped carbon neutral, so you're not hurting the planet with shipping.

### CengageBrain



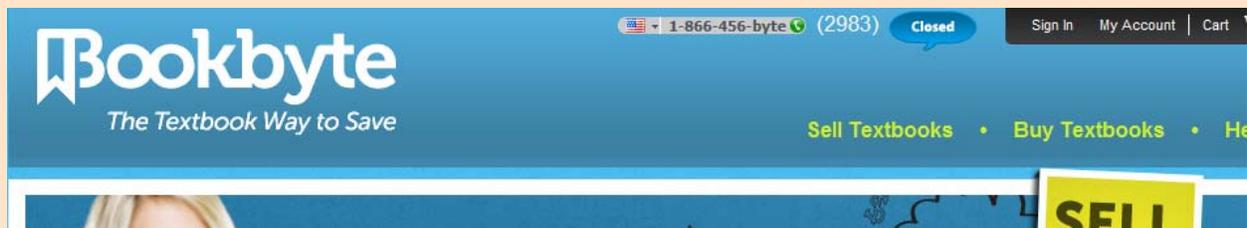
When you buy a new textbook at [CengageBrain](http://CengageBrain.com), you can download the first chapter for free while you wait for your books to ship. You will also have access to free study tools on their site.

## Textbooks.com



This website comes highly recommended! You'll also have the chance to enter sweepstakes for things like an iPad or free textbooks.

## Bookbyte

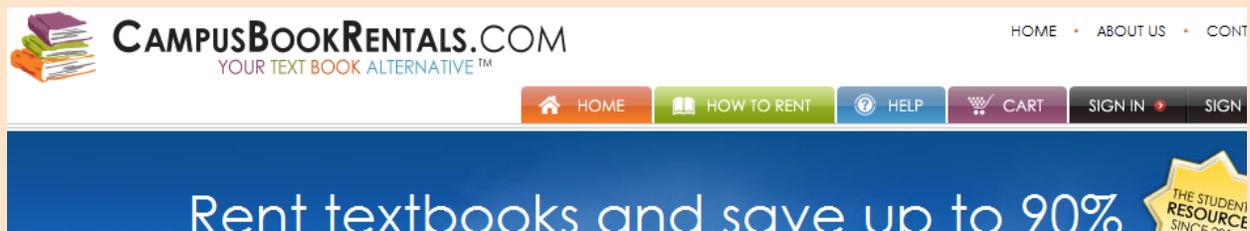


At Bookbyte, you can find out prices for your books by texting. So if you're at your campus bookstore deciding if you should buy the it at the store or if you could get a better deal online, just text them to find out!

## RENT YOUR BOOKS

If you don't want to deal with the hassle of selling your books at the end of the semester, you could rent them. This is an especially good option for gen-ed classes where you know you won't need the books in the future. Here are the top 5 book rental sites:

### CampusBookRentals



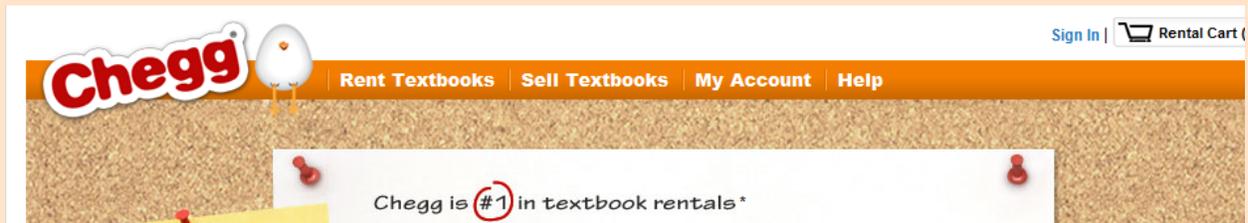
CampusBookRentals has free shipping and shipping materials (for returning books). You'll also have 30 days to return the book for a full refund, plus a generous 15-day grace period at the end of the semester. However, if you want fast shipping, you'll have to pay.

### CengageBrain



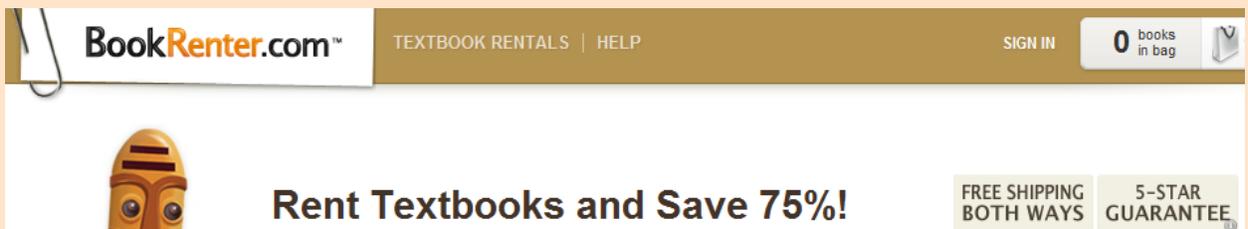
At CengageBrain you'll have a 7-day grace period and the option of extending the rental for up to 130 days. But make sure you don't damage the books or return them after the grace period because you'll basically be paying the list price.

## Chegg



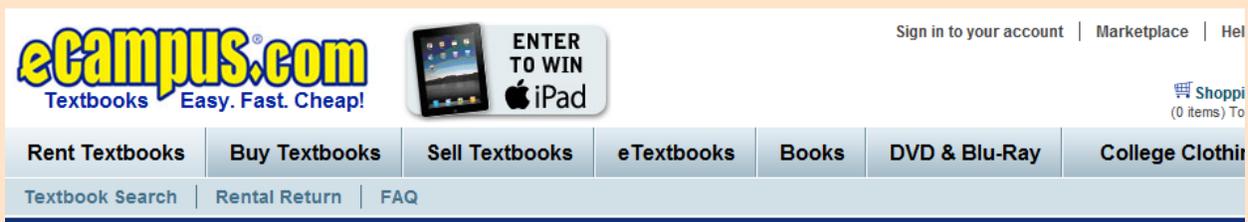
Chegg has fast, free shipping and a 30-day period to return your books for a full refund. Be careful not to lose or damage the books because the lost and damaged book fees are high.

## BookRenter



BookRenter also has fast, free shipping plus the added bonus of an email or text reminder when your book is due. However you'll only have 10 days to return your book at the beginning of the semester and you'll be charged a restocking fee of at least \$10. Also, if you lose the book, you could be charged more than if you had bought it new.

## eCampus



This website is great because it offers a “bill me later” option. They also have free shipping for orders over \$59. You'll be able to return your books within the first 30 days, but you'll be charged a 10% restocking fee. There's also no grace period, so you can't forget the due dates!

## GET E-BOOKS

Your last option for getting books is to buy digital versions. What you're getting is actually a subscription, so you won't be able to access the book after the end of the semester. You'll either download the book directly onto your computer, or have an internet subscription.

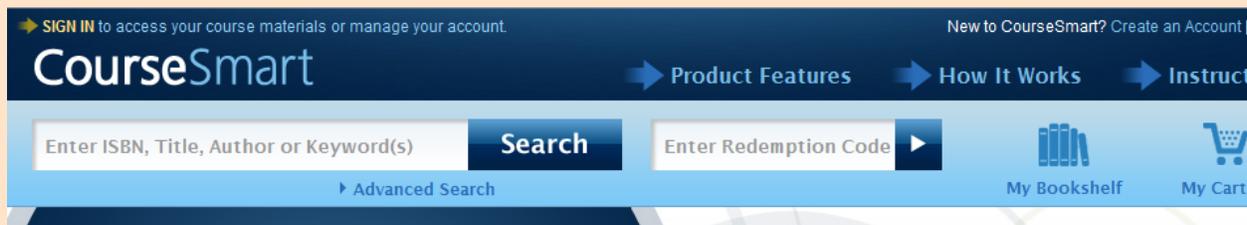
Many e-books have features where you can highlight and take notes electronically as well as print off pages you need. You'll also be able to quickly search the book for any term or phrase. You'll also avoid hassles such as sifting through used textbooks, waiting in line, finding a place to sell your books back, shipping costs, or heavy materials to lug around.

Digital textbooks are environmentally friendly because you won't be killing any trees to make the book and there's no shipping. You'll also have the advantage of getting the book immediately – so you can wait until you absolutely need the book to buy it.

Since e-books are fairly new, you probably won't be able to find all your books in a digital format. Another thing to remember: there are no returns. So if you drop a class, you lose the money since you don't have a physical book to sell back.

Here are the top 5 sites for digital textbooks:

### CourseSmart



This site is dedicated to e-textbooks so every book you find here is available in digital format. They also have an iPhone app where you can view e-books from your iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch.

### CengageBrain



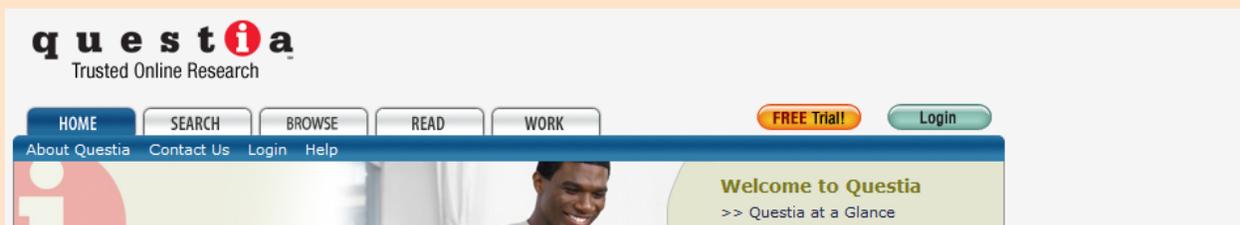
This site is easy to navigate and the first chapter is usually available for free. You also have the option of buying specific chapters, which is a great alternative to buying the entire book for just a few chapters.

## Kindle Store



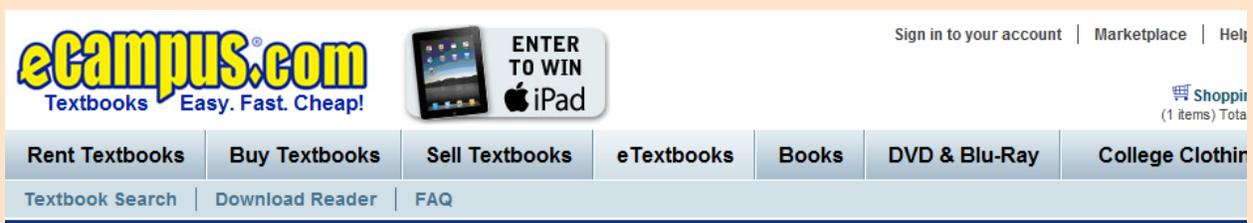
If you have a Kindle or are thinking about getting one, you'll have access to over 30,000 e-textbooks. The Kindle Store is the only place where you'll be able to find e-textbooks compatible with your Kindle.

## Questia



This is an online library with 76,000 digital textbooks and 3 million articles. They have free trials available, but to access the content you'll have to get a subscription. You can bookmark, highlight, add notes, read other people's shared notes, cite sources, and create a bibliography with a click of a button. This would be an excellent resource if you found your required books here or if you are working on a research project or thesis.

## eCampus



This website offers many options for buying books, including digital versions. If a digital version is available, it will list the e-book price along with the other prices.

## THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

We hope you've found this guide helpful and that you've been able to find at least some of your books for free! Remember that it probably won't be quite as convenient to search for free books, but it'll be worth it if you're short on cash. And even if you can't find them for free, we've provided many places where you can find great deals so you won't be spending \$1,000 or more just on books.

Remember you can find more tips on saving money on books and other articles to help you succeed in college by visiting our website at <http://makecollegereality.com>.

Good luck and have a great semester!