

eBooks

A introduction to buying commercial eBooks

eBooks are popular for both avid readers and students. They are convenient, easy-to-use, and usually cheaper than buying a physical book. For students, many publishers are trying to make eTextbooks that offer the same reading experience as the hard copy and offer much more flexibility in the user experience as well as enhanced media features.

For students with disabilities, eTextbooks may improve the reading experience. However, there are many types of readers and eTextbooks available, and the features available on each type may vary greatly. Keep in mind, that usually eTextbooks differ from other popular books published because of enhanced study features. Also, the eTextbook may not include the same supplementary materials you would find on a textbook CD or dedicated publisher courseware access site such as McGraw-Hill Connect. Unless otherwise noted, these eTextbook readers are designed to be used on a personal computer or laptop—not a dedicated eBook device.

This is a brief guide to commercially available eTextbook readers to help you choose if an eTextbook is right for you.



Nook Study

Nook Study downloads as a desktop application and is a product of Barnes and Nobles.

Features

Visual

Nook Study reader allows you view one page at a time, or switch to side-by-side view. You can zoom in to the page. Unique to Nook Study, you can have two books open at once to cross-reference your materials.

Navigation

To navigate easily through your book, you can jump to sections of a book from the contents pane including your bookmarks and notes, step through by page, or go to a specific a specific page.

Speech

Nook Study comes with a built-in screen reader tool. This tool functions like a standalone screen reader used by persons with visual impairments, but the keyboard commands can easily be learned for anyone to navigate through the book with audio.

Study Tools

Nook Study allows you to highlight, asterisk, or underline text in the book or add your own notes. You can later export these notes for a study guide. Also, click on a term for easy web reference.

Extras

Nook Study allows you to create links to send to your classmates to review sections with your notes and highlights. You can print or copy and certain number of pages for your use. To help you organize your coursework, you can upload all of your coursework and notes into Nook Study. Enhanced audio and video features are available for some books.

Book Source

Buy or rent your books from BarnesandNobles.com and look for the Nook symbol. Also available from the CUA Bookstore.

Try It!

Nook books are available for 7 day free trials.

Kindle

Kindle desktop reader is a product of Amazon. These books are also available to be read on standalone Kindle readers or mobile devices with the Kindle app.



Features

Visual

The Kindle app on the desktop replicates the Kindle reader device. You can change the size of the text and the words will wrap to fill the screen. The window will also allow you to choose between one or two columns of text. To ease reading, you can choose to view text background as white, black, or sepia.

Navigation

Use the contents frame to click through chapters and book sections or your bookmarks, move forward one page at a time, or go to a specific page number. You can also search for key terms and jump to relevant pages.

Speech

Speech is only available if you are using assistive speech on your computer or screen reader software. Be sure to download the accessible reader for PCs available at Amazon.com.

Study Tools

The Kindle app allows you to add bookmarks, highlight in one color, add notes, and click on terms you are unfamiliar with and quickly jump to the web for Dictionary.com, Wikipedia, or Shelfari extras.

Extras

Enhanced features like audio and video available for some books and usable on Kindle Fire devices and iOS apps.

Book Source

Buy books on Amazon.com. Look for the Kindle versions.

Try It!

Free book trials are available either as a limited number of pages or for a limited number of days.

The CourseSmart logo is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word "CourseSmart" in a white, sans-serif font, with "Course" in a lighter weight and "Smart" in a bolder weight. The logo is set against a dark blue rounded square background.

Coursesmart

Coursesmart collaborates with some of the world's largest textbook publishers. Read your books through a browser-based reader, or apps are available for mobile devices.

Features

Visual

Coursesmart reader allows you to view multiple pages at once and zoom in to text.

Navigation

Easily navigate through your book by jumping to sections and your bookmarks from the contents pane, step through pages, go to a specific page, or search for specific terms or phrases.

Speech

The Coursesmart web-based reader is compatible with screen readers but does not have built-in audio. The mobile apps are not accessible.

Study Tools

Coursesmart reader helps students study with a highlighter and bookmark tool and enables you to take notes on the page. Share your notes and highlights with classmates as well.

Extras

Coursesmart allows you to view up to 5 books in offline mode and print a limited number of pages. If you need a screen reader accessible book, you can request these through the website. Apps are available for mobile devices.

Book Source

Buy or rent books at [Coursesmart.com](https://www.coursesmart.com).

Try It!

Some books are available for a 3 day free trial.

Vital Source Bookshelf

Vital Source Bookshelf is a desktop application reader. Vital Source collaborates with over 300 publishers to connect students with eBooks.



Features

Visual

Vital Source reader allows you to change your page layout as well as the colors of text, lines, and background.

Navigation

To navigate easily through your book, you can jump to sections of a book or to your highlights from the contents pane, step through by page, or go to a specific a specific page. You can also search for specific terms.

Speech

The built-in text-to-speech uses a synthesized voice to read the page aloud. Control reading with a start/stop button.

Study Tools

Vital Source provides a number of tools to help you study including multi-color highlighting, quick web references, the ability to take notes on a page, and it will create bibliography information for any text you copy.

Extras

The reader connects you to your classmates so you can share notes and highlights while you study. The reader supports multiple languages. You can read both on- and offline, as well as use the app for your iOS device. Some books have enhanced media. Functionality may be limited for iOS use.

Book Source

Buy books from store.vitalsource.com.

Try It!

Free trial books are available for use for 14 days.

CafeScribe

CafeScribe is a Follet product. Read your books through a browser based reader, or apps are available for mobile devices.



Features

Visual

The CafeScribe reader maintains the look of the textbook and allows you to view one or two pages on the screen as well as zoom in to the text.

Navigation

Navigate through the book by sections from the contents pane or view page thumbnails. Step through pages or go to a specific page and jump quickly to your bookmarks.

Speech

CafeScribe does not provide information on screen reader accessibility. A built-in text-to-speech reads pages. Control the audio with a start/stop button.

Study Tools

Study better with CafeScribe by using its multi-color highlighting tool or take notes on a line or for a page. The reader allows you to print off your highlights and notes for an easy study guide.

Book Source

Buy or rent books at CafeScribe.com.

Try It!

Most books are available for 3-day free trials.

For more information on these eBook readers or alternative formats available to students, contact Disability Support Services.

The CUA Bookstore will be happy to help you purchase any materials required or recommended for your courses.



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