

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the advantages of e-books over hardcopy texts?

E-books allow you to:

- Have immediate access to your textbook.
- Access all your textbooks from your device of choice (computer, tablet, smartphone). You can read the book on up to five devices. You can also download the book to your device for offline reading. So, no need to worry about forgetting or losing your book!
- Increase text size to improve readability.
- Listen to the book via the read-aloud feature.
- Take digital, in-line notes using the annotation features. These can be shared with classmates to study together or collaborate on a project.
- Search across the entire content and figures in the book (including your own notes!) for keywords and concepts.

Learn more about the features of e-books at <https://www.vitalsource.com/bookshelf-features>

2. How can I find out if my course uses an e-book?

If the online bookstore does not list textbook purchase options, but instead says Opt-Out, this means that the course uses an e-text provided within Blackboard (OU's online learning platform). There is a \$50 materials fee, which is charged directly to your student account. If you would prefer to 'Opt-Out' and purchase the textbook from another source, simply click the Opt Out button and proceed from there.

3. How will I access and read my e-book?

At Ottawa University, we use an e-book reader called Bookshelf. This is made by our e-book platform provider, VitalSource. You must access the e-text at least one time through the link in your Blackboard course to create your VitalSource Bookshelf account, unless you have used Bookshelf before and already have an account. If you already have a Bookshelf account, clicking the link will add the e-book to your Bookshelf. Once you have an account, you can read online at <http://bookshelf.vitalsource.com> or via a mobile device using the Bookshelf app.

[Download the Bookshelf App.](#)

Here's a quick video about how to use Bookshelf: [Getting Started With Bookshelf](#)

4. Can I print my e-book so I can read it in hard copy?

Some e-books allow you to print small sections of the book. However, there are limitations set by the copyright owner and the publisher. It is common for a book to have a page limit per print and for the print outs to include a watermark. If you want to have an entire hardcopy book, it would be best to opt out of the e-book and to purchase a hard copy.

5. Can I share my e-book with someone else that is taking the same course?

No, each e-book is licensed to an individual for personal use. Your Bookshelf account gets connected to your Blackboard account through an integration and you can only see e-books inside your own account. If you choose to share your mobile device with someone else and you have the Bookshelf app, that person can of course read the book on your device.

You can share your annotations in the e-book with classmates (see

<https://support.vitalsource.com/hc/en-us/articles/360021978094-Making-and-Sharing-Notes-and-Highlights> for more details).

6. What if I have more questions? Is there someone I can talk to?

You can reach out to your academic advisor or email ouhelp@ottawa.edu.

7. Why are most of the items showing as “Out of Stock” from the OU Bookstore?

The OU Bookstore, located at our residential campus in Ottawa, KS does not carry all of the textbooks required for the adult sites and online courses. The “Out of Stock” indicator simply means they do not carry the item and you will need to select another option from the list further down on the screen.

8. Is it true that I can rent a print textbook or purchase an e-book from the OU Bookstore?

Yes, in many cases our bookstore will provide the option to rent a hardcopy textbook. Please be aware of the timeline for rental as some vendors may only rent for 90 days, which may not be sufficient time for the book especially if it is needed for another course.

E-books are always a type of rental. The e-books that are integrated into Blackboard are available for a minimum of 180 days and some are available for 360 days or even longer. E-books that are available for “purchase” via the bookstore (or from other vendors) may have a rental duration for as little as 90 days. Please pay close attention to the rental period before making your purchase.

9. What does Opt Out mean?

This means that you choose not to use the e-text and the materials provided within Blackboard (OU’s online learning platform) that is included in your course. Opting out will disconnect your access to the e-text within the course. It will also remove the \$50 materials fee associated with the e-text which is charged directly to your student account. (NOTE: This make take a few weeks.)

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The opt-out deadline matches the add/drop period. The same date applies if you opt out and want to opt back in.

Please note: The preferred method is to use the e-text provided within the course. There are many benefits available including immediate access to your text, low fee, and technical support.

10. How can I opt out?

There are two ways you can opt out: within Blackboard or via the online bookstore.

Within Blackboard:

1. Click “E-text” on the course menu.
2. Click the title of the book (a link) to open the e-book landing page.
3. Choose “Want to opt out?” and follow the prompts.

Via the online bookstore:

1. Visit <https://oubookstore.ottawa.edu/>
2. Click “Textbooks” (you may need to open the menu in the upper left first) and select “Get Textbooks”.
3. Navigate to the course and section you are enrolled in.
4. Click the “Opt Out” button for the e-book you do not want to be billed for.

11. If I opt out, do I have to purchase my book from another source listed in the online bookstore?

No, the ISBN for the required textbook is provided on the online bookstore. If you prefer to use the ISBN to search for the textbook elsewhere, that is fine, as long as it is the correct text and the ISBN matches what is shown in the bookstore. Be careful in choosing an alternative vendor for your materials. E-books that are for purchase or rental elsewhere may have an access duration for as little as 90 days, which may not be sufficient time, especially if you need the book for another course.

12. If I choose to opt out, can I opt back in if I change my mind?

Yes, you may opt back in and be charged the \$50 course materials fee on your Tuition and Fees statement. HOWEVER, as with the opt-out deadline, the opt-in deadline matches the add/drop date. To change your opt out preference:

1. Go to your Blackboard course.
2. Click the “E-text” content item.
3. Click the book title to open the ebook landing page.
4. Choose “Opt In”.

13. What does Inclusive Access mean?

In the context of course materials, the term “Inclusive Access” refers to course materials that are included in the cost of tuition. This is a bookstore/publishing industry term for providing streamlined access to course materials, typically via an e-text, such that the student does not need to purchase something (e.g., a textbook) on top of the tuition and has everything needed for the course on the first day of class. It means that the cost of the course is “all inclusive”; it includes the tuition and the text/materials. Strictly speaking, Ottawa University does not use Inclusive Access, because we provide (most) e-texts for a nominal \$50 Course Materials fee, which is in addition to the tuition for the course.

14. How does the Pell Book Advance work with the Opt-Out?

The Pell Book Advance is still available to you as long as you opt-out **one week prior** to the start of a new term. If you opt-out any time after the week before the start of a new term you will not be eligible to receive the book advance.